

Politeness in Digital Interaction: A Pragmatic Analysis in Genshin Impact Discord Chats

Virna Amelia ¹, Silvia Utami ^{2*}, Maspufah Maspufah ³

* Corresponding Email: csilviany@gmail.com

^{1 2 3} English Department, Universitas Persada Bunda Indonesia, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Politeness is key in maintaining smooth communication, especially in digital discourse spaces where tone and intent can be easily misunderstood. This research aimed to identify politeness strategies in Genshin Impact participants' messages on the Discord server and identify factors influencing their use by adopting Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory. This research analyzed discourse transcripts from various Genshin Impact Discord server participants using a descriptive qualitative method. The findings revealed 113 utterances that occurred in the politeness strategies: 15 of bald on-record, 65 of positive politeness, 21 of negative politeness, and 12 of off-record politeness. Positive politeness strategies were primarily used in the Discord to maintain the close relationship between participants. Two main factors that influence politeness in Discord were payoffs (priori consideration) and circumstances of sociological variables. These findings highlight the importance of understanding politeness strategies in shaping respectful and effective communication in online gaming communities.

Keywords: *chat room, discord server, Genshin Impact, politeness strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

Online communication has become increasingly common, with people sharing hobbies and interests in group chats. However, the linguistic and communicative ways of uttering words can vary significantly among individuals from different backgrounds, depending on their politeness. Politeness comprises linguistic behavior through which people indicate that they take others' feelings into account when determining how they should be treated. Politeness strategies encompass individuals' linguistic and communicative choices to maintain social relationships and manage potential conflicts during interactions (Kádár, 2017). The options will be different for each culture.

Cultural differences can lead to varying perceptions of politeness, as seen in Indonesia, where kissing an older person's hand is a tradition to show respect. However, in other countries, it may be flirting or showing affection. Unwritten rules in various settings, including home, school, and work, shape language and politeness (Fridolini et al., 2021). Analyzing politeness strategies is crucial for understanding individual social interactions and cultural dynamics. This enhances

interpersonal skills and fosters effective and respectful communication in diverse environments, enhancing cultural understanding.

Discourses on online platforms like Discord allow participants to explore politeness strategies and interact with individuals from different countries and backgrounds. Participants' utterances can vary based on their personalities and cultural backgrounds. For example, Western participants avoid discussing skin color as a sensitive topic, while Indonesian participants use it as an affectionate in-group label or joke to lighten situations. Online discourse can be as intimate as talking with family or real-life friends. Discord's "channel" allows users to interact on specific topics without worrying about politeness. This makes online discourses familiar and enables people to understand others better. Learning about courtesy and observing how others communicate can be achieved through engaging in digital discourse and observing interactions. Overall, online conversations provide a platform for understanding and enhancing politeness in various contexts.

Some studies on politeness strategies have shown their significance in facilitating successful interactions between speakers. Many existing studies, particularly those focusing on movies, talk shows, and online interaction, emphasize the dominance of positive politeness strategies and the sociological factors influencing their use (Ammaida, 2020; Handayani et al., 2022; Hutahaean et al., 2021; Mojo et al., 2021; Silitonga, 2022). However, studies exploring politeness strategies in mobile games remain limited. For instance, Budiarta et al. (2024) investigated how the Traveler conveys politeness and impoliteness in interactions with Paimon in the mobile game Genshin Impact. This study uniquely investigates politeness strategies in the Genshin Impact Discord server, providing insights into digital gaming communities - a context underexplored in previous studies. Building on these insights, this study uniquely investigates politeness strategies in the Genshin Impact Discord server, providing an in-depth look into digital gaming communities—a rapidly growing and culturally diverse interactional space. Using Brown & Levinson's face theory, the research sheds light on how politeness functions in real-time, game-related online interactions. Therefore, this study aims to answer two questions: (1) What politeness strategies are used in the Genshin Impact Discord server? and (2) What factors influence the use of these strategies?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Politeness Strategies

Politeness strategies are developed to minimize threats in communication, aiming to save the hearer's face. Rather than being a fixed set of behaviors or linguistic structures, politeness is a dynamic process inherent in social interactions (Watts, 2003). Furthermore, Mills (2003) elaborates

that politeness expresses the speaker's intention to reduce impoliteness towards others. Brown & Levinson (1987) have significantly influenced the field by providing a universal model that captures the nuances of politeness across diverse languages and cultures. Based on face, this model is valid for capturing the logic of politeness in any language and culture. In conclusion, understanding politeness strategies as a dynamic and context-dependent process enriches our comprehension of social interactions and highlights the importance of cultural nuances in communication.

More recent scholarship has expanded the understanding of politeness in digital contexts. Locher & Graham (2010) argue that politeness online is shaped by the affordances of digital platforms, including anonymity, asynchronicity, and multimodality. Herring (2004) highlights the distinctive characteristics of computer-mediated communication (CMC), showing that digital discourse often blends formal and informal features, creating unique politeness challenges. These perspectives enrich the classical framework of Brown & Levinson by incorporating technological and social changes in communication.

Regarding this research, the politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) were used to identify the strategies used by the participants in the Genshin Impact Discord server. They present the following four strategies to face FTA: Bald on Record strategy, Positive Politeness strategy, Negative Politeness strategy, and Off-Record strategy.

Bald on-Record

This strategy is the most direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way to say things without minimizing the imposition on the hearer. It is mainly applied by speakers who closely know the hearer. Bald on-record can occur in four circumstances: direct imperative, metaphorical urgency, sympathetic advice, and granting permission for something requested. Direct imperative is a common usage of bald on-record, as demonstrated in the sentence "Don't burn your hand!" This direct warning effectively avoids misunderstandings and poses a risk of threatening the hearer's face. Bald on-record strategy is best for preventing misunderstandings, but has the most significant risk of threatening the hearer's face.

Positive Politeness

Positive politeness is a metaphorical extension of intimacy, used to indicate common ground or sharing of wants between strangers who perceive themselves as similar. It is a social accelerator, where speakers show equality and a desire to "come closer" to the hearer. (Brown & Levinson, 1987) list fifteen strategies of politeness addressed to the hearer's positive face: notice, attend to hearer (his interests, wants, needs, goods); exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer);

intensify interest to hearer; use in-group identity markers; seek agreement; avoid disagreement; presuppose/raise/assert common ground; joke; be optimistic; assert or presuppose S' knowledge of and concern for H's wants; offer and promise, include both speaker and hearer in the activity; give (or ask for) reasons; assume or assert reciprocity; provide gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation). These strategies emphasize the importance of addressing the hearer's positive face and highlight the complexities of human communication in diverse contexts. Understanding these techniques enriches conversations and fosters a supportive environment.

Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is a strategy that assumes social distance or awkwardness between the speaker and hearer, emphasizing the speaker's and the hearer's independence (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It is divided into ten strategies: be conventionally indirect, question and hedge, be pessimistic, minimize the imposition, give deference, apologize, impersonalize the speaker and hearer, state the FTA as a general rule, nominalize, and go on record as incurring a debt or not indebted to the hearer. Conventional indirect politeness uses phrases and sentences with contextually unambiguous meanings, while questions and hedges soften commands and make the membership of a noun phrase more complete. Pessimistic politeness expresses doubt about the appropriateness of the speaker's speech act, while minimized imposition minimizes inconvenience or burden to another person. Deference phenomena represent instructions of social factors into language structure, such as honorifics and relative status between participants. Apologizing for an FTA indicates reluctance to impinge on the hearer's negative face and redresses that impingement. In summary, negative politeness is a strategy that assumes social distance and awkwardness between the speaker and hearer, emphasizing their independence and the speaker's role in the interaction.

Off-Record

The off-record strategy is a method of politeness that involves using indirect language to leave the meaning of an utterance up to the hearer. (Brown & Levinson, 1987) differentiate fifteen sub-strategies of off-record politeness. These include giving hints, association clues, presupposition, understatement, overstatement, tautologies, contradictions, ironic criticism, metaphors, rhetorical questions, ambiguity, vagueness, over-generalization, displacement of hearer, and incompleteness. Giving hints allows the hearer to infer the intended meaning without directly stating it, saving face for both parties. Association clues provide related implications triggered by the violation of given relevance. Similar to irony, Presuppose uses language opposite to the intended meaning, but is typically used aggressively. Understatement minimizes the speaker's

intended meaning, while overstatement amplifies the speaker's message. Metaphors and rhetorical questions allow hearers to interpret the speaker's intended message. Overall, off-record strategies highlight the complexities of communication, enhancing understanding, and maintaining respect among participants.

Factors Influencing the Choice of Politeness Strategies

Sociological factors play a significant role in the use of politeness strategies. Brown & Levinson (1987) identified two factors influencing speakers to use politeness strategies: payoff and relevant circumstances. The first factor, *payoff*, refers to the benefits a speaker can receive from each strategy. For instance, by going on record, a speaker can build trust with the hearer by making them believe they are honest and trustworthy. They can avoid misunderstandings and minimize face-threatening acts without effort.

On the other hand, by going off record, a speaker can lead the hearer to interpret their utterance, avoid responsibility for potentially damaging interpretations, and show a caring person. A positive politeness strategy minimizes face-threatening acts by indicating belonging to the same group and avoiding requests and offers. Conversely, a negative politeness strategy may satisfy the hearer's negative face, avoiding future debt, paying regard, and maintaining social distance. In summary, sociological factors play a crucial role in using politeness strategies.

The second factor is *relevant circumstances*, as the factors influencing the choice of a politeness strategy are divided into: social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition. (1) *Social distance* refers to the perceived social relationship or level of familiarity between individuals. The closer the social bond, the less politeness is required, while greater politeness is necessary in interactions with higher social standing or unfamiliar acquaintances. (Brown & Levinson, 1987) present two examples to illustrate how social distance affects the choice of politeness strategies. The first example, "Got the time, mate?", suggests that the individuals involved have a close relationship, and the speaker employs positive politeness. The second example, "Excuse me, would you by any chance have the time?", is suitable for situations where the individuals involved are unfamiliar and from different backgrounds. The speaker uses negative politeness, even more polite than the first example. (2) *Relative power* is the social rank or authority that the speaker and hearer hold in a specific context. Social status, age, occupation, or institutional roles can influence this power. Individuals with higher power may use more direct and assertive language, as their authority makes them less concerned about face-threatening acts. Conversely, individuals with lower power often employ more deferential language and additional politeness strategies to maintain face and show respect. For instance, supervisor (high power): "I need you to finish this report by the end of the

day. It is crucial for our team's success.” Employee (lower power): “Yes, I understand. I will make it my top priority.” The supervisor's superior position allows for straightforward communication without excessive politeness. At the same time, the employee acknowledges the power dynamic by using politeness markers like "yes" and emphasizing their commitment to completing the task promptly.

Next, (3) *Rank of imposition* refers to the level of inconvenience or burden associated with a specific request or action. There are two levels of ranking: those requiring services or time, and those requiring goods or non-material items. Both types can result in face-threatening acts (FTAs). High levels of imposition are present when seeking a significant favor, while low levels are evident in smaller requests. Two examples illustrate different levels of imposition: (a) “Look, I’m sorry to bother you, but would there be any chance of your lending me just enough money to get a railway to get home? I must have dropped my purse and I just don’t know what to do”. (b) “Hey, can you lend me some money? I forgot my wallet at home”. The first example involves apologizing for the inconvenience; the other is a straightforward request without minimizing potential threats. These examples demonstrate the different levels of imposition in communication. From those explanations, this research analyzed the factors influencing politeness strategies during the interaction of Genshin Impact participants in the Discord server, focused on payoff (a priori consideration) and the circumstances of sociological variables.

METHOD

Research Design

This research used a descriptive qualitative method that focused on identifying the types of politeness strategies used by Genshin Impact participants in the Discord server and the factors influencing their choice of strategy. The descriptive method was chosen since it is an approach that analyzes data directly, uses limited frameworks and interpretations, categorizes material into themes, and is appropriate to examine the everyday language of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This research material was the participants' discourse on the Discord server and was categorized into themes such as politeness strategies and influencing factors.

Research Site and Participants

The data for this research was purposefully selected from the interactions of various participants on the Genshin Impact Discord Server channel, specifically the *Jeaneral-chat* channel. When the server was most active, data were collected from the Discord server between February 17 and March 18, 2024 (Friday–Monday, 11 p.m.–1 a.m.). Approximately 500 utterances were initially observed; 113 relevant utterances demonstrating politeness strategies were selected for

analysis based on clarity and contextual completeness. Participants included active members of the Discord, whose usernames were anonymized. Moderators were informed of the research, and ethical guidelines for observing public online spaces were followed. The Discord application can be downloaded for free on the Google Play Store or App Store.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by joining and recording the discourse on Discord during the specified period. Relevant utterances containing politeness strategies were identified and tabulated. The categorization process involved reading each utterance and assigning it to one of Brown & Levinson's (1987) four main strategies: Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, or Off-Record. For instance, identifying Bald on Record when direct and unambiguous utterances such as *"You better go to sleep now!"* were coded as Bald on Record because they were imposed without mitigation. After initial coding, the utterances were displayed in tables summarizing their frequency and examples for each strategy. The categorization was checked twice by the researchers to ensure reliability and to resolve ambiguities collaboratively. Analysis followed three concurrent flows of activity (Miles et al., 2014): data condensation (selecting relevant discourse), data display (organizing data in tables), and conclusion drawing (analyzing and interpreting the data).

FINDINGS

The Politeness Strategies Found in Genshin Impact's Discord Server

The findings showed four types of politeness strategies used by the Genshin Impact participants in the Discord server: bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Each utterance was identified and classified according to the types of politeness strategies, considering the factors influencing the use of the strategies. The frequency of each strategy is summarized in the table below, followed by a detailed discussion of representative examples for each category.

Table 1. Frequency of Politeness Strategy Used in the Genshin Impact Discord Server

Types of Politeness Strategy	Frequency
Bald on-Record	15
Positive Politeness	65
Negative Politeness	21
Off-Record	12
Total	113

Table 1 shows that positive politeness was the most frequent (58%), followed by negative politeness (19%), bald on-record (13%), and off-record (11%). Data showed that positive politeness was the most used strategy, suggesting participants often tried to build rapport, show friendliness, and foster group solidarity. Negative politeness was the second most common strategy used to show respect and reduce pressure in conversations, especially when making requests or dealing with people of higher status, like moderators or experienced members. Then, the next step was followed by bald on-record strategies showing that direct and unambiguous speech acts were less common but still present, often used in urgent or emotionally driven contexts. Off-record strategies were the least common, indicating that indirect or vague expressions were less preferred, but still used for humor, sarcasm, or subtle criticism. Further analysis is depicted in the following explanation.

Bald on-Record

The research identified 15 findings of the bald on record strategy, including 4 ways, direct imperatives, metaphorical urgency, granting permission, and sympathetic advice. The bald-on-record strategies used in the Genshin Impact Discord Server were identified in the following table.

Table 2. Bald on-Record Strategies Used in the Genshin Impact Discord Server

No	Politeness Strategy	Utterance	Explanation
1	Bald on-Record (Direct Imperative)	You better go to sleep or else	Direct imperative expressing concern and urgency.
2	Bald on-Record (Metaphorical Urgency)	Guys, help, why do these masked goblins keep attacking me?	Expressing desperation and urgency to prompt a response.
3	Bald on-Record (Granting permission)	Sure, you can have them all	The speaker grants permission directly, fulfilling the hearer's request.
4	Bald on-Record (Sympathetic Advice)	Get some chicken soup and get well, please	Advice intended to help the hearer recover, showing concern.

Datum 1 in the table showed a direct imperative expressing concern and urgency from the speaker after the hearer stated, *“I don’t need sleep, it’s fine”*. The speaker warned, *“You better go to sleep, or else,”* implying a threat that not sleeping could lead to something bad happening. Following this,

datum 2 illustrates the speaker's intense desperation and urgency, aiming to inspire a response. The speaker was asking for help from other participants. The speaker implies the message was important and it needed a response. In datum 3, the speaker explicitly grants permission, satisfying the hearer's request upon hearing the phrase, "*Can I join your world? I run out of hill churls to farm.*" As a result of that response, the speaker's message was classified as a bald-on-record strategy. Sympathetic advice is present in datum 4, highlighting concern for the hearer's recovery. The speaker showed concern when they learned about the hearer's unwell condition after stating, "*I'm just bella sick right now.*" The speaker offered some advice and wished the hearer well. Therefore, this data demonstrated how bald-on-record strategies employed in the Discord server to convey urgency, grant permission, offer advice, and directly address the hearer's needs without ambiguity.

Positive Politeness

This research found fourteen positive politeness strategies, except the giving gifts to the hearer strategy (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation), with 65 utterances. Positive politeness aims to enhance the hearer's positive self-perception and to improve friendship relations between interlocutors. A participant mostly used this strategy in the Discord servers' interaction to get positive responses from other participants, such as giving approval, exaggerating, and even using in-group identity markers to bond a relationship. The data for each strategy were summarized in the table below.

Table 3. Positive Politeness Strategies Used in the Genshin Impact Discord Server

No	Politeness Strategy	Utterance	Explanation
5	Notice/Attend to Hearer	Keep practicing in your free time... I'm sure you'll ace it next time	Shows encouragement and attention to the hearer's issue.
6	Notice/Attend to Hearer	I'm noticing you have changed your PFP...	Remarks on the hearer's appearance to show attentiveness.
7	Exaggerate (Approval)	Oh, that's cool!	Enthusiastic approval with exaggeration using exclamation.
8	Exaggerate (Approval)	Your cuteness hits me like an arrow in my lower ribs	Dramatic hyperbole is used to express exaggerated affection.

No	Politeness Strategy	Utterance	Explanation
9	Intensify Interest to Hearer	Did you know Raiden's sword comes from her heart?	The speaker shares trivia to pique the hearer's interest.
10	Use In-Group Identity Marker	What do you expect, silly?	A term of endearment used to strengthen group identity.
11	Seek Agreement	Iron what?	Repetition suggests seeking alignment in a playful tone.
12	Avoid Disagreement	Not really, but if you like her, then play her	Soft disagreement using a hedge and allowance.
13	Presuppose/Raise Common Ground	Did you know Raiden's sword comes from her heart?	Shared game trivia is assumed to connect with the hearer.
14	Joke	Enough to understand what love and heartbreak man /j	Self-deprecating humor tagged with '/j' to imply jest.
15	Assert S' Knowledge of H's Wants	I know you didn't want it, but at least you got the best standard lightcone.	The speaker recognizes the hearer's disappointment and reassures.
16	Offer and Promise	I will try to remember to do it later	Promises cooperation in future action.
17	Be Optimistic	You'll help me, right?	Optimistically assumes the hearer will participate.
18	Include S and H in Activity	Let's just have a normal conversation actually	Inclusive language to invite mutual participation.
19	Give Reason	Why don't you go out and take a deep breath?	The suggestion was softened with a reason to show concern.
20	Assert Reciprocity	I can let you farm if you'll help me find two Tsurumi time challenges	Mutual cooperation is expressed with conditional exchange.

Table 3 shows the *Notice/Attend to Hearer* strategy (Datums 5–6), which shows how speakers paid close attention to the hearer’s feelings and circumstances. In Datum 5, the speaker acknowledged the hearer’s frustration about failing a motorcycle test and offered encouragement: “*Keep practicing in your free time... I’m sure you’ll ace it next time.*” Similarly, in Datum 6, the speaker noticed and commented on the hearer’s unusual profile picture, showing attentiveness to their habits and preferences. The *Exaggerate* strategy (Datums 7–8) was used to express enthusiastic approval or affection through hyperbolic language. For example, in Datum 7, the hearer responded to a comment about language channels with “*Oh, that’s cool!*”, using an exclamation mark to convey enthusiasm. Datum 8 goes further, where the speaker dramatically expressed admiration by saying, “*Your cuteness hits me like an arrow in my lower ribs,*” which uses hyperbole to create a playful and warm interaction.

Then, some strategies aimed to engage the hearer by sparking interest or affirming group identity. In Datum 9, the speaker shared a surprising game-related fact to *Intensify Interest to Hearer*, which successfully piqued the hearer’s curiosity. Likewise, Datum 10 uses an *In-Group Identity Marker*, where the speaker affectionately calls the hearer “*silly*” to convey camaraderie. Agreement and harmony were maintained through strategies like *Seek Agreement* (Datum 11) and *Avoid Disagreement* (Datum 12). In Datum 11, the speaker echoed the hearer’s words playfully: “*Iron what?*” This repetition fosters alignment in the conversation.

Meanwhile, in Datum 12, the speaker softened disagreement by hedging and allowing the hearer to keep their preference: “*Not really, but if you like her, then play her if you want.*” Other strategies relied on shared knowledge and humor. In Datum 13, the speaker assumed a *Common Ground* by sharing trivia about the game, prompting interest and connection. Similarly, in Datum 14, humor was used to diffuse tension: “*Enough to understand what love and heartbreak man /j*”, where */j* signals a joke.

Furthermore, several strategies reflect care for the hearer’s desires and promote cooperation. For instance, in Datum 15, the speaker reassured the hearer after an undesirable outcome: “*I know you didn’t want it, but at least you got the best standard lightcone.*” The *Offer and Promise* strategy appears in Datum 16, where the speaker committed to helping later. Optimism about the hearer’s cooperation was evident in Datum 17: “*You’ll help me, right?*” and inclusivity was promoted in Datum 18: “*Let’s just have a normal conversation actually.*” Lastly, the speaker encouraged cooperation in Datums 19 and 20 by giving reasons and suggesting reciprocity. In Datum 19, the speaker proposed taking a break: “*Why don’t you go out and take a deep breath?*” In Datum 20, the speaker explicitly suggested a mutually beneficial exchange: “*I can let you farm if you’ll help me find two Tsurumi time challenges first.*”. Thus, positive politeness strategies were used in the Genshin Impact Discord Server to foster

camaraderie, maintain harmony, and encourage engagement. Whether through noticing the hearer's needs, exaggerating approval, making optimistic assumptions, or offering reciprocal help, these strategies reflect the participants' efforts to build and sustain positive interpersonal relationships in their online interactions.

Negative Politeness

The negative politeness strategy aims to demonstrate respect and establish a sense of distance between speakers and Hearers. The participants' messages on the Genshin Impact Discord server utilized negative politeness strategies, as observed in their interactions. Five out of ten strategies were found, except the imposition, state the FTA as a general rule, nominalize, go on record as incurring a debt or not indebted the hearer, and the impersonalize speaker and hearer strategy, with 21 utterances. In this case, a participant used negative politeness to soften requests or commands by making them less imposing, to acknowledge the imposition by saying sorry, and even to maintain respect in the conversation using an honorific. The data can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. Negative Politeness Strategies Used in the Genshin Impact Discord Server

No	Politeness Strategy	Utterance	Explanation
21	Conventionally Indirect	Could you help me make some teams then?	Request softened using a modal verb to minimize imposition.
22	Question and Hedge	It seems that there's some issue with your network	Use of a hedging phrase to reduce assertiveness.
23	Be Pessimistic	If it's not death-related, I'm afraid I can't help you	Politeness is expressed through conditionals and apologies.
24	Give Deference	That's very kind of you, milady...	Respectful honorific acknowledges social differences.
25	Apologize	I apologize, greetings to you and the rest who I oversaw	An apology was issued to mend oversight.
26	Apologize	Oh, I didn't mean to drag down the vibe here... sorry	Apologetic tone to show remorse for unintended disruption.

In datum 21, the speaker softened a request with a conventionally indirect phrase, using the modal “*could you*” to reduce pressure and avoid imposing. Datum 22 demonstrates using a hedge, “*it seems that,*” to make the assertion less forceful and more tentative, leaving room for alternative interpretations. In datum 23, the speaker expressed pessimism and regret by using a conditional and an apologetic phrase, minimizing the imposition by acknowledging their limitations. Datum 24 highlights deference, where the speaker addressed the hearer respectfully as “*milady,*” acknowledging a social hierarchy and showing esteem. In datum 25, an explicit apology was given to repair an oversight and recognize the hearer’s feelings. In contrast, datum 26 shows another apology, where the speaker expressed remorse for negatively affecting the group’s mood. These data collectively illustrate how negative politeness strategies helped maintain respect, minimize threats, and foster harmonious interaction in the online discourse at Genshin Impact.

Off-Record

This strategy involves indirect uses of language. Alternatively, to construct an off-record utterance, one says something that is either more general (contains less information) or different from what one means (intends to be understood). In either case, the hearer must make some inference to recover what was intended. Six out of fifteen off-record strategies were found in this, with 12 utterances: understate, overstate, tautologies, be incomplete and use ellipsis, contradictions, and rhetorical questions. The detailed explanation can be seen below.

Table 5. Off-Record Strategies Used in the Genshin Impact Discord Server

No	Politeness Strategy	Utterance	Explanation
27	Understate	Itto’s passive is quite interesting	Understatement reduces the force of expression.
28	Overstate	Geo is a sh*t element... I hate geo	Overstatement expresses exaggerated dislike humorously.
29	Tautology	Game is game	Redundant truth used to imply acceptance or complaint.
30	Tautology	Why is gaming named gaming even he’s not gaming?	Playful complaint using tautological phrasing.
31	Ellipsis	Not sure about that... nice PFP tho	An elliptical statement leaves the thought unfinished.

No	Politeness Strategy	Utterance	Explanation
32	Contradiction	Kinda yes and kinda no	A contradictory statement encourages interpretation.
33	Rhetorical Question	How could I know? I quit	A rhetorical question used to express detachment.

The off-record strategies in the Genshin Impact Discord server reflect the speakers' preference for indirectness and creativity in expressing opinions. The understatement in Datum 27 ("*Itto's passive is quite interesting*") minimizes enthusiasm, hinting at mild disapproval. Conversely, the overstatement in Datum 28 ("*Geo is a sh*t element...*") exaggerates criticism humorously to engage others. Tautologies appear in Data 29 and 30 ("*game is game,*" "*Why is gaming named gaming...*") as redundant truths to express resignation or playful complaint. Ellipsis in Datum 31 ("*Not sure about that... nice PFP tho*") leaves the thought incomplete, inviting the hearer to interpret the speaker's true sentiment. Contradiction in Datum 32 ("*Kinda yes and kinda no*") conveys ambiguity and prompts the listener to infer meaning. Finally, the rhetorical question in Datum 33 ("*How could I know? I quit*") expresses detachment without expecting an answer. These strategies show how participants employ subtle, indirect communication to maintain politeness and engage creatively in conversation.

The Factor Influencing the Use of the Strategy

In Genshin Impact's Discord channel, participants' politeness strategies are influenced by two main factors: the payoffs (a priori consideration) and the circumstances (sociological variables). The participants determined the politeness strategy for dealing with FTAs by considering certain payoffs or advantages and the relevant circumstances that would provide more benefits for them. Choosing the appropriate strategy helps the participants build mutual relationships, maintain social distance, and avoid or minimize the debt implication of FTAs, such as requests or offers.

The Payoff: A Priori Consideration

The payoff factor is commonly used in the discourse to appeal to the listener's negative face by minimizing imposition or respecting others' autonomy. Some utterances were chosen to give an example of the payoff factor in the following table.

Table 6. The Payoff factor influencing the politeness strategies used in the Genshin

Impact Discord Server			
No	Strategy	Utterance	Explanation
34	Positive Politeness (Avoid Disagreement)	Collie seems like better fit in my opinion, but it could work	A hedge is used to reduce confrontation over differing opinions.
35	Positive Politeness (Offer/Promise)	Sleep well then. Gn mods. I promise not to cause any ruckus while you are gone.	Demonstrates reassurance and respect through a joking offer.
36	Off-Record (Ellipsis)	I love Yelan...look what people see her as...	Indirect opinion through ellipsis to allow interpretation.

In datum 34, the hearer used positive politeness with the *avoid disagreement* strategy to soften a different opinion. The hedge “seems” and the phrase “but it could work” reduced potential conflict while still expressing their perspective, maintaining solidarity. Datum 35 illustrates positive politeness through an *offer/promise*. The hearer playfully reassured the speaker by promising not to cause trouble while they were away, fostering a warm and cooperative atmosphere. Lastly, datum 36 shows an *off-record* strategy using ellipsis. The speaker expressed their opinion about Yelan vaguely (“*I love Yelan... look what people see her as...*”), leaving room for the hearer to interpret and respond indirectly, which they did by shifting to other characters and avoiding direct disagreement.

In summary, the payoff factor significantly influences the choice of politeness strategies in the Genshin Impact Discord Server, as it allows speakers to minimize conflict, express solidarity, and maintain harmony in conversations. Participants strategically use hedges, offers, promises, and indirect language to appeal to the hearer’s face needs while avoiding confrontation. This finding highlights how speakers weigh the benefits of maintaining good relationships and ensuring mutual understanding when choosing how to phrase their utterances.

The Circumstances: Sociological Variables

As the second factor, sociological variables include the rank of imposition, social distance, and power. In this research, Genshin Impact’s Discord server participants mostly contain regular members and some new members. The pace of the interaction is rapidly changing with every passing second. The language employed is semiformal, suited for peer interaction and casual exchanges. Some participants discussed unrelated topics about the game, such as food, origin, daily

life, etc. The participant's personal information remains confidential, which makes other participants ask about the age in the discourse or adopt a more casual tone. The three classifications of sociological variables can be seen below.

Table 7. The Sociological variables factor influencing the politeness strategies used in the Genshin Impact Discord Server

No	Strategy	Utterance	Explanation
37	Social Distance	"Man I'm sorry man. I said it wrong"	Informal addresses ("man") show familiarity and close social distance between participants.
38	Relative Power	"Bro is being haunted by Xiangling"	Casual peer-to-peer language, indicating no power difference and fostering sympathy or humor.
39	Rank of Imposition	"Please stick to English in the Teyvat channels."	A polite request from an admin, demonstrating a high-ranking imposition mitigated with "please" and a respectful tone.

The sociological variables observed in the Genshin Impact Discord interactions illustrate how social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition influence politeness strategies. Datum 37 shows how low social distance is reflected in informal language, as the hearer repeatedly uses the word “*man*” to convey familiarity and camaraderie between participants. Datum 38 highlights relative power, where casual, humorous language such as “*Bro is being haunted*” signals equal standing between the speaker and hearer, fostering peer-to-peer rapport. Lastly, datum 39 demonstrates the rank of imposition: the speaker, an admin, mitigates a high-ranking request (“*Please stick to English*”) with polite language and a respectful address (“*young lady*”), showing sensitivity to the hearer’s feelings despite enforcing a rule. In conclusion, the participants adapted their language based on social distance, power relations, and the burden of the request, ensuring interactions remained respectful and cooperative even in a dynamic online setting.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to explore two primary research questions: 1) What types of politeness strategies are used in the Genshin Impact Discord server? and (2) What factors influence the use of these strategies in this online gaming community? Through a pragmatic lens grounded in Brown

and Levinson's (1987) theory, this study identified the strategy employed and the contextual variables influencing its application. In response to the first research question, the analysis revealed four types of politeness strategies, from the most frequent to the least: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record, and off-record. Among these, positive politeness was most frequently observed, aligning with prior studies emphasizing its role in fostering solidarity in online communities. Negative politeness and off-record strategies were used in contexts requiring deference or ambiguity. Bald on-record strategies, though direct, occurred in urgent or emotionally charged contexts. These findings demonstrate how participants strategically navigate digital discourse to maintain relationships and mitigate face threats. These findings align with prior research (Assyari & Djauhari, 2025; Handayani et al., 2022; Lukman et al., 2024; Syah, 2021) that highlights positive politeness's dominance in traditional, and digital interaction platforms. This frequent use reflects how participants seek to maintain friendly and cooperative relationships in the discourse, suggesting the creation of a pseudo-familial space despite anonymity and geographic distance.

Regarding the second research question, two influencing factors were found: payoff (a priori consideration) and sociological variables - specifically, social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition. The choice of politeness strategy often stemmed from participants' desire to reduce imposition or foster inclusion. For example, positive politeness was commonly employed when participants offered help or comfort, while negative politeness was used to maintain respect in hierarchical or formal contexts. These results support Brown and Levinson's original framework and demonstrate its applicability to modern digital discourse. Interestingly, although less frequent, the use of off-record and bald on-record strategies served specific functions. Off-record strategies allowed participants to express opinions indirectly, preserving social harmony. Meanwhile, bald-on-record strategies—typically more direct—were used in urgent or emotionally charged situations. These contextual applications reflect similar dynamics identified in Swari et al. (2024) and Budiarta et al. (2024), though the informal nature of Discord allowed for more relaxed interaction compared to formal or scripted media like films and interviews.

This study contributes new insights into how online game communities negotiate politeness, especially in real-time discourse environments where cultural, emotional, and strategic considerations intersect. For practitioners such as moderators or platform designers, these insights can inform community management strategies that promote respectful dialogue. For instance, training bots or designing prompts that mirror positive politeness strategies may help maintain a healthy discourse environment.

However, some drawbacks occurred in this research, as the theory was based on outdated politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987). Brown & Levinson's model is useful but criticized for its ethnocentrism and dependence on stable social hierarchies (Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003). Scholars argue that it inadequately accounts for cultural variation, gender differences, and the dynamic nature of digital communication. For example, Locher & Graham (2010) emphasize that politeness is negotiated in interaction rather than fixed, and that online environments reshape how politeness is enacted. Similarly, Herring (2004) highlights how computer-mediated communication (CMC) differs from face-to-face interaction, with affordances like anonymity, asynchronicity, and multimodality influencing politeness strategies. Sifianou (2019) notes that the lack of visual cues online can lead to heightened politeness and increased impoliteness, depending on context.

In addition, another limitation was the data collection, which was restricted to one specific channel (Jeaneral-chat) within a limited time frame, which may not fully represent broader or longitudinal patterns across the entire Discord community. Furthermore, the lack of user demographic data (e.g., cultural background, gender) limits the ability to draw culturally nuanced interpretations. The nature of Discord, which is text-based, semi-anonymous, and fast-paced, also means that some intended meanings may have been missed or misinterpreted. Future research could expand on these findings by exploring cross-cultural comparisons of politeness in Discord channels from different games or regions. Additionally, examining voice-based interactions or integrating longitudinal studies may offer deeper insights into evolving patterns of digital politeness. Investigating how users adapt politeness strategies in response to moderation policies or AI-generated messages may also be fruitful areas of inquiry.

CONCLUSION

The findings revealed four types of politeness strategies on Genshin Impact's Discord server-specific channel. There were 113 utterances in total that employed the politeness strategies. The first strategy was bald on record, with 15 utterances occurring bald on record. There were 14 strategies of positive politeness found on the channel, with 65 utterances of positive politeness. The strategies of negative politeness include only 5 strategies, with 21 utterances occurring in negative politeness, and the last strategy was off-record politeness, which in this case included 6 strategies and a total of 12 utterances occurred off-record.

Furthermore, several factors that influenced the choice of strategies were found. There were payoffs: a priori consideration, and the circumstances (sociological variables). The analysis indicates that politeness strategies and their influencing factors are related among the participants.

This research concluded that politeness strategies in online game discourse rooms were not used arbitrarily but were influenced by pragmatic considerations and social variables embedded in the interaction.

REFERENCES

- Ammaida, Y. (2020). Politeness Strategies of The Comments Toward Trump's Instagram Post on "International Women's Day." *Mahakarya: Student's Journal of Cultural Sciences*, 1(1), 24–36. <https://doi.org/10.22515/MJMIB.V1I1.2743>
- Assyari, M. Z. A., & Djauhari, O. S. (2025). Analyzing Positive Politeness in Self-Introductions by Players on the Albion Online Forum. *Jejak Digital: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*, 1(4), 1598–1607. <https://doi.org/10.63822/W94BBR29>
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage (Studies in Interactional Sociolinguistics 4). In J. J. Gumperz (Ed.), *Cambridge University Press*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587263>
- Budiarta, I. W., Ngurah, G., Rajistha, A., Gusti, I., Sri, A., Jayantini, R., & Kasni, N. W. (2024). General Politeness and Impoliteness in Mobile Gaming Communication. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.22034/IJSCL.2024.2040802.3691>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6th ed.). Sage Publication, Inc.
- Fridolini, F., Arisena, D. A., & Idawati, K. (2021). Politeness Strategies Analysis Reflected in Little Women Movie by Greta Gerwig. *Getsempena English Education Journal*, 8(2), 267–281. <https://doi.org/10.46244/GEEJ.V8I2.1375>
- Handayani, R., Rachmawati, R., & Arif, T. Z. Z. Al. (2022). Politeness Strategies Conveyed by The Students in Online Discussions. *JELT (Jambi-English Language Teaching)*, 6(2), 74–87. <https://doi.org/10.22437/JELT.V6I2.16741>
- Herring, S. C. (2004). Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis: An Approach to Researching Online Behavior. In B. S, K. R, & G. JH (Eds.), *Designing for Virtual Communities in the Service of Learning* (pp. 338–376). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511805080.016>
- Hutahaean, D. T., Herman, H., & Girsang, A. F. F. (2021). An Analysis of Politeness Strategies Found in Pesbukers Variety Show. *Wanastra: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 13(1), 39–46. <https://doi.org/10.31294/W.V13I1.9218>
- Kádár, D. Z. (2017). Politeness, Impoliteness and Ritual: Maintaining the Moral Order in Interpersonal Interaction. In *Politeness, Impoliteness and Ritual: Maintaining the Moral Order in*

- Interpersonal Interaction*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781107280465>
- Locher, M. A., & Graham, S. L. (2010). Interpersonal pragmatics. In *Interpersonal Pragmatics*. De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110214338/PDF>
- Lukman, L., Merling, A., Haryeni, H., Hasjim, M., & Indarwati, I. (2024). Eco-Humanistic Politeness and Addressing Strategies in Lecturer-Student WhatsApp Interactions: A Pragmatic Perspective. *Journal of Ecobumanism*, 3(4), 2169–2187. <https://doi.org/10.62754/JOE.V3I4.3714>
- Miles, M. ., A.M, H., & Saldana, J. (2014). Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook. In *SAGE Publications, Inc* (3rd Editio). SAGE Publications. <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/qualitative-data-analysis/book246128>
- Mills, S. (2003). Gender and Politeness. In *Gender and Politeness*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511615238>
- Mojo, J. K., Tulung, G. J., Kalangi, L. M. V., & Imbang, D. (2021). Positive politeness strategies of Tonado Javaness (Jaton) community. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S1), 1100–1109. <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5ns1.1493>
- Sifianou, M. (2019). Im/politeness and in/civility: A neglected relationship? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 147, 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.PRAGMA.2019.05.008>
- Silitonga, D. H. (2022). An Analysis of The Politeness Strategy used in Mata Najwa Talk Show on Trans7. *JETAL: Journal of English Teaching & Applied Linguistic*, 3(2), 17–24. <https://doi.org/10.36655/jetal.v3i2.659>
- Swari, P. A. A. G., Netra, I. M., & Indriani, K. S. (2024). Orienting Negative Politeness Strategies Towards the Hearer Negative Face in Disney's Frozen Movie. *VISA: Journal of Vision and Ideas*, 4(3), 1385–1391. <https://doi.org/10.47467/VISA.V4I3.2821>
- Syah, N. A. (2021). Politeness Strategy Performed in Satu Jam Lebih Dekat Talk Show on TV One: A Pragmatic Approach. *ELTALL (English Language Teaching, Applied Linguistics and Literature)*, 2(1), 18–28.
- Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511615184>