



PREFACE

THEME: Language, Communication, and Technology: Crossing Borders, Connecting Minds

It is with great honor and excitement that I introduce this Special Issue, which is published in conjunction with the International Conference on Multidisciplinary Approaches in Language (ICMAL2024) and the Language, Innovation, Invention, and Design (LIID2024) conference. These dynamic events, held under the overarching theme "*Language, Communication, and Technology: Crossing Borders, Connecting Minds*," serve as a vibrant platform for intellectual exchange and innovation in the rapidly evolving fields of language, communication, and technology. The thematic focus of this Special Issue reflects the core mission of ICMAL and LIID: fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and encouraging fresh perspectives in applied language studies and the integration of technology in language education. By bringing together language practitioners, educators, researchers, and postgraduate students from around the globe, this publication seeks to capture the diverse and forward-thinking contributions that were presented at these conferences.

The articles featured in this issue span a broad range of topics, grouped under two significant sub-themes; a) Applied Language Studies which explore various dimensions of language as a tool for professional and intercultural communication, alongside its role in teaching, learning, and assessment. They offer valuable insights into how language can bridge cultural divides, enhance professional practices, and foster global connections, as well as b) Innovation and Technology in Language Learning which reflects transformative potential of technology, this section highlights pioneering research and applications of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), mobile apps, gamification, and artificial intelligence (AI) in language education. These contributions illustrate how emerging technologies are reshaping the way languages are taught, learned, and experienced.

As a Guest Editor, I am deeply impressed by the diversity and quality of the submissions. The innovative research and creative solutions presented in this issue demonstrate the commitment of our global academic community to addressing the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of language and technology. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the authors for their outstanding contributions, to the reviewers for their meticulous feedback, and to the organizing committee for their tireless efforts in curating this conference and subsequent publication. I am confident that the articles in this Special Issue will inspire further dialogue, research, and innovation, contributing meaningfully to the advancement of language, communication, and technology.

Thank you for joining us on this intellectual journey.

Dr. Haida Umiera Hashim

Guest Chief Editor

Special Issue: *Language, Communication, and Technology: Crossing Borders, Connecting Minds*

ICMAL2024 & LIID2024

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(Im)Politeness in Accepting Compliments and Making Refusals through Polite-Nopoly Game

Nur Asyrani Che Ismail*
nurasyrani@uitm.edu.my
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa
Universiti Teknologi MARA

Hanna Insyirah Mohd Sukri
hannainsyirah@uitm.edu.my
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa
Universiti Teknologi MARA

Noorfarida Filzah Mohd Sobri Paridaluddin
faridafilzah@uitm.edu.my
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa
Universiti Teknologi MARA

Haida Umiera Hashim
haidaumiera@uitm.edu.my
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa
Universiti Teknologi MARA

Anealka Aziz Hussin
anealka@uitm.edu.my
Akademi Pengajian Bahasa
Universiti Teknologi MARA

Corresponding author*

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ABSTRACT

Communication is one of the essential mediums of interaction towards fulfilling various communicative purposes such as requesting, asking, apologizing and many others. In communication, individuals demonstrate different communication styles of either with good manners, or commonly referred to as polite, or rather impolite. Previous research has utilised frameworks of politeness empirically but there is a lack of integration in terms of innovation to identify politeness among users. Thus, an innovation called Polite-Nopoly, a board game incorporating multiplayer-basis, turn-taking styles, and a scoreboard which assisted in identifying the types of politeness strategies and factors of using them based on several daily life situations is designed and developed. The development of the game is based on the ADDIE Model which comprises needs analysis, design and development process, implementation, then evaluation. The structure and concept of the game focuses on using language in response to compliments and refusals. The responses provided by the players are recorded in the scoreboard and further analysed based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) Model of Politeness Theory. The findings showcase that the Polite-Nopoly game is compatible with being a platform in identifying politeness strategies used by the players which most players generally express positive politeness strategy through gratitude when receiving compliments and using negative politeness strategies by apologising mostly in making refusals. In addition to this, the choice of the politeness strategies is influenced by social distance and social power factors. Therefore, using the Polite-Nopoly game has the potential to be used by language users towards discovering their politeness style especially when entertaining compliments and refusals.

Keywords: politeness, compliment, refusal, ADDIE model, innovation

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the essential mediums of interaction towards fulfilling various communicative purposes like requesting, asking, apologizing and many others. In communicating any messages, individuals demonstrate different communication styles of either being one with good manners or commonly referred to as a polite person or rather an impolite person. In the nature of communication, the incorporation of language and politeness is inseparable as this bonding becomes an indicator of an appropriateness of interactional style. Omar et al. (2018) refer to politeness as an expression of respectful behaviour towards others. This includes the ways one is using courteous language with insensitive words, the right tone and most importantly not offending others. Shen et al. (2023) also mentioned that courteous language may also provide persons the space they need to consider other people's feelings, understand their needs, and stop from speaking for themselves. It is a space to show the act of being respectful and considerate, adding a layer that fosters positive interactions.

In interaction, communicating the language requires the performance of an action such as making a proposal to someone, asking for help, and many others which this refers to a concept of speech act. Searle (1971) lists five important functions of speech acts such as assertive, expressive, declarative, directive and performative which are carried out in one's life. Speech acts comprise real-life encounters and need not only understanding of the language, but also the right use of that

language within a certain culture (Alikulova, 2022). The style of using language determines one's attitude of speaking. For example, if the speaker uses polite and polished language, he or she is deemed polite but if the language employed is offensive to the listener, he or she is called rude (Azman et al., 2020). Thus, politeness is a significant element in language to ensure the appropriate ways of speaking to one another. This includes certain discourse markers, a right way of using tone of voice and an appropriate form of address based on social distance (Daulay et al., 2022).

Speech acts like receiving compliments and making refusals are among the common speech acts encountered by individuals in their daily life interaction. These two speech acts demonstrate contradictory responses where receiving compliments is always perceived as a pleasure while making refusals needs to deal with challenging outcomes as it is easily regarded as an offence towards others. Al-Qarni (2020) stated speakers employ many terminology and language structures to express praises and reply to them. Despite its nature of giving a good sense to those receiving it, expression of politeness is another element required to ensure an appropriate compliment response to be made. Although compliments always convey admiration to the interlocutors directly or indirectly (Zatulhimmi & Muslem, 2022), it can still cause the interlocutors to feel a lack of positivity or confidence (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For this matter, instilling politeness can help them to feel better and appreciative with the compliments.

Meanwhile, in making refusals, politeness becomes another crucial aspect to be displayed. This is due to the fact that refusals are a very complex speech act, primarily because they can involve extensive negotiations and face-saving manoeuvres (Bangun & Stevani, 2020). Refusal appears as another side of language behaviour, in which speakers manage the complexities of politeness and interpersonal dynamics to effectively negotiate their communicative intention (Hargie, 2021). Since refusal is a face threatening behaviour, politeness is required to further soften any damage done (Nuzulia & Agustina, 2022) which can tarnish the reputation or face of other speakers. Politeness is then crucially needed in both speech acts of receiving compliments and making refusals. Without the inclusion and expression of politeness can be misinterpreted as accusing ones of being rude or impolite.

This study will then seek to have an extensive observation on identifying the politeness used in receiving compliments and making refusals through the application of a board game concept entitled Polite-Nopoly. It is hoped that this study is able to identify types of politeness strategies based on the Model of Politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) and further to discover factors of politeness strategies choice among participants. The study explores how individuals navigate these situations, examining the impact of cultural norms, personal values, and social contexts. By understanding the nuances of politeness in these scenarios, individuals will be able to identify effective communication tools to build stronger connections and navigate social interactions with greater confidence.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The methodology and approach employed for this innovation is the Design and Developmental Research (DDR), with the instructional tool used being the ADDIE Model Type 1. This model consists of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation phases, which guide the design and development process of this innovation. The research design process follows a qualitative paradigm that aligns with the research questions' nature. It comprises three phases, each taking a distinct approach to achieve its objectives: starting with the analysis phase, followed by the design and development phase, and concluding with the implementation and evaluation phase.

This innovation involved three main phases:

1. Analysis Phase: this phase included the process of the analysis of the respondents' knowledge about different interaction styles as in receiving compliments and making refusals.
2. Design and Developmental Phase: this phase involved the process of designing and developing the board game content and media, then gathering the formative evaluation involving the experts review on the designed and developed board game. "Polite-Nopoly Game" is an innovation of a board game concept whereby three players will take turns to accomplish the given tasks which incorporates a Pragmatic approach. The focus is on language use for compliment and refusal purposes.
3. Implementation and Evaluation Phase: this phase involved the process of implementing and evaluating the designed and developed board game in terms of its usefulness.

Implementation Procedure of Polite-Nopoly

"Polite-Nopoly" Instructions :

The game will start with 3 players at one time.

The players will have to vote for the turn taking by rolling the dice.

The players will take turns accordingly.

"Polite-Nopoly" Guidelines :

This game is a board-game concept where it provides 3 blocks representing 3 players, dice, Mystery cards and Love Cards.

There are 21 boxes on the board for the players to complete.

All boxes are divided according to two different themes which are Compliment (C) and Refusal (R).

Each box has different tasks for the players to accomplish where they have to respond to the task according to the given themes. The examples of the task are as follow:

Compliment theme (C)

Instruction:

The player needs to respond to a compliment given.

Example:

Your best friends said, “You are very smart!”.

Refusal theme (R)

Instruction:

The player needs to make a refusal based on the task given.

Example:

Your best friend invited you for her wedding next month. How do you turn down the invitation?

Say it in the form of a dialogue, not an explanation.

If the player gets any of the Mystery or Love cards, each card displays the following tasks for the player to accomplish.

Mystery Card

Instruction:

The player needs to state Yes/No/short answer (if asked) to the question or statement related to the factors of responding to compliment or making refusal.

Example:

(C): Do you prefer to accept compliments? Yes/No

(R): Do you think it’s hard to refuse? Yes/No

Love Card

Instruction:

The player needs to state a Yes/No/short answer (if asked) to the question or statement related to the personality test of them when responding to a compliment or making a refusal.

Example:

(C): I am very open minded to accept compliments from everyone? Yes/No

(R): I am a direct person when making a refusal? Yes/No

Scoreboard: Evaluation Procedure of Polite-Nopoly”

All responses answered by the respondents throughout the whole session of “Polite-Nopoly” game will be recorded by the researchers and moved into the scoreboard with an Excel Sheet transcribing all related responses made by the players. At the end of the game session round, the respondents will be informed of the results, displaying their personality and attitude towards responding to compliments and making refusals.

Research Sampling

This innovation was employed to 30 undergraduate students at a public university in Shah Alam, Selangor for both needs analysis and implementation, also evaluation phase. The choice of sampling method is on a voluntary basis. In the meantime, the second phase, namely the design and development phase, necessitates a smaller number of respondents. Two expert reviewers were invited to go through the board game prototype and provide feedback on the content and design of the designed and developed board game in the form provided.

RESULTS

The transcribed and recorded verbatim data in the scoreboard were further based on the Model of Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In this model, there are five politeness strategies involved which are positive, negative, bald-on record, bald-off record and do not perform FTA at all. Therefore, in answering to the first research question, the identification of politeness strategies will be based on this model, while the second research question will be adapting a thematic analysis to further understand the factors involved in receiving compliments and making refusals. Table 1 below shows the summary of the politeness strategies from the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987).

Table 1. Summary of politeness strategies from Model of Politeness
(Brown & Levinson, 1987)

No	Abb	Politeness Strategies
<i>Positive</i>		
1.	NH	Notice, attend to H (interest, goods, needs, wants)
2.	EX	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)
3.	I	Intensify interest to H
4.	IM	Use in-group identity markers
5.	SA	Seek agreement
6.	AD	Avoid disagreement
7.	PP	Presuppose/assert/ raise common group
8.	J	Joke
9.	A	Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants
10.	O	Offer, promise
11.	OP	Be optimistic
12.	B	Include both S and H in the activity
13.	OR	Assume or assert reciprocity
14.	AR	Give (or ask for) reasons
15.	R	Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation, *appreciation)
16.	GRT	Expressing appreciation/gratitude/wishes/prayers/compliments

Negative

1. IDC Be conventionally indirect
2. QH Question/hedge
3. PS Be pessimistic
4. MI Minimise the imposition
5. DF Give deference
6. AP Apology
7. SH Impersonalise S and H: avoid the pronoun 'I' and 'you'
8. GR State the FTA as general rule
9. N Nominalise
10. IDH Go on record as incurring debt, or as not indebting H
11. SY Ask for sympathy or understanding
12. SG Suggestion

Bald off record

1. GH Give hints (motives for doing A or conditions for A)
2. GC Give association clues
3. PRP Presuppose
4. US Understate
5. OS Overstate
6. T Use tautologies
7. C Use contradictions
8. IR Be ironic
9. M Use metaphors
10. RQ Use rhetorical questions
11. AM Be ambiguous
12. V Be vague
13. OG Over-generalize
14. DH Displace H

15. IE Be incomplete, use ellipsis
Bald on record
 1. UD Great urgency or desperation
 2. AG Speak in maximum efficiency, found in attention getters
 3. TO Task-oriented, instructions
 4. S Sympathetic, advise, warning
 5. GP Granting permission for something
 6. IV Invitations
 7. WE Welcoming
 8. G Greetings and farewell
-

From the board game, the players elicited 24 responses for the speech act of accepting compliments and 47 responses for speech act of making refusals. In both types of speech acts, the use of positive politeness strategies is the most preferred strategy demonstrated by all players with 47 occurrences (66.2%), followed by negative politeness strategies with 23 occurrences (32.4%). The use of bald on record strategy is impractical as no players employ such strategy while only 1 occurrence (1.4%) observed in bald off strategy. Table 2 and Table 3 show the overall findings of politeness strategies used based on accepting compliments and making refusals respectively.

Table 2. Politeness strategies of accepting compliments

POSITIVE (Total=19)						NEGATIVE (Total=4)		BOR (Total=1)
NH	IM	O	OP	AR	GRT	IDC	DF	US
1	1	1	3	1	12	2	2	1

(BOR: Bald off record)

Table 3. Politeness strategies of making refusals

POSITIVE (Total=28)							NEGATIVE (Total=19)				
NH	EX	IM	A	O	AR	GRT	QH	PS	DF	AP	SG
1	4	3	2	4	10	4	5	1	4	6	3

Overall findings from Table 2 and 3 show that not all politeness strategies are demonstrated by the players. Both speech acts of accepting compliments and making refusals employ positive politeness strategies which are expression of gratitude, using reasons and asserting reciprocity. Meanwhile, from negative politeness strategies, expression of regrets which is apologising and using deference are used quite often.

Politeness Strategies in Accepting Compliments

The domination of positive politeness in this speech act is rather opposite to Frislando's (2022) study where she observed the compliment responses from movie characters. The present innovation somehow rather looked at the real scenario which further explained the use of gratitude and being optimistic when accepting compliments. The common response obtained when accepting compliments is 'thank you'. From the politeness model, such expression is a form of gratitude which further supports the positive face of the other speakers (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The consistent finding is observed from Zatulhimmi and Muslem's (2022) as well as Bangun and Stevani's (2020) where a token of appreciation which is similar to expression of gratitude is the most used strategy by participants. The second preferred strategy is being optimistic where Brown and Levinson (1987) define this strategy as the cooperation displayed by both speakers due to having mutual interest. From this board game, it shows that most players demonstrated a positive reaction when accepting the compliments through acknowledging the similar weightage of compliments back to the speaker rather than just embracing it for themselves. As for the negative politeness strategy, the act of being indirect when accepting compliments is the most frequent to be done by the players, especially when they received it from the superiors.

Politeness Strategies in Making Refusals

The use of gratitude and reasons are the most common positive politeness strategies used for making refusals (Mohd Jalis et al., 2019; Saad et al., 2020). These two strategies are crucial especially at sustaining positive and stable relationships between speakers. Since refusal is a face threatening act, expression of gratitude through saying 'thank you' and explaining the situations can significantly minimize the damage done to the other speakers. As for negative politeness strategies, the use of apologizing is frequently used by the players. It is a form of regret and responsibility which the speaker has to bear (Brown & Levinson, 1987) when they have to turn down one's offer, request or invitation. Thus, through apologizing, the impact of refusal is rather softened.

Factors of Politeness Strategies Preference

In both speech acts of accepting compliments and making refusals, social distance, social status and context are the crucial factors in determining the use of politeness strategies. It is discovered that the closer persons the players have to deal with encourage them to be extra polite and indirect. This is supported by Terada et al. (2021) which asserts that the use of indirectness as a politeness strategy is an implication of trust and intimacy. Therefore, the responses elicited tend to be lengthy and wordy. The same condition is applied during communication with people of higher status and wider social distance. Other than that, context, as addressed by Isabella et al. (2022), is another factor that also influences the use of politeness strategies. In the study, it is apparent that if the compliments made are related to the players' personality and traits or if the situation that required

refusals was not urgent in nature, the players will comfortably accept the compliments and make refusal respectively. This aligns with the pragmatic concept of the interrelationship between semantics and world knowledge, emphasising the importance of context within the realm of communication (Aulia et al., 2019). In short, players' acceptance of compliments or refusal of invitations is influenced by their social proximity and their interpretation of utterances which is shaped by contextual meaning, as theorised by Thomas (2014).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Polite-Nopoly board game effectively demonstrates the application of politeness strategies in social interactions. During gameplay, players produced numerous responses for both accepting compliments and making refusals. The data revealed a strong preference for positive politeness strategies, which were the most frequently used. Negative politeness strategies were also commonly employed. In contrast, the bald-on-record strategy was not used at all, and the bald-off-record strategy was observed only once. These findings also highlight the factors of politeness used within interactions which include hierarchical and societal status, which are related to culture and societal expectation. This echoes other studies that emphasise how the differences of status may also affect individuals in demonstrating politeness (Al-Ghamdi & Alrefaee, 2020; Astia, 2020).

This board game highlights the practical application and understanding of politeness strategies by players. Polite-Nopoly proves to be a valuable educational tool for teaching and exploring the nuances of politeness in communication. In addition, incorporating this game into the educational setting can help students to improve their communication skills, particularly in recognising the effective politeness strategies. This eventually becomes a tool for cultural awareness and is a valuable source for teaching the nuances of politeness in interactions.

Based on the findings of this study, the game can be a valuable tool for language learners and educators, specifically, to explore and understand politeness strategies. Individuals can gain insights on their own politeness styles and the factors that affect the respective styles by engaging in the gameplay. Future research can delve deeper into the specific politeness strategies and may also consider analysing the differences of the politeness styles across multiple cultural contexts, languages, or range of age.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Authors' Contributions

Abstract, N.F; Introduction, H.I.; methodology, H.U.; findings and discussion, N.A.; formal analysis, N.A.;resources, A.A.;writing—original draft preparation, N.A., H.I., H.U., and N.F.; writing—review and editing, H.U. and N.F.; project administration, N.A., and H.I. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.