

The Face and Politeness on Philippine Press Briefings: A Content Analysis

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Abstract

Face of the speaker and hearer matters in a communication. This qualitative study employing the content analysis was conducted to understand the different types of face threatening acts and politeness strategies in Philippine Press Briefings. There were 12 corpora used in this study. Results revealed that Face Threatening Acts have impacts on the hearer and speaker's face. This study found two types of faces to the hearer's face. First is the negative face and followed by the positive face. Each has its own elements which provided wider perspectives on the influence of language in the contexts of discourse. From the corpora, there is only one face which is the negative face. In particular, this presented about the expression of thanks. Moreover, the politeness strategies identified were bald on, positive, negative, and off-record. Face Threatening Acts transpired in the Press Briefings of the Philippine Malacañang Palace. Each face was threatened or affected by the exchange of discourses. It can be noted that speaker and hearer's echelon matters in the presentation of faces. One has the control and the other has to follow. This manifested that imposition changed someone's face. Furthermore, different elements were indicated in each of the politeness strategies. The utilization of politeness markers makes a difference in preserving and affecting the face of the speaker and the interlocutor. Notwithstanding, this concludes that press briefings are rich sources of information that may deepen the explanation of Face Threatening Acts as well as the politeness strategies.

Keywords: Press briefing, Face threatening acts, Politeness strategies, Negative face, Positive face

Introduction

Everything that a person utters has effects on the interlocutors. Thus, it is a must to consider the feelings so that these could not cause negative face to the hearer or to the speaker. Positive face corroborates on how the speaker want to be admired, looked, and respected. Meanwhile, negative face occurs when one needs free from imposition and autonomy. Similarly, face threatening acts can be found in different media such as the press briefings which is usually provided by the government to provide the necessary and relevant information to the members of the press.

As defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) defined face threatening acts (FTAs) whose face is being threatened and which type of face is being threatened which composed the positive or negative face. Acts that threaten an addressee's positive face included acts such as complaints, criticisms, accusations, and interruptions. Meanwhile, an act that threatens addressee's negative face may be an offer and promise. Despite the difference of power between interlocutors, it was suggested that speakers with higher status may use politeness strategies in their speech compare with those in the lower class.

Hence, the concept of power is believed to closely correlate with negative politeness of not wanting to impose to others and allow them to have the freedom to act. For Liu (2005) defines power as a status on a hierarchy from powerful to powerless. Rank of imposition is necessary in choosing politeness strategies used especially in performing request. It can be said that the greater the request is, the more respectful one must be because it may be inconvenient for the hearer or bringing them into trouble (Santosa & Iskandar, 2022).

Moreover, Face Threatening Acts during the online classes indicated the power of the teacher which had the impact on the negative face of the hearer (Santosa & Iskandar, 2022). Also, students utilized impolite strategies such as bald on record, positive, negative, and sarcasm (Permana et al., 2021). This theoretical framework has been found useful in explaining debates during the presidential candidate debate in the United States of America as revealed by the study of Adi (2021). The findings of Tsoumou (2021) indicated that people tried to employ varied strategies in intensifying impoliteness as they responded to Facebook posts.

The present study looked into the different aspects of Face Threatening Acts as well as the politeness strategies found on press briefings. Usually, people responded to these by posting on their social media accounts questioning the government programs. Without knowing, the statements of the spokesperson already made an effect on the face of the interlocutors. This tried to build a gap in the local context. Most of the studies on politeness theory are foreign (Ambuyo et al., 2011; Darong et al., 2022; Dewi, 2022; Gusthini et al., 2022). Hence, this study paved the way for presentation of this handiwork in the local parlance.

Similarly, this study gave a total understanding about the applicability of politeness theory in the discourse. It can add to the bodies of knowledge and could provide better opportunities for pedagogy. In the same manner, this will guide speakers as they respond to questions. Hence, this can be crucial to classroom interactions especially on teachers' dealing with students during the teaching-learning process. More importantly, this will guide people to as they respond to questions raised. The aforementioned rationale served the source of motivation for pursuing this study.

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative study employing content analysis aimed at determining the Face Threatening Acts by Brown and Levinson (1978) found in press briefings of the Malacañang Palace. Specifically, it intended to answer the following questions:

1. What face threatening acts are found in press briefings; and
2. What politeness strategies are found in press briefings?

Objectives of the Study

This qualitative study employing the content analysis was conducted to understand the different types of face threatening acts and their corresponding meaning. Also, this determined the different politeness strategies that are found on press briefings. These are those delivered by the Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on the Peoples Television (PTV 4). Topics were on the aspects of the fight of the Philippines on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused at determining the different faces on face threatening acts by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). In addition, this study uncovered the different politeness strategies embedded on the press briefings of the Malacañang Palace. The press briefings are the media conference which address questions from the members of the Philippine media. There were 12 corpora used taken from the official YouTube Channel of the Peoples Television (PTV4). All of which covered during the times of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines.

Methodology

This study employed the qualitative-content analysis as the method of gathering and analyzing the data. Qualitative research has been defined as a methodology that deals with human experiences where it explores using phenomenology, case study, narratology, as well as grounded theory (Crabtree & Milelr, 2022; Flick, 2022; Jackson & Mazzei, 2022). Conversely, there are other processes where texts and other aspects of language studies need the in-depth meanings of texts that may have impacts in the society (Hersh et al., 2022; Stickler & Hampel, 2023).

Indeed, content analysis is a qualitative methodology wherein the main tool for collection of the data would be books, newspapers, magazines, speeches, and interviews and the like (Vears & Gillam, 2022). By using the qualitative approach, content analysis focuses on understanding and analyzing the underlying meanings from the corpora (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The purpose of using this content analysis is to determine the underlying effects of the communication content (Goksu et al., 2022).

In this regard, this paper was qualitative since there are no statistical analysis to be involved. Likewise, it employed the content analysis since the press briefings were used as the source of identifying the two faces of acts. Another, this merely interprets the data based on the contexts of the lens which serves as the guidance to the researcher in giving meaning to the texts.

Sources of Data

The main source of the data was the PTV 4 videos on the YouTube. These were the press briefings made by the Malacañang Palace especially by the Presidential Spokesperson during the height of COVID-19 in the Philippines. As well, these served as the corpora of the

study. These the best sources of explaining the occurrence of Face Threatening Acts wherein the mode of questioning and responses indicated the occurrence of this linguistic phenomenon.

Sampling Technique

The researcher employed the purposive sampling. Specifically, the corpora were taken from the official YouTube Channel of the PTV 4. These covered the periods of 2020-2021 where cases of COVID-19 in the Philippines were at its highest level. There were 10 recorded press briefings used in identifying the different aspects of Face Threatening Acts by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) as the main framework for the analysis. These were taken during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic since it explained the timeliness of the data and most there was the urgency for the government to provide information to the people every now and then.

Procedure of the Study

The following procedures were observed in this study. First, the researcher read about the underlying theories relative to the Face Threatening Acts. After which, the kind of corpora was considered. It was observed that the press briefings used by the Malacañang Palace especially by the Presidential Spokesperson were full of dynamism of the lens of politeness theory. Thus, the FTA by Brown and Levenson (1978) was used as the main process in the analysis of the texts.

Secondly, the researcher transcribed the recorded press briefings taken from the YouTube Channel of the Peoples Television (PTV4). Each was coded for the easy identification. This was followed by the determination of the elements of the Face Threatening Acts. Subsequently, member checks were observed. Colleagues in the school were asked to give their comments and suggestions.

Moreover, the analysis and the discussions were sent to peer debriefers. They were asked to review the correctness of the process of the analysis of the data. To provide the panel members with the corpora of the study, the audit trail was provided to cross checked the sources of the data with the texts in the discussion.

Ethical Considerations

This study used the secondary data as the corpora of the study. Hence, the following ethical considerations were observed. Since the data was available online, these were considered as public. Anybody who can watch and read them would not be liable ethically unless the data contained anonymity of individuals involved in the study.

Issues such as rape, murder, and the like which involved minors should conform to the ethical norm of research. From the press briefings, there were no issues related to the former. All of which were about the fight of the government against COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the source of the data as well as the date was clearly indicated.

Each of the corpora was coded for the easy identification. In the like manner, the researcher provided the members of the panel with the copies of the corpora for their reference. Through this, they confirmed that all of the data used were true and uphold the sense of veracity.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data involved strict process of qualitative research. Each of the corpora was first grouped based on the dates. Then, the research questions were followed. The elements of Face Threatening Acts of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) were identified from the press briefings of the Malacañang Palace.

Results

This section underscores the results based on the analysis of the data. It provides an in-depth discussion of the findings with explain the different elements of Face Threatening Acts of Brown and Levenson (1978, 1987) on the press briefings delivered by the Malacañang Palace of the Republic of the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Face Threatening Acts Found in Press Briefings

The first research question deals with the identification of the Face Threatening Acts found in the press briefings of the Malacañang Palace. There are two types of FTAs. These are FTAs on hearer's face and the listener's face.

Face Threatening Acts Threatening the Hearer's Face

This study found two types of faces to the hearer's face. First is the negative face and followed by the positive face. Each has its own elements which provided wider perspectives on the influence of language in the contexts of discourse.

Negative Face

The negative face values the face of the hearer or the interlocutor in the conversation. Under this face is order and compliment.

Order is one of the elements of a negative face in the Face Threatening Acts on the hearer's face. For example, from the extract below in which Sec Harry Roque Jr was giving a compliment to Dr Solante as a true expert of infectious disease. His words may have an impact on the accessibility of the vaccines of the Filipino people. As an interlocutor, that compliment may have an impact on his face especially on his performance as a medical doctor who has the first-hand knowledge about the disease.

Sec Harry Roque Jr: At pangalawa po, kung pupuwede po, i-explain rin Ninyo kung anu-ano iyong pagkakaiba noong mga iba't ibang mga bakuna at sabihin na nating totoo, ano ang ibig sabihin ng 50% efficacy rate po ng maintindihan po ng 36abuti ng ating mga kababayan; bagama't ang Sinovac po ay 60% daw po ang affectivity rate. **Dr. Solante, a true expert on infectious diseases, the floor is yours, sir.** (PB1, P5)

Dr. Solante: Thank you, Sir Harry Roque. Unang-una, I will have to explain, we have been working since March of last year, when DOST convened this group experts. During that time we are already having talks and meetings with some of these vaccine manufacturers, where they present all their platforms to us and in fact, that was one of the busiest times because when they were still doing their presentation, they are also presenting their phase 1, phase 2, and even the pre-clinical studies. (PB1, P5)

In the same manner, on PB4, P6 conversation, it shows that Sec Harry Roque Jr was asking for clarification to Dr Gap Legaspi relative to the condition of the Philippine General Hospital. Using the word please ignites the negative face of the interlocutor. Thus, as a response to the question the first statement indicates that he expresses thanks to the secretary.

Sec Harry Roque Jr.: Dr. Gap Legaspi, **pakilinaw naman po, ano ba ho talaga ang nangyayari diyan sa PGH? (please clarify, what really is happening in PGH).** Talaga bang nauubusan na kayo ng kama dahil napakadami ng COVID-19 patients o mayroon pong ibang dahilan? **The floor is yours, Dr. Gap Legaspi.** (PB4, P6)

Dr. Legaspi: Thank you very much, Sec. Gusto ko lang pong balikan ng kaunti ang mga pangyayari sa COVID. Tayo po ay nagsara noong March of last year at dahan-dahan pong binubuksan ang hospital bandang mga Hunyo at July because of the demands of the non-COVID patients. Actually, po may mga araw na 100 ang pasyente sa emergency room, tatlo lang ang COVID doon, karamihan po non-COVID na. So, napilitan po kaming buksan ang maraming beds ng PGH sa non-COVID. (PB4, P6).

Similarly, the secretary is polite when asking the governor of Negros Occidental about the cases of COVID-19 and the readiness toward vaccination. Hence, this affects the negative face of the governor.

Sec. Harry Roque Jr.: “Gov. kamusta ang mga kaso ng Covid-19 sa inyong probinsya at handa na ba tayo para sa bakuna at kung handa na tayo, anong bakuna ang pinaghahandaan natin? **Governor, the floor is yours.** (PB3, P2)

Governor Degamo: Good morning, Sec. Roque. Nagpapasalamat (we are very grateful) po kami na nagpunta ka dito sa Negros Oriental to talk about the importance of the vaccine na ano bang bibilhin natin na vaccine na ituturok natin sa taong-bayan ng Negros Oriental. You know, as Governor of Negros Oriental, I am pretty confident na ‘yong bakuna talagang nakuha ng national government through DOH ay talagang yon ang aasahan naming na ituturok dito. (PB3, P2)

The result implies that as one of the elements of the negative face, ordering with the sense of politeness can have a good impact to the interlocutor. Here, faces of interlocutors were constrained where the authority of the secretary has been imposed to them. Nevertheless, when their faces were affected, they responded in a manner that they sounded tact polite. Through this, the result applies that behaviors may be affected through the negative face of a person. However, these orders are coupled with high sense of respect to the participator of the conversation.

The second identified type of the negative face to the hearer’s face is compliment. The extract reveals that the Dr Solante was expressing compliment to the mode of questions raised by Sec Harry Roque about the variations on the efficacy rate of Sinovac from three identified countries.

Sec. Harry Roque Jr.: Ang question ko naman po tungkol dito sa Sinovac ‘no. Bakit po sa clinical trials – kasi wala pong clinical trials sa Tsina, dahil wala na sila masyadong kaso ng COVID doon ano – eh iba-iba iyong efficacy rate na lumabas? Sa Turkey 91.25, sa Indonesia 91.25 at sa Brazil ay 50.4...(My question is about Sinovac. Why there are no clinical trials in China? Does that mean that they have least cases of COVID and that there is

a difference in the efficacy rate like 91.25 in Turkey, 91.25 in Indonesia, and 50.4 in Brazil?)

Dr. Solante: Okay, that is a good question. Iyong efficacy rate is not always consistent with any population, depende iyan (that depends). Number one, the efficacy rate will always be, one, how the vaccine will elicit an antibody response. Number two, how the reproduction number of a particular country; and then number three, is the host immune response. How the host can elicit and produce this antibody.

Under PB5, P6 the undersecretary was congratulated by Sec Roque about the type of system to be implemented in the Philippines especially by the Local Government Units and different hospitals to combat the spread of the deadly virus.

Usec Vega: So siguro po mga middle of May, we will transfer and we will be able to provide you a better service and a better functionality. Kasi we hope na this will not just be for COVID but even in post-COVID, we will have a national referral system all over the Philippines, connecting the different hospitals, LGU for access and even for financial services that are needed by the patient. (PB5, P6)

Sec. Harry Roque, Jr.: Well congratulations Usec. dahil sa totoo lang po, sinusundan po talaga namin iyong capability na ma-contact ang One Hospital Command Center at kanina po pinarinig naman namin na sumasagot po ang 1555. Hindi gaya ng siguro mga one month or two months ago na busy ang lahat. So **congratulations Usec. Vega.** At again ang reminder po natin sa ating mga kababayan, kung nais ninyo pong malaman kung saan kayo pupunta, tumawag lang po kayo sa mga numero ng One Hospital Command Center dahil kung hindi po, talagang mangyayari sa inyo na baka ang mapuntahan ninyo ay puno na po iyong COVID bed allocation nila. So tawag lang po sa One Hospital Command Center. (PB5, P6-7)

It can be inferred from the findings that the face of the interlocutor was affected due to the given appreciation. This complimentary statement infused a good standing of how the hearer's negative face has been raised because of the good actions they did in response to the problem. As such, it validates that the speaker intention can actually change the face of the interlocutor or vice versa.

This type of face-threatening act happens when the speaker is succumbing to the power of the hearer (Cahyaningrum et al., 2022). Common face threatening acts to the hearer's negative face are suggestions, promises, requests, threats, challenges, dares, reminders, compliments, offers, and suggestions (Aporbo, 2022). An act that affirms or denies a future act of the hearer creates pressure on the hearer to either perform or not perform the act (Hutabarat, 2019).

Positive Face

The positive face of the interlocutor or the hearer can be affected based on the contexts of the discourse. It may be in the form of criticism as well as the expression of the emotion.

Criticism underscores the beauty of the language in itself. It provided an idea that humans use this as a weapon to intensify the destruction of the hearer. In this case, the response of Sec Harry Roque has a detrimental effect on the face of the one who asked the question.

Usec. Ignacio: Third question po niya: How does the Palace respond to concerns that the military has been too focused on red tagging to guard Philippine waters versus threats posed by China? (PB2, P12)

Sec Harry Roque Jr.: **Wala pong katuturan iyan, iyan na po iyong propaganda na sinasabi ni Vice President Leni at hindi iyong WHO figures.** (That is nonsense. That is a propaganda by Vice President Leni and not the WHO figures). (PB2, P12)

In addition, another response of Sec Harry Roque affects the positive face of Pia Tirada related to the contexts of her question. She has been criticized when she has been corrected about the cases of human rights violations under the Duterte Administration. However, it entails to destroy the face of the hearer as indicated from the responses of the secretary.

Pia Tirada: Does it also prove that there's truth to the accusations and complains of the victims and some human rights critics in the country and what does the government plan to do about these violations. Is war on drugs or the way on pursuing our law enforcement, you know, the way it should go? (PB3, P6)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr.: Well, I will talk as a former professor of law. **Let me correct you, it does not prove editing.** Because what is accepted as proof of the commission of applied, is generally the decision of a court. What it does prove is that we are in the discharge of our state to investigate and prosecute violation to the right of life. (PB3, P6)

Correspondingly, another member of the Malacañang Press Club was criticized when he stated that the country was last in receiving the vaccine. He was corrected by the secretary and that disproved his accusations against the government's effort to have the vaccines ready for the people.

Roy Agustillo: Thank you Sir. You have mentioned that the vaccine is arriving. Yesterday, Malaysia just received their vaccine, the other day or two, Brunei. Unfortunately, we are the last country to receive vaccine. What are the factors Sir(PB3, P11)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: **I don't think we are the last. I don't think we're the last. There are only ten countries that have used the vaccine, noh. So, does that's disproved the fact that we are the last.** The rest of the world still have to receive their vaccine, pero I have to admit kung tayo po ay nag-insist on Western brands, mag-aantay pa rin tayo ng pagdating at hindi natin alam kung kailan darating. Kaya nga po natin sinasabi, basta aprobado ng ating FDA tanggapin po natin yan bilang ligtas at epektibo. Talagang nag-uunahan po ang buong daigdig para sa mga Western brands. (PB3, P11)

Furthermore, one of the questions raised affected the positive face of the secretary. This caused an intimidation. Thus, by looking into the choices of words, one can infer that he has raised his voice in response to the question raised. This is also true to extracts in PB8, P6 where Pia Ranada a Rappler reporter has been one of the staunch critics of the Duterte Administration. Her line of questioning infuriated the secretary that eventually affected the positive face.

Usec Ignacio: Ang follow up question po ni Leila Salaverria, Secretary: Why won't the government just cooperate in the probe to prove the ICC wrong if it believes it has done nothing wrong? (PB8, P4)

Sec Harry Roque Jr: How dare you say that the Philippine legal system is not working. Emotional issue po ito for all lawyers and for all Filipinos. Hindi po, hindi tayo ganiyan sa Republika ng Pilipinas. (PB8, P5)

Usec Ignacio: Okay. Secretary, from Pia Rañada pa rin: If Duterte administration is indeed sincere about bringing drug war abuses to justice, why are the only conviction of drug-related EJKs the cops in Kian delos Santos murder? (PB8, P5)

Sec Harry Roque Jr: Excuse me! Kailan ba nagsampa ng kaso si Trillanes (When did Trillanes file the case?) 2018. Anong taon ngayon (What year was that?) 2021. Anong stage natin? Formally mag-i-investigate ka pa lang! Kung mabagal ang proseso sa Pilipinas, mas mabagal po ang proseso sa ICC dahil wala pa ngang preliminary investigation, tatlong taon na ang lumipas. Eh bakit nagdi-demand tayo nang napakabilis na proseso dito sa Pilipinas? (PB8, P6)

Another question which changed the positive face of the interlocutor yields in PB9, P8. Here the secretary was criticizing the contexts of the question by citing a presidential decree which justifies the inconsistencies on the quoted comments of former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Usec Ignacio: Yes. Secretary, from Jason Gutierrez ng New York Times for Secretary Roque and Justice Jardeleza: Comment on Justice Carpio saying he believe that Jardeleza's proposed bill was unnecessary because President Duterte could simply issue a presidential proclamation listing the geologic features complete with names and coordinates, and that this would be faster than passing legislation. (PB9, P8)

Sec Harry Roque Jr.: That's so wrong. Unang-una, the tribunal said na nga, iyong ating domestic law, PD 1596, is inconsistent with the UNCLOS. Now tama po, it does not automatically nullify the domestic law. But pursuant to pacta sunt servanda, we have a treaty obligation and an obligation under customary international law to amend our existing law to comply with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. (PB9, P8-9)

Truly, criticism changes affect the positive face of the hearer or the interlocutor as revealed from the aforesaid extracts. The expression of responses of the secretary to the questions evaluates against the deepest accusations against the government. Furthermore, it can be surmised that the positive face evaluated the negative face of the hearer because of the elements being raised from the questions.

The expression of emotion shows an impact to the positive face of the hearer. In this regard, PB10, P13 indicates that the secretary was expressing his sadness about the fate of Pasig River. Being listed as one of the plastic polluters of the world, the secretary showed his feelings that the Philippines should not be proud of the news.

Usec Ignacio: Yes, Secretary, thank you. Question from Kris Jose of Remate/Remate Online: Reaksiyon ng Malacañang dahil napabilang daw po ang Ilog Pasig at 18 iba pang ilog sa bansa sa listahan ng world's top plastic polluter? (PB10, P13)

Sec Harry Roque Jr: Well, nakakalungkot po iyan (That is sad), **that is not something na we should be proud of.** Dati nga po ay mayroon pa tayong komisyon just on Pasig River, pero wala ring nangyari. So sa akin po, talagang kinakailangan ipatupad ang ating existing laws, ipatupad iyong obligasyon ng mga water concession agreements na magkaroon talaga ng

wastewater treatment at ipatupad talaga iyong pagbabawal ng pag-discharge ng kahit anong nakakasira sa kalikasan diyan po sa Pasig River. (PB10, P13)

More so, this finding explains the role of emotion in changing the face of the hearer upon hearing a sad news. In particular, this connotes that the speaker is greatly affected by the mere fact that the body of water is the main source of pollution in the world. This can have a negative impact in the image of the country as it tries to combat against global warming and natural calamities.

The findings are in consonance that a hearer's positive face threatening acts are complaints, criticism, mention of taboo topic, and interruptions (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Threatening the positive face of the hearer can be marked with an action that expresses the speaker's indifference toward the addressee's positive face (Cahyaningrum et al., 2022). Above all, it aims to destroy the face of the hearer and vice versa (Aporbo, 2022).

Face Threatening Acts Threatening the Speaker's Face

The Face Threatening acts also threatens the face of the speaker. From the corpora, there is only one face which is the negative face. In particular, this presents about the expression of thanks.

Negative Face

The negative face on the speaker's face values the essence of respect from this point of view.

The speaker face has been affected by the credit being expressed by the interlocutor. Here, word of thanks has been expressed by Dr Solante when the floor for him to talk was offered by the secretary.

Sec Harry Roque Jr.: At pangalawa po, kung pupuwede po, i-explain rin Ninyo kung anu-ano iyong pagkakaiba noong mga iba't ibang mga bakuna at sabihin na nating totoo, ano ang ibig sabihin ng 50% efficacy rate po ng maintindihan po ng mabuti ng ating mga kababayan; bagama't ang Sinovac po ay 60% daw po ang affectivity rate. Dr. Solante, a true expert on infectious diseases, the floor is yours, sir. (PB1, P5)

Dr. Solante: Thank you, Sir Harry Roque. Unang-una, I will have to explain, we have been working since March of last year, when DOST convened this group experts. During that time we are already having talks and meetings with some of these vaccine manufacturers, where they present all their platforms to us and in fact, that was one of the busiest times because when they were still doing their presentation, they are also presenting their phase 1, phase 2, and even the pre-clinical studies. (PB1, P5)

In the same vein, the governor of Negros Occidental was grateful of the presence of the secretary to talk about the government's plan against the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the province.

Sec. Harry Roque Jr.: "Gov. kamusta ang mga kaso ng Covid-19 sa inyong probinsya at hand ana ba tayo para sa bakuna at kung hand ana tayo, anong bakuna ang pinaghahandaan natin? Governor, the floor is yours. (PB2, P2)

Governor Degamo: Good morning, Sec. Roque. Nagpapasalamat po kami na nagpunta ka dito sa Negros Oriental (thank you for visting Negros Oriental) to talk about the importance of the vaccine na ano bang bibilhin natin na vaccine na ituturok natin sa taong-bayan ng Negros

Oriental. You know, as Governor of Negros Oriental, I am pretty confident na ‘yong bakuna talagang nakuha ng national government through DOH ay talagang yon ang aasahan naming na ituturok dito. (PB3, P2)

Also, in PB3, P10, the secretary was happy upon hearing the agreement signed between the industries and the Sinovac to vaccinate their employees. This entails that the face of the secretary has been affected.

Melo Acuña: yeah. **Thank you.** Covid-19 related issue, I just talk to former Special Envoi to China, Dr. Francis Chua, and The Federation of the Filipino Chamber Commerce and Industries signed an agreement with the Sinovac early last night. Are there any groups signing up with the Sinovac for a vaccine supply to the Philippines? (PB3, P10)

Sec. Roque: I’m happy to hear that. I have not been officially informed of this, pero kung pupuwede po talagang magpirma ng tri-partite agreement for Sinovac, I am very happy because right now po ang ating allocation is 25M, if we can get more, that will be good. So far po 15 countries in the world have ordered and are using Sinovac. And, I believe if they have allotted 300M dosage of vaccine for export in addition to the more than 1 Billion that they need in China. So, kung masa marami pong supply ang makukuha natin ng Sinovac, that is the welcome development po. (PB3, P10)

This finding provides that the expression of things can be associated from the source of the discourse. Hence, the face of the hearer was affected. The negative face has been elevated through the mode of questions raised. Aside from that, this implies the role of the politeness markers such as -happy and -thank you which demonstrate a good impact on the hearer.

Indeed, face threatening acts to the speaker’s negative face include expressions of gratitude, thanks, apology, offer, and making promises (Brown & Levinson, 1987). An act that shows that the speaker is in some sense wrong, and unable to control himself (Hutabarat, 2019).

Politeness Strategies Found in Press Briefings

The second research question determines the different politeness strategies found in the press briefings of the Malacañang palace at the height of the pandemic. Different issues were tackled that might have impact in the government’s effort in running the country.

Bald-On Record

The first politeness strategy which was determined is the bald-on record. This is more in the aspect of imperative or request. Thus, in PB1, P8 shows that the secretary was requesting the reporter to come closer in order for him to clearly ask his question.

Roy Lomotan: Good after Secretary, and to our governor Degamo and Mayor Degamo. At this point, we will entertain 1 question from our local media. I would like to call on Mr. Boy Pelongo of Radyo Bandera. (PB1, P8)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: Walang, walang volume Roy?... Seguro lumapit ka na lang. go ahead (no volume Roy? Come closer. Go ahead). (PB1, P8)

Bald-on record also happens in PB9, P3 when the secretary was asking his interlocutor to proceed with his message.

Former Justice Jardeliza: Hello? (PB9, P3)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: Yes, go ahead po. **Go ahead,** Justice, as you were saying. (PB9, P3)

As well, this strategy is indicated from the request of the secretary to unmute his microphone in a teleconference in order for him to be heard.

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: Thank you, Professor Bagares. At si Dr. Melissa Loja naman, si Dr. Melissa Loja has a PhD in international law from the University of Hong Kong. Long time no see, Dr. Loja! Ano hong magiging hugis nitong teritoryo ng Pilipinas kung maipapasa po itong batas na inyong pino-propose. Dr. Loja, go ahead. (PB9, P5)

Dr. Loja, paki-unmute po ang Zoom ninyo. Paki-unmute. (Unmute your Zoom). (PB9, P5)

Dr. Loja: Yes. (PB9, P5)

Meanwhile, the interlocutor in PB10, P8 was requesting someone to play the slides of his presentation.

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: Okay. Mayroon po kayong power point presentation on COVID vaccine clinical trials updates. The floor is yours, Dr. Yu. (PB10, P8)

Dr. Yu: Sige po. Can I have the first slide po? (PB10, P8)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: Okay na po, nandiyan po ang first slide. (PB10, P8)

This politeness strategy indicates the critical role of everyone in the conversation. It can be noted that making request or the imperative statement may have an impact to the hearer, however, it has a politeness value that can create an understanding between the speaker and the hearer.

Indeed, bald-on record does not save face. It can be used to threaten if it is used out of context (Waziana et al., 2021). The main reason of using is that speaker avoids to mitigate a Face Threatening Act to the hearer especially they are not in a close relationship (Santoso, 2015). Here, the speaker is more powerful than the hearer like the secretary acting as the interlocutor (Culpeper, 1996).

Positive Politeness Strategy

Positive politeness also appears in the corpora. It manifests that the questions raised were asking the secretary to explain clearly about the contexts of the question. As such, on PB1, P15, the response of the secretary can be understood when he used the word -because in his answer.

USEC. IGNACIO: Second question po niya: Did he give any assurance of safety and efficacy and did he address concerns raised about Sinovac in the Philippines? (PB1, P15)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: No information po because umuwi po ako sa probinsiya noong dumating po si Minister. Wala po ako sa pagpupulong. (No information because I was in the province when the minister arrived). (PB1, P15)

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: Sir, there have been a lot of killings of people who have been red-tagged under the Duterte Government and there have been no convictions so far, no justice. Sir, why doesn't the President create a task force on this since he's so quick to create task force for other things like typhoons, communism? I mean, isn't this a priority of the President given the growing numbers? (PB4, P16)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: Because Secretary Meynard Guevarra already created that inter-agency committee. (PB4, P16)

PIA RAÑADA/RAPPLER: But, sir, how come there have been no convictions yet? There are no results yet of any investigation into people who died and were red-tagged before dying? (PB4, P16)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr: Because that's how the wheel of justice operate 'no. It's not instant justice, ala Kangaroo Court ng NPA, it takes time. But we are taking steps even with the support and the cooperation of the judicial branch of government to expedite the hearing of these cases. (PB4, P16)

As revealed from the extracts, it implies that the secretary was trying to respond to the questions raised by the reporter. Another, the conjunction *-because* deeply explains that reasons for the questions are being expressed by the secretary. Responses have full information that could suffice and satisfy the interlocutor.

More importantly, there was an agreement on the question being raised by the reporter. As PB5, P12 shows that Sec Dizon agreed with the statement. In the same extract and the exchange of questions, again the secretary agreed and thus, appreciated the reported on that regard.

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Na ipu-procure 'di ba? And then, right now you have an existing 50 plus but dadagdagan iyan for NCR Plus ng 30. So if you add all these up, you're looking at at least 530,000 antigen tests. (PB5, P12)

SEC. DIZON: That's right. (PB5, P12)

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: But, sir, ang question ko, sir: In terms of allocation, because I think as we will agree, we need to urgently test iyong NCR Plus, so I'm interested in the allocation per city if you have. Kumbaga, sir, if these were... kung laser, saan ninyo itututok itong at least 30,000 so that we will be able to identify the cases and contain them so we prevent the spread? (PB5, P12)

SEC. DIZON: Great question, Joseph. First of all, we have to understand the nature of how to use the antigen test kits. So far antigen test kits, the experts have guided us by using these, number one, for symptomatic cases. So many of these antigen test kits will be deployed to hospitals 'no because hospitals need not only more tests, they also need fast turnaround tests so that they can act quickly if a person tests positive using this test. (PB5, P12)

Conformably, the undersecretary agreed on the statement of the reporter where figures should be provided especially on the cases of COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose is to inform the public and to warn them about the rising case of those who get infected by the virus.

MELO ACUÑA/ASIA DAILY PACIFIC: Maybe next time we can come up with figures so that we will have a clearer picture, Mr. Undersecretary. (PB6, P15)

DOH USEC. VEGA: Yes, we can do that. (PB6, P15)

The result harmonizes that positive politeness can make as a strategy can be delivered by agreeing into the meaning of the statement. In the same manner, this explains that the interlocutor should have the total understanding of the statement before they respond to the question. Digging deeper, this creates an understanding between the participants of the conversations.

This corroborates from the point of view of Clayman and Heritage (2002) that this mode of questioning and response is called as direct agreement. It asserts that this compromises the

neutrality of the interviewer/interlocutor. In addition, this type of politeness strategy was used when the interlocutor has a high level of economic or social status. On the contrary, this expresses solidarity between the speaker and the hearer who do not know each other (Dzikriyah, 2018).

Negative Politeness Strategy

The extracts show the negative politeness strategies found in the press briefings. It can be noted that speakers used honorifics in addressing their counterparts. For example, in PB1, P5 that Secretary Roque used the word *-doctor* Solante to give an explanation related to the clinical trials being made by vaccine manufacturers. Likewise, the *-sir* was used by Dr Solante in response to Sec Harry Roque.

Sec Harry Roque Jr.: Dr. Solante, a true expert on infectious diseases, the floor is yours, **sir**. (PB1, P5)

Dr. Solante: Thank you, Sir Harry Roque. (PB1, P5)...

Conversely, the use of hedges like *-I think* and *-you know* justify that indeed the response or statement falls under the negative politeness strategy

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: Sir, you've seen obviously the portfolio of vaccine manufacturers that the government is talking to and you've seen their data. From the portfolio, sir, what vaccine would you recommend for the President? (PB1, P9)

Dr Solante: So, **I think** most of the vaccines now are really safe. (PB1, P9)

JOSEPH MORONG/GMA7: **Sir**, just one last question. How much longer can we afford to stay under GCQ? Mayroon ba tayo, sir, point of no return such that if we spend this number of months under still GCQ eh iyong damage to the economy will be irreparable?

SEC. CHUA: Well, **you know**, we have been in GCQ or higher 'no in the Metro Manila area for already 12 months, so to the extent that we can continue with it, it's really going to put our economy in a very difficult position.

In the same manner, Sec Roque gave the floor to the leader of the province of Negros Occidental by calling him as *-governor*. And in response, a greeting as well as the position of Harry Roque as mentioned.

Sec. Roque Jr.: ...**Governor**, the floor is yours. (PB2, P2)

Governor Degamo: **Good morning, Sec. Roque. Nagpapasalamat po kami na nagpunta ka dito sa Negros Oriental** (thank you for coming to Negros Oriental) ...(PB2, P2)

This infers that the speaker shows respect to the hearer or the interlocutor of the conversation. Hence, the findings showed that honorifics were mentioned in deference to the person in authority. In the same vein, this connotes that there is a mutual respect with the utterance of greetings as well as the used of hedges in communication.

A sense of respect is represented in the negative politeness strategy. As stated by Kuzhevskaya (2019), the use of negative politeness is commonly used in formal situation rather than positive politeness for example in a business meeting intended the meeting look formal and professional. Generally, this involves some speech acts and one of this is thanking (Kristina, 2022). Opposing to this is the use of hedges as one of the features of negative politeness strategy (Zunaidah et al., 2022).

Off Record

The off-record statements are found in the extracts of PB2, P8 and PB2, P14. Here the secretary contradicts and opposes the questions raised by Pia Tirada and Joseph Morong. Their questions are beyond knowledge. That is why by looking into the responses of the secretary he was trying to counter justifying his knowledge as a lawyer and the information that he has.

Pia Tirada: Does it also prove that there's truth to the accusations and complains of the victims and some human rights critics in the country and what does the government plan to do about these violations. Is war on drugs or the way on pursuing our law enforcement, you know, the way it should go? (PB2, P8)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr.: Well, I will talk as a former professor of law. let me correct you, it does not prove editing. Because what is accepted as proof of the commission of applied, is generally the decision of a court. What it does prove is that we are in the discharge of our state to investigate and prosecute violation to the right of life. (PB2, P8)

Joseph Morong: Does that mean that no government agency will pay for any vaccine?(PB2, P14)

Sec. Harry Roque Jr.: That's wrong because although it is funded loans, it is ultimately government funds that will pay for the vaccines. (PB2, P14)

From the aforesaid extracts it signifies that off-record strategy really happens in the press briefings. Questions raised were out of contexts where they are immediately contradicted. The fear of disposing these types of questions may ignite the minds of the people that the government is not doing anything in responding to the problems. In particular, discourses may play a crucial role in imparting politeness strategy so that responses may not sound annoying to the hearer.

Off-record statements affirm that agents who utilized this tactic were able to obtain more concessions from their human partners (Terada et al., 2021). This strategy is used when the speaker asks an indirect question that requires the listener to interpret. In other words, the speaker does not impose himself on the listener. As a result, there is no direct threat to the face. This strategy frequently necessitates the listener to interpret what the speaker is saying. The off-record indirect strategies relieve some pressure and Avoid FTA (Sukarno, 2018).

Discussions

This qualitative study employing the content analysis was conducted to understand the different types of face threatening acts and their corresponding meaning. Also, this determined the different politeness strategies that are found on press briefings. These were those delivered by the Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on the Peoples Television (PTV 4). Topics were on the aspects of the fight of the Philippines on the COVID-19 pandemic. There were 12 corpora used in this study. Results revealed that Face Threatening Acts have impacts on the hearer and speaker's face.

This study found two types of faces to the hearer's face. First is the negative face and followed by the positive face. Each has its own elements which provided wider perspectives on the influence of language in the contexts of discourse. From the corpora, there is only one face which is the negative face. In particular, this presented about the expression of thanks. Moreover, the politeness strategies identified were bald on, positive, negative, and off-record.

Conclusion and suggestions

Conclusion

Face Threatening Acts transpired in the Press Briefings of the Malacañang Palace. Each face was threatened or affected by the exchange of discourses. It can be noted that speaker and hearer's echelon matters in the presentation of faces. One has the control and the other has to follow. This manifested that imposition changed someone's face. Furthermore, different elements were indicated in each of the politeness strategies. The utilization of politeness markers makes a difference in preserving and affecting the face of the speaker and the interlocutor. Notwithstanding, this concludes that press briefings are rich sources of information that may deepen the explanation of Face Threatening Acts as well as the politeness strategies.

Suggestions

This study used the Press Briefings as the corpora of the study. Thus, it is recommended in this study that future researchers may use different materials that can provide the bigger picture of Face Threatening Acts and politeness strategies. In order to apply this in the parlance of pedagogy and to better understand the discourse that happens inside the classroom setting, it is deemed necessary to conduct similar studies that may show interactions between teachers and students. Also, the limitation of this study can be further enhanced by integrating the post-pandemic press briefings. Above all, teachers may also develop activities that exhibits the different aspects of FTAs and politeness strategies to make class more interactive. Finally, this study can be the basis by the politicians as they properly respond to questions brought by the member of the press.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

Face Threatening Acts by Brown and Levenson (1978, 1987) has a significant effect to the society. For example, in the contexts of teaching-learning process, the teacher will be guided properly on how to respond to questions asked by their respective students. They can contextualize their responses that it would not insult or hurt their learners. In turn, they will be able to motivate them to become active individuals in the classroom. Moreover, this study implies that the speaker has to always have to be particular of the details of their questions in order for them to have the response that they would want. Indeed, politeness happens in different facets of life. Sometimes, we are unaware of what we are saying, but eventually this already has an impact to the hearer. We can be impolite or polite depending on the person whom we are dealing with. Therefore, one has to be careful of every word that comes out one's mouth.

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