

# Politeness Strategy in Speech Act of Giving Advice in Japanese

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## ABSTRACT

Speech act is a very important thing in Japanese communication and cannot be separated by the manners are applied in society. Politeness is needed to create a good condition when we use speech act in communication. One of the speech acts that needs to use politeness is speech act of giving advice. By using a descriptive qualitative method, this study aims to show the types of speech act of giving advice in Japanese. The data are in the form of dialogues which use speech act of giving advice from Japanese movies such as *Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai*, *Omoi Omoware Furi Furare*, and *Haru Matsu Bokura*. The data were analyzed based on the context and politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson (1978). From this study, 36 data were obtained showing the use of speech act in giving advice in Japanese, specifically 9 bald on record strategy, 17 positive politeness strategy, 3 negative politeness strategy, and 7 off-record politeness strategy. Based on these results, the most common politeness strategy found in these movies is positive politeness strategy. Positive politeness strategy is widely used because of the habit of Japanese people who tend to avoid hurting others' feelings. From this study, it can be seen how politeness strategies are used by Japanese people when using speech act of giving advice to the interlocutor, so we can understand how speech act of giving advice should be used in Japanese.

**Keywords:** Giving advice, Japanese, politeness strategy, speech act.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In communication, people need language as a tool for communicating means, purposes, and messages to the interlocutor. According to Herniti (2010), language makes people into social beings because language is a tool for communicating means, purposes, messages, ideas, desires, and feelings of the speaker to the interlocutor. Yoshimi (1992) states people's thoughts and perceptions are strongly influenced by the words they said. Language as a tool for communication reflects the perceptions and thoughts of the speaker.

In Japanese, we need to notice the use of language that depends on the context. Mulyana (2005) explains the context is the background situation of a conversation. In Japanese, communication is influenced by several factors such as age, position, gender, relationship, and others. In Japanese communication, speech act is a very important thing, so the speaker should notice who the interlocutor is to determine what speech act will be used. Speech act according to Chaer and Agustina (2010) is meanings and actions that were delivered by a person in the communication process. Austin (1962, as cited in Tomoyo, 2018) explains that speech act can be classified

into three levels such as locutionary speech act, illocutionary speech act, and perlocutionary speech act.

Searle (1979, as cited in Yamaoka, 1999) divided the illocutionary speech act into 5 types such as assertive, directive, commissive, declaration, and expressive. The speech act is used in communication can't be separated by the manners are applied in society. Politeness in communication is needed to create a good condition between the speaker and interlocutor. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain the theory of politeness related to positive and negative faces. In interaction, the speech participants must take care of each other's faces so there is no threat to the face. Brown and Levinson (1987) call this threat as Face Threatening Act (FTA). To prevent the occurrence of FTA we can do some politeness strategies such as the bald on record strategy, positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, and off-record politeness strategy.

Searle (1969, as cited in Al-Aadeli, 2013) defines advice as "telling you what is best for you". According to Searle's classification, advice is included in the directive speech act. As a directive speech act, the speaker wants the other person to do something. Hinkel (1997, as cited

in Flor, 2003) stated that three types of strategies in the use of speech act of giving advice, there are direct, conventionally indirect, and indirect strategies.

Babaie and Shahrokhi (2015) conducted a study with a compared speech act of giving advice by Iranian EFL learners and English native speakers. These findings indicate that Iranian EFL students haven't been able to use speech act of giving advice the same as native speakers concerning to social strength and social distance of the interlocutor. Babaie and Shahrokhi (2015) state that native English speakers more often use speech act of giving advice in indirect form, while Iranian EFL students who have low proficiency level use speech act of giving advice indirect form that is more familiar and easier to giving advice.

Al-Aadeli (2013) conducted a study of speech act in giving advice by analyzing the strategies in using speech act of giving advice and classified the strategies by using classification of giving advice strategies according to Flor's theory. The speech act was obtained from three plays such as "Flowering Cherry", "The Tiger and The Horse", dan "Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?". Al-Aadeli explained that in giving suggestions, indirect strategies were widely used in the drama than direct strategies. Meanwhile, in giving advice, direct strategy is more often used in the drama than indirect strategy.

Berger (2020) analyzed speech act of giving advice in Roman comedy through a pragmatic approach. This speech act is classified based on the politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson's theory. Direct strategy (the bald on record strategy) usually conveys a more binding speech act, while the indirect strategy (off-record strategy) sometimes produces assertive expression such as the act of giving advice. Apart from the correlation, illocutionary types such as politeness are the result of rather complex interactions between social boundaries such as power relation, distance, and ranking of imposition with contextual such as verbal surrounding.

Although there are many studies which analyzed the speech act of giving advice, there is still little attention has been given to the study which examined speech act of giving advice in Japanese. Therefore, the author wants to analyze the speech act of giving advice in Japanese based on the need to understand the habits of Japanese people who don't want to hurt other people when delivering speech acts. To fill the gap in the previous study, the author wants to analyze different objects and classify them based on the politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Method

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. By using descriptive qualitative method, the researcher

explains in detail the results of the analysis speech act of giving advice in Japanese particularly the description of the form and analysis the use of speech act of giving advice that occurs in Japanese conversations.

### 2.2 Data Sources

The data were speech act of giving advice in Japanese. They were obtained from Japanese movies such as *Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai* (2017), *Omoi Omoware Furi Furare* (2020), and *Haru Matsu Bokura* (2018).

### 2.3 Data Collection

The data in this study were collected by listening to the conversations in movies that containing speech act of giving advice. The data that have been collected were input into the data card and were classified according to source of the data were obtained.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

In data analysis, the author identified the use of speech act of giving advice. Then, the data will be classified based on politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory such as the bald on record strategy, positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, and off-record politeness strategy. Through these movies, the author can observe and directly analyze the use of speech act of giving advice in Japanese

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data found in this study are 36 data. These data were categorized into 4 politeness strategies that are presented in Table 1. According to the table, the majority of politeness strategies in this data is positive politeness strategy with 17 data (47,2%) and the minority of politeness strategies in this data is negative politeness strategy with 3 data (8,3%).

**Table 1.** Politeness strategy in speech act of giving advice

No	Politeness Strategy	Amount	Percentage
1	The Bald on Record Strategy	9	25%
2	Positive Politeness Strategy	17	47,2%
3	Negative Politeness Strategy	3	8,3%
4	Off-Record Politeness Strategy	7	19,5%
Total		36	100%

### 3.1 The Bald on Record Strategy

- (1) A: *Mukiaun dakara Takahiro-kun ga ii yo. Supōtsu ban no sansho kukenmi ikemen kurasu inchōjyan.*

If you want to date, it's better to be with Takahiro. He is good at sports, an achiever, and a handsome chairman.

(*Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai*, 20:50)

In data 1 above, there was a rumor about Sakura was dating Haruki. Hearing the rumor, one of Sakura's friends disagreed that Sakura was dating Haruki and advised Sakura to date Takahiro who is a handsome chairman and good at sports. The conversation that occurs is informal conversation between close friends which is indicated by the use of informal form in Japanese sentences and occurs spontaneously in a short time. Sakura's friend advised dating Takahiro and gave the reasons why Sakura should follow the advice. The speech act in this conversation is included in the bald on record strategy. In this strategy, the speaker directly explained her purpose to the interlocutor. This strategy will cause the interlocutor to feel embarrassed and surprised by what the speaker was saying. In this conversation, we can see the surprised reaction from Sakura who denied her friend's words. Because is spoken directly, this strategy is usually used by speakers and interlocutors who know each other well and have good relationship.

- (2) Sakura: *Kanojo wa tomokatte, tomodachi wa tsukuri nai.*  
Not a girlfriend but try to find friends first.

(*Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai*, 50:17)

Haruki explained that he didn't intend to find or get a girlfriend because he didn't have friends. Sakura advised Haruki not looking for a girlfriend but make a friend first. Because at that time Sakura and Haruki's relationship was close, Sakura no longer hesitated to directly convey her purpose to Haruki. This is in following with the theory that was said by Brown and Levinson (1987) that speakers will be easier to convey their suggestions to people who are considered close. In the conversation, the speaker used the informal form in Japanese sentences which shows there is no distance and status difference between the speaker and interlocutor. Speech act of giving advice in that conversation is included in the bald on record strategy where the purpose of the speaker is conveyed clearly to the interlocutor. By using this strategy, the interlocutor can easily understand the meaning of what the speaker was saying in conveying her advice.

- (3) Rui: *Konna shika inakatte, jibun de iki yo.*  
There's only her there. You should find her by yourself.

(*Haru Matsu Bokura Movie*, 07:04)

At that time Ryuuji asked Rui for help to call the girl he liked but Rui called the wrong person. Rui was angry because Ryuuji was embarrassed to find that girl by himself. *Yo* is used at the end of the sentence to indicate

imperative form in Japanese. Oshima (2014) explains *yo* is one of the most frequent discourse particles that is used in declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exhortative sentences. Speech act of giving advice in that conversation is included in the bald on record strategy because the statement said by the speaker is conveyed directly to the interlocutor who has a close relationship with the speaker. The speech act by using this politeness strategy causes the interlocutor to feel embarrassed and surprised by the words said by the speaker. By using this strategy, the speaker does not need to make an effort to minimize the threat to the interlocutor or reduce the impact of the occurrence of face threatening act (FTA). In this strategy, the speaker conveys his suggestions in the form of imperative sentences directly to the interlocutor. Hinkel (1997, as cited in Flor, 2003) classified the use of the imperative form in giving advice in the direct types. The advice was given directly is a transparent pragmatic expression shown by the use of positive imperative forms.

### 3.2 Positive Politeness Strategy

- (4) Haruki: *Bunrui kōdoo oboetara ii dake dayo.*

You just need to remember the code of the books, it's done.

(*Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai*, 02:00)

On the first day Sakura was working in library, she advised Haruki to tell her how to put the books correctly, so she didn't put the books in the wrong place. The speech act of giving advice can be seen in the use of sentence pattern *~tara ii* which indicates giving advice in Japanese. In this sentence, the speaker used informal form which indicates that the relationship between the two is close friend. At that time Haruki helped Sakura by giving advice that Sakura just remember the code of the books so she will not make mistakes in arranging the books. The conversation is included in the positive politeness strategy. This strategy is indicated by the attitude of the speaker showing optimism to the interlocutor. The use of *yo* in Japanese is an oral form used to express belief and emphasize something. The use of *yo* at the end of the sentence in the conversation reinforces the use of positive politeness strategy and sense of optimism was conveyed by the speaker. Oshima (2014) states *yo* was used to indicate that the utterance conveys information and influences what the interlocutor should do or be. In this strategy, the speaker gives freedom to the interlocutor to agree or reject the advice. This is also related to the statement said by Al-Aadeli (2013) that there is no compulsion in giving advice because the interlocutor is free to accept or reject the advice.

- (5) Haruki: *Kekkou dayo. Kimi wa kimi no suki ni ikita hougai ii.*

You should enjoy your life.

(*Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai*, 09:03)

Sakura and Haruki were walking together. Sakura asked Haruki to be her friend, but Haruki refused Sakura's request and advised Sakura to enjoy life while she was healthy. Speech act of giving advice is indicated by the use of sentence pattern *~ta houga ii* which is used for giving advice in Japanese. In the utterance, the speaker suggested the interlocutor finds other ways that make her enjoy life. The speech act above is included in positive politeness strategy which is indicated by the attitude of the speaker who notices the needs of the interlocutor. The speaker shows his sympathy by conveying advice that the speaker understands and knows the needs of the interlocutor. The use of this strategy gives the impression that the speaker has the same feelings as the interlocutor. Hinkel (1997, as cited in Flor, 2003) classified the speech act of giving advice above into a conventionalized strategy type, which is indicated by the use of sentence pattern *~ta houga ii* which has the same meaning with "should" or "ought to" in English.

- (6) Haruki : *Tsugi de saigo dane, kimi wa sukoshi mizu o nonda houga ii yo.*

Next is the last. You should drink water.

(*Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai*, 41:28)

After dinner, Sakura started to get drunk and talked indistinctly. Haruki advised Sakura to drink water. The speech act of giving advice can be seen in the use of sentence pattern *~ta houga ii* which is used for giving advice in Japanese. The use of *yo* at the end of the sentence aims to emphasize the declarative sentence. Oshima (2014) explains declarative sentence with *yo* has function to inform the interlocutor that the utterance is relevant to what the interlocutor should and may do. The speaker advised the interlocutor to drink so that her condition can be better after she was drunk. The speech act above is included in positive politeness strategy which is indicated by the attitude of the speaker who notices the needs of the interlocutor. By using this strategy, the speaker shows his concern by giving advice that the speaker understands what the interlocutor needs. This strategy seeks to minimize the distance between the speaker and the interlocutor by showing concern and friendship. Based on Hinkel's classification (1997, as cited in Flor, 2003), the speech act of giving advice in the sentence is included in the type of direct strategy which is indicated by the use of a declarative form.

- (7) Sakura : *Chigau yo. Kimi ga kichinto minna to hanasanai kara dayo. Chanto hanaseba omoshiroi hito date kitto minna mo wakatte kureru yo.*

Not. It's because you didn't speak properly. If you talk, surely everyone will know that you are an interesting person.

(*Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai*, 1:02:26)

Sakura's friends thought Sakura didn't go to school because Haruki always follows her. Sakura explained that it happened because Haruki never spoke properly. In this utterance, the speaker advised the interlocutor to speak properly so the other people want to be friends and

talk to the interlocutor. The conversation is included in positive politeness strategy which is indicated by the actions of the speaker notices the attitudes of the interlocutor. By using this strategy, the speaker pays attention to everything related to the interlocutor. The speaker expresses his concern by advice that the interlocutor shouldn't act like now. In a close relationship, giving advice is done when the interlocutor is in trouble and the speaker is trying to help the interlocutor to solve the problem. The speaker in the conversation tries to convince the interlocutor that the problem will be solved if the interlocutor follows the advice was given by her. Berger (2020) explains that in giving advice, a speaker must have a strong reason so the interlocutor feels confident and believes that the advice will be useful for him.

- (8) Akari : *Onaji manshon ni hito no koto. Koekakeba yokatta noni.*

In the same apartment? You should greet him.

(*Omoi Omoware Furi Furare*, 03:30)

One day, Yuna met someone who looks like the prince in the book while took the elevator in her apartment. Akari advised Yuna to greet the guy because if she just waited for the guy, their love will not start. Akari told Yuna to be ready for falling in love by confirming each other's feelings and convince each other. In this utterance, the speaker advised by asking the interlocutor that she must be brave to greet the guy she likes so that she can start her first love. The conversation is included in positive politeness strategy which is indicated by the attitude of the speaker who shows optimism to the interlocutor. By using this strategy, the speaker expresses his belief and optimism that the interlocutor will be able to succeed in getting what she wants. This sense of optimism only comes from the speaker without being accompanied by a strong reason. Therefore, the speaker gives the choice to the interlocutor to agree or reject the suggestion that has been given by the speaker.

### 3.3 Negative Politeness Strategy

- (9) Asakura : *Wakatta. Oretachi ga jyamanara kyori o oiteru. Demo daiji ni shitai tomodachinara hontō no koto o itta hō ga ii to omou yo.*

All right. We will stay away if we are disturbing you. But, if you want to have a good friendship with her, I think you should tell her everything.

(*Haru Matsu Bokura*, 22:00)

Mitsuki stayed away from Asakura and his friend because her new friend didn't like when she was close to Asakura and his friends. Asakura advised Mitsuki that she should tell everything if she wanted to have good friendship with her friend. The speech act of giving advice can be seen in the use of sentence pattern *~ta houga ii* which is used to giving advice. In the utterance,

the speaker used informal form because they know each other well. In this sentence, the speaker added a sentence pattern *~to omou* at the end of the sentence to emphasize that the advice is the result of conveying the contents of his thoughts to the interlocutor. The speaker intends to give advice so that the interlocutor says everything to her new friend. The conversation is categorized in negative politeness strategy because the speaker being pessimistic about Mitsuki's friendship. In negative politeness strategy, which is indicated by pessimistic attitude, the speaker doesn't want to be optimistic by assuming that the interlocutor will have good friendship with her friend. Therefore, the speaker talked carefully to reduce the threat of the interlocutor's face.

- (10) Rui : *Sukoshi ki o tsuketa hō ga ī kamo ne. Osanai tomodachi tte itte mo otokonon dakara.*

I think you should be careful with him. Even though he is your childhood friend, he is still a man.

(Haru Matsu Bokura, 1:17:35)

Rui asked Mitsuki about her dating with Kamiyama. Mitsuki said yesterday she and Kamiyama only saw *hanabi* together. Rui and his friends felt Kamiyama liked Mitsuki even though Mitsuki only thought Kamiyama was her childhood friend. Kyousuke advised Mitsuki to be careful with Kamiyama because even though Kamiyama was childhood friend, he was still a man who might hurt Mitsuki's feelings. Speech act of giving advice can be seen in the sentence "*sukoshi ki o tsuketa hō ga ī kamo ne*" that indicated by the using of sentence pattern *~ta houga ii* that is used for giving advice in Japanese. That speech act is included in negative politeness strategy because the speaker being pessimistic about the relationship between Mitsuki and Kamiyama. By using this strategy, the speaker shows an attitude of uncertainty about what the interlocutor was doing. This pessimistic attitude is followed by reasons why the speaker thinks like that. The speaker didn't want to show his optimism by assuming that the interlocutor would have happy relationship with Kamiyama.

In addition, in the conversation, negative politeness strategy is also marked by the attitude of the speaker stating something as a general rule. In the sentence "*osanai tomodachitte itte mo otoko nandakara*", the speaker stated in general that in his view all men can do something that hurt women's feelings. To reduce the threat to the interlocutor's face, the speaker discussed a common problem in general. The speaker was impossible to say clearly that Kamiyama was probably a bad guy for Mitsuki.

### 3.4 Off-Record Politeness Strategy

- (11) Haruki : *Koe o ōkī yo.*

Your voice is so loud.

(Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai, 2:23)

At the library Sakura was talking without realized her voice was too loud, so Haruki said Sakura's voice was very loud. Haruki's words indirectly giving advice to Sakura to lower her voice, so people who were in the library were not disturbed. The speech act in the conversation is included in off-record politeness strategy. In this strategy, the speaker doesn't convey communication clearly and allows the interlocutor to interpret what the speaker said. In this conversation, Haruki did not give advice to Sakura clearly, so Sakura had to understand the meaning of what Haruki said. In this conversation, the speaker expresses his opinion through what he hears to quip the interlocutor who often speaks loudly at wrong times and disturbs other people. The speaker does not directly advise the interlocutor to be silent but gives advice indirectly through insinuation. By using this strategy, the speaker intends to take action threaten the interlocutor's face, but he doesn't want to be responsible.

- (12) Haruki : *Ano sa hitotsu oshiete oite age, kitto yakunitatsu janai ka nā. Ano ko wa shitsukoi ningen wa kiraida sōda yo. Mae no kareshi ga sōdattarashi.*

I'll tell you something. Maybe it can help you. She hates people who always curbing her. It seems like her ex-boyfriend looks like that.

(Kimi no Suizou o Tabetai, 55:42)

Haruki just went out of Sakura's house he was suddenly hit by Sakura's ex-boyfriend. Sakura's ex-boyfriend is annoyed that he thought Haruki and Sakura were dating. Haruki said that he and Sakura weren't dating and told him to stop curbing Sakura because Sakura hated it so much. The speech act of giving advice is included in off-record politeness strategy. The speech act of giving advice was conveyed by Haruki indirectly. By using off-record politeness strategy, the speaker advised the interlocutor by quipped the interlocutor who often curbing Sakura. The speaker doesn't specify to whom the words are intended to hide the real meaning of the speaker. Therefore, the speaker let the interlocutor interpret by himself what the speaker was said.

The findings then suggest that the politeness strategy is used to maintain self-esteem, so the interlocutor feels appreciated when the speaker using speech acts. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that it cannot be said that a politeness strategy will be better than other politeness strategies. The strategy will be said to be polite if it is used in the right context and situation. In giving advice, the speaker can't force the interlocutor to be able to follow the advice. Al-Aadeli (2013) also explains that there is no compulsion in giving advice because the interlocutor can accept or reject the advice because purpose of the advice is to convey actions that can be helpful for the interlocutor.

In giving advice, the speaker needs to pay attention to the use of speech strategies so the advice can be received well by the interlocutor. Although speech act of giving

advice is suave than directive speech act, speech act of giving advice also potentially result the occurrence of face threatening act (FTA). Brown and Levinson (1987) explained that the speech act of giving advice may create FTA because it puts the interlocutor in the position to do something that was asked by the speaker, therefore limiting the interlocutor's freedom to act and places the speaker in position of power as someone who knows what the best for the interlocutor is. The speech act of giving advice is a complex speech act that's why in using this speech act, we must be careful not to offend the interlocutor. Barenjee and Carrel (1988, as cited in Al-Aadeli, 2013) state that there are several things that need to be considered in giving advice, such as the urgency of the advice, the level of shyness in the situation, and the social distance and power between the speaker and the interlocutor.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that most of the speech act in giving advice in Japanese uses the sentence pattern *~ta houga ii*, *~tara ii* or *~ba ii* which have a function to giving advice to others. The speech act of giving advice in Japanese based on their politeness parameters, marked by the use of formal and informal forms.

The data found in this study regarding politeness strategy were amounted to 36 data with 9 bald on record strategy, 17 positive politeness strategy, 3 negative politeness strategy, and 7 off record politeness strategy. Based on the results, positive politeness strategy is used more often when giving advice in Japanese. This is because in communication, Japanese people tend to avoid hurting the other person's feelings. By using positive politeness strategies, social relations between the speaker and the interlocutor can work well and minimize the occurrence of face threatening act (FTA).

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