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From Street to Elite: Analyzing Politeness Strategies in a Socially Divided Bronx in *Vampires vs. The Bronx*

Ida Ismiyati^{*}, M.R. Nababan¹, Riyadi Santosa¹, Tri Wiratno

Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural and Sciences, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta 57123, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This study aims to (1) identify the types of politeness strategies and speech acts used by characters in the film *Vampires vs. the Bronx* and (2) analyze how these strategies reflect the characters' social class backgrounds. Using a qualitative descriptive approach within a single case study framework, the research examines linguistic data from the film's dialogues. Data were selected through purposive sampling based on relevant criteria and collected via document analysis and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Validity was ensured through triangulation of data sources and methods. The findings reveal that characters from lower social classes often use positive politeness strategies, marked by Black-English dialect greetings, particularly in directive speech acts. In contrast, characters from higher social classes frequently use off-record strategies, reflecting cunning and negative traits, predominantly in assertive and expressive speech acts. These results highlight the interplay between language use and social class distinctions, offering insights into power dynamics and social identity as depicted in media. This study contributes to sociolinguistic and media research by demonstrating how speech acts and politeness strategies can reflect broader societal structures and power relations.

Keywords: Politeness Strategy; Speech Act; *Vampires vs. The Bronx*

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Ida Ismiyati, Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural and Sciences, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta 57123, Indonesia; Email: idaismiyati59@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

In linguistic and sociolinguistic studies, language is often seen as a key element in expressing and shaping social identity, including social class, power, and relationships between individuals or groups in society. One way in which language serves to reflect these differences is through **politeness strategies**, which specifically show the extent to which an individual manages their social relations with others during communication. **Politeness strategies** are mechanisms used by speakers to manage self-image and maintain one's "face" (social identity), either positive (solidarity and closeness) or negative (avoidance of confrontation or intrusion)^[1]. In this context, politeness strategies depend not only on individual choices but also on the social and cultural products that involve social differences and hierarchies in society.

Politeness strategies are a cornerstone of sociolinguistic inquiry because they offer insights into how people navigate social hierarchies and cultural expectations through language. Brown and Levinson's seminal politeness theory categorizes these strategies into two main types: positive politeness, which seeks to establish solidarity and affirm group belonging, and negative politeness, which respects personal boundaries and maintains social distance^[1]. Both types of strategies are influenced by the speaker's and addressee's social positions, power relations, and cultural background. For example, individuals in subordinate social positions might use positive politeness to create rapport with those of higher status, while those in dominant positions might rely on negative politeness to assert authority and maintain distance. These dynamics are evident not only in everyday communication but also in cultural products such as literature, theater, and film, where language serves as a powerful tool for representing social structures and identities.

As a cultural product, film serves as a medium to represent, critique, and even perpetuate social class distinctions. Through dialogue, character interactions, and linguistic choices, films often mirror societal structures, offering a lens through which audiences can examine the complexities of power, identity, and social inequality. One film that exemplifies this intersection of language and social class is *Vampires vs. The Bronx*, a Netflix horror-comedy. The film follows a group of young people from the Bronx, New York, as they attempt to save their neighborhood from an invasion of vampires. Beneath its comedic and supernatural storyline

lies a rich sociolinguistic subtext that reveals how language reflects and reinforces social class distinctions.

The Bronx, which serves as the primary setting for the film, is a borough historically associated with ethnic diversity, socioeconomic marginalization, and cultural vibrancy. It has long been a symbol of resilience and community solidarity, particularly among Afro-American and Latino populations. However, it is also a space marked by systemic inequality and social stratification, making it an ideal backdrop for exploring the interplay between language, identity, and power. In *Vampires vs. The Bronx*, the language used by the characters from this marginalized community is not just a reflection of their personal identities but also a representation of their social and cultural context. The characters' use of Black English Vernacular (BEV), also known as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), serves as a marker of group identity and solidarity, reinforcing their shared experiences and cultural heritage.

The linguistic choices of the Bronx characters align with positive politeness strategies. Through casual greetings, inclusive speech, and expressions of camaraderie, these characters use language to strengthen social bonds and assert their collective identity. For example, their use of BEV features such as double negatives, habitual "be," and slang not only reflects their cultural background but also fosters a sense of belonging and mutual support within their community. This use of language aligns with sociolinguistic theories that emphasize the role of dialects and vernaculars in constructing social identity and resisting cultural assimilation^[2, 3].

In contrast, the vampires in the film, who symbolize a higher social class with power and privilege, use a markedly different linguistic style. Their speech is characterized by formal, structured, and distant language, reflecting negative politeness strategies that emphasize social distance and hierarchical authority. This linguistic contrast underscores the power dynamics between the two groups, with the vampires' language serving as a tool for asserting dominance and control. By juxtaposing the informal, community-oriented speech of the Bronx characters with the formal, hierarchical language of the vampires, the film highlights the role of language in constructing and maintaining social class distinctions.

Despite the extensive body of research on politeness strategies, most studies focus on interpersonal communica-

tion within real-life social settings, such as workplace interactions, family dynamics, or intercultural communication. While some research addresses linguistic representations in media, these works often analyze broad themes such as stereotypes, gender, or identity without focusing on the intersection of politeness strategies and social class. Furthermore, existing studies on social class representation in film tend to prioritize visual and narrative elements, often overlooking the nuanced role of language in constructing class identities. This gap becomes particularly significant in the context of contemporary media, where language plays an increasingly central role in shaping public perceptions of social hierarchies and cultural identities.

This research addresses the lack of studies that explicitly examine the intersection of politeness strategies and social class representation in film. While previous works have explored the sociolinguistics of dialects and the pragmatics of politeness, few have applied these frameworks to analyze how language in film reflects and critiques social structures. By focusing on *Vampires vs. The Bronx*, this study contributes to filling this gap by demonstrating how linguistic choices in film dialogue function as markers of social class and power relations. Unlike traditional studies that isolate linguistic phenomena from their cultural and narrative contexts, this research integrates sociolinguistic and media studies perspectives to provide a holistic analysis of language use in film.

Building on foundational theories of politeness^[1] and sociolinguistic identity^[4], this study emphasizes the dual role of language as both a reflection of social structures and a means of negotiating identity and power. Mills argues that language in social contexts is not merely a tool for communication but also a mechanism for asserting or challenging power relations^[5]. In the context of *Vampires vs. The Bronx*, these theories provide a framework for analyzing how the characters' linguistic choices reveal their social positions and relationships within the broader societal framework.

Furthermore, this research explores the implications of these linguistic patterns for understanding media representations of social class. Films like *Vampires vs. The Bronx* do more than entertain; they shape cultural narratives and influence societal attitudes toward issues such as inequality, marginalization, and resistance. By analyzing the politeness strategies used by the film's characters, this study sheds light

on how language choices in media both reflect and challenge societal norms, offering insights into the broader cultural and political dynamics at play.

This research also addresses the temporal and spatial dimensions of language use in *Vampires vs. The Bronx*. The film's setting in the Bronx is not only geographically significant but also temporally relevant, reflecting contemporary issues such as gentrification, racial inequality, and cultural resilience. The language choices made by the film's characters are deeply influenced by these social and cultural conditions, making them a valuable lens for examining the intersection of language, identity, and power in modern society.

In conclusion, this study aims to analyze the use of politeness strategies in *Vampires vs. The Bronx* to uncover how language choices reflect social class distinctions and power dynamics. By adopting a sociolinguistic and pragmatic approach, the research explores how politeness strategies function as mechanisms for asserting identity, maintaining solidarity, or reinforcing hierarchy. Additionally, it examines the broader implications of these linguistic patterns for understanding media representations of social class and their relevance in contemporary discussions on social justice and cultural identity.

By focusing on the interplay of language, social identity, and power, this research contributes to the growing discourse on the sociolinguistics of media. It highlights the critical role of language in shaping and challenging social hierarchies, offering new perspectives on how linguistic choices in film can both reflect and reshape societal norms. In doing so, it underscores the importance of analyzing language as a cultural and political tool, particularly in the context of contemporary media narratives.

2. Methods

In line with the naturalistic approach, the study adopts a perspective that understands meaning in its cultural and situational context. As Santosa points out, naturalistic research seeks to view phenomena as holistic entities, inseparable from the context in which they occur^[6]. In this study, the categorization of politeness strategies and their social class implications is not based on abstract theorization but is rooted in the contextual dynamics within the film.

The study focuses on identifying the politeness strate-

gies employed by the characters in *Vampires vs. The Bronx*, particularly as they reflect social class distinctions. Specifically, the study examines the translation of these strategies from English to Indonesian. The research does not aim to generalize its findings but instead offers a nuanced, context-dependent understanding of how politeness strategies function as markers of social class. The study assumes that the results are idiographic, with the findings bound to the specific context and time of the study^[6]. While generalizations across broader populations are not sought, the study's results offer insights into how linguistic choices within a specific context can reveal underlying social dynamics.

Furthermore, the study assumes a cause-and-effect relationship between the use of politeness strategies and the social class they represent. The hypothesis is that the politeness strategies used by the characters correlate with their social class positions, with higher-status characters using more formal, distant forms of politeness and lower-status characters utilizing more informal, solidarity-building forms.

Data Sources and Sampling

The primary data source for this research is the film *Vampires vs. The Bronx*, which provides a rich text for analyzing language, social class, and politeness strategies. The film, which was released by Netflix in 2020, uses English as its original language, and the dialogue is available with Indonesian subtitles. As such, the film serves as an ideal corpus for examining how politeness strategies are translated and how they reflect social class distinctions.

The setting of the film in the Bronx, a New York City neighborhood often associated with poverty, crime, and social marginalization, provides an additional layer of sociolinguistic significance. The characters in the film, who come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, employ specific linguistic strategies to navigate social relationships, both within their community and in their interactions with external forces, such as the vampires. These interactions form the basis for understanding how language reflects social hierarchy.

Participant Selection

Participants in the study are the characters in the film, whose utterances provide data on the linguistic representation of social class. The study's goal is to understand how these characters' social class identities are mediated through their language choices, particularly through the employment

of politeness strategies. The events within the film, which include both everyday interactions among characters in the Bronx and supernatural encounters with vampires, will also provide data for analysis. These events are crucial for contextualizing the utterances in relation to the characters' social positions.

This study employs purposive sampling to select both the data and the sources. The selection of the film is based on the following criteria:

1. The film portrays a social structure with clear distinctions between social classes, which is essential for analyzing how language reflects these divisions.
2. Social class distinctions are not only represented through non-verbal cues (e.g., body language, dress) but also through the verbal strategies the characters use, providing a rich corpus of data for analysis.
3. The film offers Indonesian subtitles, making it suitable for analyzing both the original English dialogue and its Indonesian translation.
4. The film is widely accessible, ensuring that the data is available to a broad audience and can be easily referenced by future researchers.

Informants Selection

In terms of informants, the study involves linguistic experts who are familiar with both the English and Indonesian languages and who have some background in sociolinguistics or pragmatics. These informants will be involved in evaluating the quality of the translation, particularly the extent to which politeness strategies are preserved or altered during the translation process.

The selection of informants is based on the following criteria:

1. Willingness to participate as raters to assess the quality of translation in relation to politeness strategies.
2. A foundational understanding of linguistics, particularly sociolinguistics and pragmatics, which is necessary for understanding the nuances of politeness strategies.
3. A background in linguistic studies, ensuring a high level of expertise in the area of interest.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research applies document analysis (or content analysis) as the primary method for data analysis. Document analysis is employed to identify the types of politeness

strategies used by the characters in the film and to categorize these strategies based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. The analysis will focus on how politeness strategies are used to signal social class, with particular attention to the differences in politeness strategies between the lower-class characters (e.g., the young residents of the Bronx) and the higher-class vampire characters.

To ensure the validity of the findings, the study employs triangulation, specifically data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation involves the use of multiple sources, including the film script, subtitles, and informant evaluations, to validate the findings. Methodological triangulation involves combining document analysis with Focus Group Discussions (FGD), where informants will provide feedback on the interpretation of the politeness strategies and their social class implications. This triangulation process enhances the robustness and reliability of the data analysis.

Identification and Categorization of Politeness Strategies

To enhance the categorization of politeness strategies, more specific criteria will be outlined. For instance, the strategies will be categorized as positive or negative politeness, with clear examples from the film's dialogues. The use of formal or informal language, addressing strategies (such as terms of address or honorifics), and speech acts (such as requests, apologies, or compliments) will be considered. Additionally, the study will detail specific linguistic markers, such as modality and hedging, to differentiate between varying levels of politeness.

Validation and Rater Reliability

To further strengthen the methodology, the study will incorporate inter-rater reliability assessments, where multiple raters (linguistic experts) will independently classify the politeness strategies in the film. The agreement between raters will be measured, and discrepancies will be discussed to ensure consistency in classification. Furthermore, additional validation measures will be used, including expert consultations and comparisons with existing literature on politeness strategies in media.

Inductive Analysis Approach

The data were analyzed using an inductive approach, as outlined by Spradley (1980), where the researcher will move

from specific observations to broader generalizations, uncovering patterns in the language use that reflect social class distinctions. This approach is in keeping with the ethnographic tradition, which emphasizes the importance of context and meaning within cultural settings.

By strengthening the categorization of politeness strategies, clarifying the relationship between linguistic choices and social class, and incorporating validation measures, this methodology will provide a more rigorous framework for analyzing the complex relationship between language use and social class representation in film media. These improvements will ensure greater reliability and reproducibility of the study's findings while contributing valuable insights to the fields of sociolinguistics and media analysis.

3. Results

After analyzing the distribution of data related to politeness strategies within both lower and higher social classes, the findings are classified based on the stages of the narrative text structure. This classification aims to gain a deeper understanding of the social function of the politeness strategies as a whole. The distribution of the data, comparing the politeness strategies used by characters from lower and higher social classes, is presented in **Table 1**.

In the *orientation* phase, a total of 77 instances (22.06%) of politeness strategies were found, distributed across both social classes. In the lower social class, 70 instances (20.06%) were identified, with various politeness strategies such as positive politeness realized through directive speech acts (32 instances, 9.17%), expressive (10 instances, 2.87%), assertive (3 instances, 0.86%), and commissive (2 instances, 0.57%). Additionally, *Bald on Record* (BoR) strategy appeared in directive speech acts (13 instances, 3.72%) and assertive speech (1 instance, 0.29%), while negative politeness was realized in directive (7 instances, 2.01%) and assertive (1 instance, 0.29%) speech acts. The combination of positive and negative politeness was found in directive speech (1 instance, 0.29%). In contrast, for the higher social class, only positive politeness strategies were found, realized through expressive speech acts (4 instances, 1.15%), assertive (2 instances, 0.57%), and directive (1 instance, 0.29%).

Table 1. Comparison of Politeness Strategies in Low and High Social Classes Based on Generic Structure.

Generic Structure	Social Class	Politeness Strategy	The Realization of Speech Act	Σ	%	Σ	%
Orientation	Low	Positive	Directive	32	9.17%	70	20.06%
			Expressive	10	2.87%		
			Assertive	3	0.86%		
			Commissive	2	0.57%		
		BoR	13	3.72%			
	Negative	Directive	7	2.01%			
		Assertive	1	0.29%			
	Pos-Neg	Directive	1	0.29%			
	High	Positive	Expressive	4	1.15%		
			Assertive	2	0.57%		
Directive			1	0.29%			
Total						77	22.06%
Complication	Low	Positive	Directive	67	19.20%	184	57.72%
			Expressive	18	5.16%		
		BoR	Assertive	12	3.44%		
			Commissive	4	1.15%		
			Directive	61	17.48%		
		Negative	Directive	14	4.01%		
			Expressive	1	0.29%		
	Pos-Neg	Directive	7	2.01%			
	High	Positive	Expressive	8	2.29%		
			Assertive	6	1.72%		
			Directive	5	1.43%		
			Commissive	1	0.29%		
		Negative	Directive	3	0.86%		
			Expressive	1	0.29%		
			Assertive	1	0.29%		
Off Record		Directive	4	1.15%			
	Assertive	1	0.29%				
Pos-Neg	Directive	4	1.15%				
BoR	Directive	3	0.86%				
Total						221	63.32%
Evaluation	Low	Positive	Directive	9	2.58%	29	8.31%
			Assertive	2	0.57%		
			Ekspresif	2	0.57%		
			Commissive	2	0.57%		
	BoR	Directive	9	2.58%			
	Negative	Directive	4	1.15%			
	Pos-Neg	Directive	1	0.29%			
High	Positive	Expressive	2	0.57%			
Total						31	8.88%
Resolution	Low	Positive	Directive	10	2.87%	18	5.16%
			Expressive	4	1.15%		
		BoR	Directive	3	0.86%		
	Negative	Directive	1	0.29%			
	Tinggi	Positive	Directive	1	0.29%		
		Off Record	Directive	1	0.29%		
Total						20	5.73%
Total Utterances Containing Politeness Strategies						349	100%

Moving to the *complication* phase, a total of 221 instances (63.32%) of politeness strategies were found, with 184 instances (57.72%) in the lower social class and 37 instances (10.60%) in the higher social class. The lower social class exhibited a variety of politeness strategies, including positive politeness (directive speech: 67 instances, 19.20%; expressive: 18 instances, 5.16%; assertive: 12 instances, 3.44%; commissive: 4 instances, 1.15%), Bald on Record in directive speech (61 instances, 17.48%), and negative politeness (directive speech: 14 instances, 4.01%; expressive: 1 instance, 0.29%). Additionally, a combination of positive and negative politeness was realized in directive speech (7 instances, 2.01%). For the higher social class, positive politeness strategies were realized in expressive (8 instances, 2.29%), assertive (6 instances, 1.72%), directive (5 instances, 1.41%), and commissive (1 instance, 0.29%) speech acts. Negative politeness appeared in directive (3 instances, 0.86%), expressive (1 instance, 0.29%), and assertive (1 instance, 0.29%) speech. The *off record* strategy was found in directive (4 instances, 1.15%) and assertive (1 instance, 0.29%) speech acts. A combination of positive and negative politeness also appeared in directive speech (4 instances, 1.15%), while Bald on Record was realized in directive speech (3 instances, 0.86%).

In the *evaluation* phase, 31 instances (8.88%) of politeness strategies were found, with 29 instances (8.31%) from characters of the lower social class and 2 instances (0.57%) from characters of the higher social class. The lower social class featured positive politeness strategies in directive (9 instances, 2.58%), assertive (2 instances, 0.57%), expressive (2 instances, 0.57%), and commissive (2 instances, 0.57%) speech acts, as well as Bald on Record in directive speech (9 instances, 2.58%) and negative politeness in directive speech (4 instances, 1.15%). A combined strategy of positive and negative politeness appeared in directive speech (1 instance, 0.29%). In contrast, for the higher social class, only positive politeness was found, realized in directive speech (1 instance, 0.29%).

Finally, in the *resolution* phase, 20 instances (5.72%) of politeness strategies were found, with 18 instances (5.16%) from characters of the lower social class and 2 instances (0.57%) from characters of the higher social class. The lower social class used positive politeness strategies in directive (10 instances, 2.87%) and expressive (4 instances,

1.15%) speech acts, Bald on Record in directive speech (3 instances, 0.86%), and negative politeness in directive speech (1 instance, 0.29%). For the higher social class, 2 instances (0.57%) of politeness strategies were identified, involving positive politeness (directive speech: 1 instance, 0.29%) and the *off record* strategy (directive speech: 1 instance, 0.29%).

4. Discussion

In *Vampires vs. the Bronx*, the orientation phase introduces the characters, setting, and cultural context while employing various politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory outlines four primary strategies: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, and off record, alongside hybrid strategies that blend positive and negative politeness. Across the film, positive politeness is the dominant strategy, followed by bald on record, negative politeness, and hybrid strategies.

The use of positive politeness in the film emphasizes solidarity and familiarity, particularly within groups that share a common social background. Characters from lower social classes often use positive politeness to foster camaraderie, employing in-group markers such as Black English dialects and informal greetings. This strategy creates warmth and minimizes threats to social harmony, even between unfamiliar characters. This aligns with Brown and Levinson's concept of positive politeness, which promotes shared identity and positive relationships^[1].

Negative politeness appears when characters wish to avoid imposing on others, using indirect requests or hedging to preserve social distance. Bald on record strategies, which involve more direct language, are employed in close relationships or urgent situations, especially among familiar characters. This is consistent with Brown and Levinson's and Kasper's assertions that bald on record strategies are used in contexts where familiarity or urgency is present^[1].

Hybrid strategies that combine positive and negative politeness are also evident in the film. For instance, Miguel's direct but polite requests, such as "Y'all gonna help me put up these posters, or what?" combine both authority and camaraderie, showing how solidarity can coexist with face-saving measures.

The characters' social classes influence the use of these strategies. Lower-class characters predominantly use posi-

tive politeness, especially in directives, as a way to mitigate face threats and strengthen solidarity. In contrast, higher-class characters employ positive politeness more superficially, using it as a tool for manipulation or to maintain social distance. This reflects Ernovilinda's findings that characters from different cultural backgrounds use similar politeness strategies, though the contexts and relationships differ^[7].

Negative politeness, in line with previous studies, serves to balance authority and friendship. Miguel, despite being a leader, uses indirect language in his directives to avoid burdening his friends. This is similar to Nhat's study, where both positive and negative face were preserved within the same utterance, reinforcing the flexibility of politeness strategies^[8].

Comparing this study with Aulia's research on films with tense situations, the use of bald on record in *Vampires vs. the Bronx* is minimal compared to Aulia's findings, where bald on record was more prevalent in high-tension scenes^[9]. In *Vampires vs. the Bronx*, bald on record occurs more in urgent situations or among very familiar characters.

The antagonistic characters from higher social classes often use positive politeness insincerely, as seen in Vivian's exaggerated compliments or Frank's fake cooperation. The absence of negative politeness and bald on record strategies in their speech underscores their deceitful and manipulative nature, typical of horror genre antagonists.

In the complication phase, all four politeness strategies—positive, negative, bald on record, and off record—are used. Positive politeness predominates in directive speech acts, reflecting efforts to foster camaraderie and solidarity, even in the face of conflict. This aligns with the generic structure of complications, where conflicts arise and strategies for resolution are introduced. Positive politeness is key to fostering group cohesion and a sense of shared goals, especially among Miguel and his friends in resisting external threats.

Bald on record strategies are common in exchanges among close friends and family, where urgency reduces the need for politeness strategies. Negative politeness appears when characters try to minimize the imposition on others, often through indirectness. Hybrid strategies, blending positive and negative politeness, occur when speakers aim to balance solidarity with respect. Off-record strategies, often used by antagonistic characters, add tension and ambiguity,

reflecting manipulative traits.

In comparison to earlier research, this study extends the analysis by incorporating hybrid politeness strategies and linking them to narrative structure, a feature not emphasized in previous works^[10, 11]. Studies such as *Desta*, *Dirgeyasa*, and *Sinaga* focus on the use of positive politeness to avoid conflict due to power asymmetry, but in *Vampires vs. the Bronx*, positive politeness serves to promote unity rather than avoid conflict.

During the evaluation phase, positive politeness remains the dominant strategy, with hybrid positive-negative politeness, negative politeness, and bald-on-record strategies also present. Brown and Levinson's theory suggests that positive politeness minimizes face-threatening acts by fostering solidarity. In this phase, the protagonists use positive politeness to strengthen unity and resolve conflicts, often incorporating group identity markers and expressions of goodwill.

Bald-on-record strategies are used to express urgency and intimacy, especially in directive speech acts. Negative politeness helps mitigate the imposition of directives, and hybrid strategies combine solidarity with tact, especially in high-stakes scenarios. This aligns with studies like which highlight how power, distance, and rank of imposition influence politeness strategies. This study adds to the body of research by identifying Black English as a unique marker of positive politeness, which previous studies focused on general identity markers like honorifics^[10, 11].

This study also challenges earlier assumptions by identifying negative politeness in non-hierarchical contexts, driven by urgency or imposition^[12]. Hybrid strategies, as seen in Nhat reflect the simultaneous protection of both positive and negative faces in one utterance, a dynamic not thoroughly discussed in Brown & Levinson's framework^[13].

Social class influences the use of politeness strategies. Lower-class characters employ positive politeness more frequently, particularly in directive, expressive, commissive, and assertive acts, reflecting their efforts to resolve conflicts. Conversely, higher-class antagonists use positive politeness more superficially in expressive acts, emphasizing their dominance in the narrative's evaluation phase. These findings reflect previous research^[13–15] on the impact of social class on politeness dynamics.

The evaluation phase of *Vampires vs. the Bronx* re-

veals a predominance of positive politeness, accompanied by hybrid strategies and negative politeness. The study underscores the film's theme of resistance against oppression, with politeness strategies playing a crucial role in resolving conflicts. The protagonists use positive politeness to foster solidarity, while antagonists from higher social classes use off-record strategies to manipulate and maintain control. These findings offer new insights into how social class, urgency, and narrative structure influence the use of politeness strategies in film.

5. Conclusions

This study reveals that the dominant politeness strategy used in the speech of both low and high social class characters in *Vampires vs. The Bronx* is positive politeness, followed by negative politeness, bald on record, off record, and hybrid positive-negative strategies. Politeness strategies primarily appear in directive speech acts but are also present, to a lesser extent, in assertive, commissive, and expressive acts.

For low social class characters, positive politeness dominates, marked by Black English greetings, inclusive principles, and expressions of sympathy. Bald on record, negative politeness, and hybrid strategies are also used. High social class characters, however, employ off-record politeness—a strategy absent from low-class characters.

Politeness strategies are most frequent in the complication stage, the narrative's core, where social interactions intensify. Low-class characters predominantly use positive politeness and bald on record strategies, especially in directive and expressive acts. Meanwhile, high-class characters utilize a broader range of strategies, including off record, across all speech acts.

In the orientation stage, low-class characters emphasize positive politeness to reflect their social closeness and camaraderie. High-class characters also employ positive politeness to establish their antagonist roles. Bald on record and hybrid strategies are unique to low-class characters, illustrating a more explicit portrayal of their social and narrative significance as protagonists.

During the evaluation stage, positive politeness dominates for both social classes, as interactions between protagonists and antagonists intensify. Low-class characters

uniquely use bald on record and hybrid strategies to assert resistance against oppression.

In the resolution stage, where low-class characters triumph over their high-class counterparts, positive politeness remains dominant. This strategy facilitates tactical collaboration led by Miguel, the protagonist. Bald on record strategies appear in urgent directives, while negative politeness is used to soften commands, both unique to low-class characters. Conversely, high-class characters exclusively use off-record politeness to issue oppressive, derogatory, or violent commands, underscoring their antagonist role.

This study highlights the intersection of language, power, and social class in cinematic narratives. The findings suggest that politeness strategies serve as linguistic tools to reflect and reinforce characters' social identities, relationships, and roles within the narrative. For low-class characters, diverse politeness strategies emphasize their resilience, solidarity, and centrality as protagonists. In contrast, the selective use of off-record politeness by high-class characters underscores their oppressive and manipulative nature.

These insights have significant implications for sociolinguistic and pragmatic studies, particularly in analyzing how politeness strategies function within fictional discourse to reflect social hierarchies and interpersonal dynamics. Furthermore, the findings offer practical implications for screenwriters and media creators, providing guidance in constructing characters and dialogues that authentically represent diverse social contexts and relationships. The nuanced approach to politeness strategies in this study deepens our understanding of how language is used to navigate power structures, and serves as a valuable resource for future sociolinguistic and media analyses.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, I.I.; methodology, I.I., R.S., M.R.N., T.W.; validation, I.I., R.S., M.R.N., T.W.; formal analysis, I.I., R.S., M.R.N., T.W.; investigation, I.I., R.S., M.R.N., T.W.; data curation, I.I., M.R.N., R.S., T.W.; writing—original draft preparation, I.I., R.S., M.R.N., T.W.; writing—review and editing, I.I., R.S., M.R.N., T.W. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the reported results is confidential and cannot be shared due to privacy restrictions.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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