

**POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN ONLINE FIGHT OF X
VERSUS THREAD BETWEEN ELON MUSK AND MARK
ZUCKERBERG**

THESIS

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IBRAHIM MALANG**

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**POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN ONLINE FIGHT OF X VERSUS
THREAD BETWEEN ELON MUSK AND MARK ZUCKERBERG**

THESIS

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Sarjana Sastra (S.S)

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Malang, 04 December 2024

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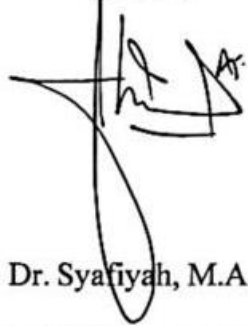
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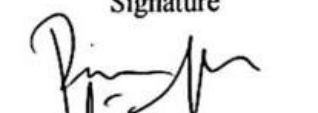
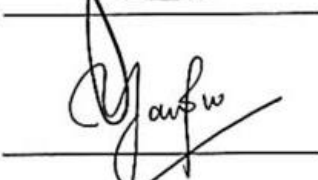
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MOTTO

Walk upon the earth and explore its paths, for only through effort will you find
His sustenance and wisdom.

“It is He who made the earth tame for you – so walk among its slopes and eat of
His provision. And to Him is the resurrection.”

-Al-Mulk:15

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis first and foremost to myself. I in the past felt pessimistic when working on this thesis because doubts had appeared in my life. Today and forever, I will try to be the best and be successful. I finished this thesis by imparting a sense of belief that this is part of the gift that will be present in my life. All of this also happened with the support, prayers and help of my family, especially my beloved parents.

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understanding, and quiet strength have been my greatest source of comfort and inspiration. Thank you for standing by me, for lifting me up when I felt defeated, and for always seeing the best in me. This achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

To each of you who have walked this journey with me, know that this thesis would not have been possible without your presence in my life. You are my greatest blessings, and I am forever indebted to your kindness and love.

Suggestions and helpful criticism are greatly welcomed in this thesis. The researcher hopes that this thesis will be useful and informative for readers as a researcher.

Malang, 04 December 2024
The Researcher,

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ABSTRACT

Nisa', Aifa Khilyatun (2024) "Politeness Strategies In Online Fight Of Thread Versus X Between Mark Zuckerberg And Elon Musk" Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Dr. Syafiyah, M.A.

Keywords: Politeness strategies, Prominent figure, social media, X, Threads

This study aims to analyze the politeness strategies used by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg in their online interactions on social media platforms, X (formerly known as Twitter) and Threads. Using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, this research identifies various strategies employed by both figures in delivering their messages to the audience. The data is categorized based on types of politeness strategies, such as bald on record, off record, positive politeness, and negative politeness. The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach, where the data is collected from conversations between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg on social media from August 5 to August 20, 2023. The results show that Elon Musk frequently uses bald-on-record strategies with elements of positive politeness to build closeness with the audience, while Mark Zuckerberg tends to use off-record strategies with elements of negative politeness to convey criticism subtly without direct confrontation. The use of humor, irony, and ambiguity is also found to be key elements in maintaining social relationships and avoiding tension in their conversations. This study provides insights into how politeness strategies play a role in the online interactions of public figures on social media, and how they navigate effective communication with a global audience. The findings also contribute to a broader understanding of the use of politeness in digital communication, particularly on social media platforms.

ABSTRAK

Nisa', Aifa Khilyatun (2024) “Strategi Kesopanan dalam Pertarungan Online di Threads versus X antara Mark Zuckerberg dan Elon Musk” Tesis Sarjana. Jurusan Sastra Inggris Fakultas Ilmu Budaya Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing Dr. Syafiyah, M.A.

Kata kunci: Strategi kesopanan, Tokoh teknologi, media sosial, X, Threads

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi kesopanan yang digunakan oleh Elon Musk dan Mark Zuckerberg dalam interaksi online mereka di platform media sosial, X (sebelumnya dikenal sebagai Twitter) dan Threads. Dengan menggunakan teori kesopanan dari Brown dan Levinson, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi berbagai strategi yang diterapkan oleh kedua tokoh tersebut dalam menyampaikan pesan kepada audiens mereka. Data dikategorikan berdasarkan jenis strategi kesopanan, seperti bald on record, off record, positive politeness, dan negative politeness. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif deskriptif, di mana data dikumpulkan dari percakapan antara Elon Musk dan Mark Zuckerberg di media sosial dari tanggal 5 hingga 20 Agustus 2023. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Elon Musk sering menggunakan strategi bald on record dengan elemen positive politeness untuk membangun kedekatan dengan audiens, sementara Mark Zuckerberg cenderung menggunakan strategi off record dengan elemen negative politeness untuk menyampaikan kritik secara halus tanpa konfrontasi langsung. Penggunaan humor, ironi, dan ambiguitas juga ditemukan sebagai elemen kunci dalam menjaga hubungan sosial dan menghindari ketegangan dalam percakapan mereka. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan mengenai bagaimana strategi kesopanan berperan dalam interaksi online figur publik di media sosial, serta bagaimana mereka menavigasi komunikasi yang efektif dengan audiens global. Temuan ini juga berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih luas tentang penggunaan kesopanan dalam komunikasi digital, khususnya di platform media sosial.

خاتمة

نساء، عيفة خلياتون (2024) "استراتيجيات الإدارة في المعركة عبر الإنترنت على الخيوط مقابل بين مارك زوكربيرج وإيلون ماسك" أطروحة بكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الثقافية، جامعة مولانا مالك X إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية، مالانج. المشرف د. سيفية، م.أ.

الكلمات المفتاحية: استراتيجيات الإدارة، براون وليفينسون، إيلون ماسك، مارك زوكربيرج، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل استراتيجيات الإدارة التي يستخدمها إيلون ماسك ومارك زوكربيرج في تفاعلاتهما عبر الإنترنت و Brown باستخدام نظرية الإدارة لـ Threads (المعروفة سابقاً باسم تويتر) و X، على منصات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي يحدد هذا البحث مختلف الاستراتيجيات التي يطبقها هذان الشخصان في إيصال رسائلهما إلى جمهورهما. تم تصنيف Levinson، negative politeness، و positive politeness، "off record و bald on record" البيانات بناءً على نوع استراتيجيات الإدارة، مثل الطريقة المستخدمة في هذا البحث هي النهج شبه النوعي باستخدام المنظور ما بعد الإيجابي، حيث تم جمع البيانات. politeness. من المحادثات بين إيلون ماسك ومارك زوكربيرج على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في الفترة من 5 إلى 20 أغسطس 2023 لبناء positive politeness مع عناصر bald on record أظهرت نتائج البحث أن إيلون ماسك غالباً ما يستخدم استراتيجية negative politeness مع عناصر off record علاقة وثيقة مع الجمهور، بينما يميل مارك زوكربيرج إلى استخدام استراتيجية لتقديم النقد بشكل لطيف دون مواجهة مباشرة. تم أيضاً اكتشاف أن استخدام الفكاهة، والسخرية، والغموض يمثل عناصر رئيسية في الحفاظ على العلاقات الاجتماعية وتجنب التوتر في محادثتهما. يوفر هذا البحث رؤى حول كيفية دور استراتيجيات الإدارة في التفاعلات عبر الإنترنت للشخصيات العامة على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، وكيفية إدارتهم للتواصل الفعال مع جمهور عالمي. تساهم هذه النتائج أيضاً في فهم أوسع لاستخدام الإدارة في التواصل الرقمي، خاصة على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS COVER	i
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP	ii
APPROVAL SHEET	iii
LEGITIMATION SHEET	iv
MOTTO	v
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	vii
ABSTRACT	x
ABSTRAK	xi
خالصة	xii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xiii
LIST OF TABLE	xv
LIST OF PICTURES	xvi
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of The Study	1
B. Research Question	6
C. Significance of The Study	6
D. Scope and Limitation	7
E. Definition of Key Terms	8
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	11
A. Theoretical Framework	11
1. Politeness Strategies	11
2. Type of Politeness Strategies	13
B. Previous Study	19
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD	25
A. Research Design	25
B. Research Instrument	26
C. Data Source	27
D. Data Collection	27
E. Data Analysis	27
CHAPTER IV FINDING AND DISCUSSION	29
A. Finding	29
1. Elon Musk's Statements on X Related to The Fight Conversation	31
2. Mark Zuckerberg's Statements on Threads Related to The Fight Conversation	49
B. Discussion	61

1. The Use of Politeness Strategies by Elon Musk in X	62
2. The Use of Positive Strategies by Mark Zuckerberg in Threads.....	65
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION	73
A. Conclusion	73
B. Suggestion	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY	79
CURRICULUM VITAE	82
APPENDIX.....	83

LIST OF TABLE

Table 4. 1 Classification types of politeness strategies.....	83
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LIST OF PICTURES

Figure 4 1Elon's X on 05/08/2023	31
Figure 4 2 Elon's X on 06/08/2023	32
Figure 4 3 Elon's X on 06/08/2023	34
Figure 4 4 Elon's X on 11/08/2023	35
Figure 4 5 Elon's X on 11/08/2023	37
Figure 4 6 Elon's X on 11/08/2023	38
Figure 4 7Elon's X on 12/08/2023	40
Figure 4 8 Elon's X on 15/08/2023	41
Figure 4 9 Elon's X on 15/08/2023	43
Figure 4 10 Elon's X on 15/08/2023	44
Figure 4 11 Elon's X on 16/08/2023	47
Figure 4 12 Zuck's Thread on 07/08/2023	49
Figure 4 13 Zuck's Thread on 07/08/2023	51
Figure 4 14 Zuck's Thread on 07/08/2023	52
Figure 4 15 Zuck's Thread on 12/08/2023	54
Figure 4 16 Zuck's Thread on 12/08/2023	56
Figure 4 17 Zuck's Thread on 12/08/2023	58
Figure 4 18 Zuck's Thread on 13/08/2023	60

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher explains the background of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, and the definitions of the key terms. This aim is to provide an introduction to the reader so that the reader knows the direction of this research.

A. Background of The Study

Recently, Meta, led by Mark Zuckerberg, launched a social media platform named Thread, which is a competitor to Elon Musk's Twitter, now renamed X. The emergence of the Threads app by Zuck, which shares some features with the former Twitter app, can be seen not only as a power struggle but also as a means of solidifying identity or existence (Kayatu, 2022) within each application. This situation leads to undeniable competition in social media (Taslimudin et al., 2022) from users to the founders of both platforms. It becomes an epic battle between two "tech siblings" facing off in the arena.

The fight between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg has no positive impact on society. Instead, it can cause disharmony or disagreement (Listyantono, 2023). Furthermore, the interaction between Elon and Zuck in their fight can influence each other's self-development and help them stay ahead. Self-development refers to self-construction, which reflects one's identity (Listyantono, 2023). One's identity plays a vital role in preserving language politeness, particularly for prominent global tech figures, as it forms the basis for maintaining personal identity and adhering to internalized norms of politeness (Aze, 2022).

The fight between Elon and Zuck in their respective applications shows a variation in the use of speech, which initially started as jokes but escalated into a serious game for them. In this regard, the communication phenomenon undertaken by Elon and Zuck in their fight can be pragmatically examined, where the speech used by both can be analyzed by linking language and the underlying context of language use (Nadar, 2009).

The language used by Elon and Zuck on the Instagram Thread and X platforms can be analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory to understand how their language usage adapts to politeness and context in everyday language. Politeness can be found not only in everyday interactions but also in other places such as talk shows, films, storybooks, and conversations between Elon and Musk on Instagram and X.

Politeness is one of the communication phenomena found in everyday life and one of their theories Brown and Levinson (1987). The politeness theory is constructed socio-culturally, and strategically used by rational language users according to context, considering the possible impacts triggered by their utterances regarding both negative and positive politeness, which is used to understand conversations in society (Silitongan & Pasaribu, 2021). In communication, people must know how to speak to others to sound good. Therefore, society needs to utilize politeness strategies to elicit positive responses from their listeners. Typically, these strategies avoid conflict while maintaining soft and harmonious interpersonal relationships (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). When employing politeness strategies, the aim is to express intentions to mutually respect and reduce misunderstandings

(Silitonga & Pasaribu, 2021). Politeness exhibited in certain cultures can reduce disturbances in social interactions (Silitonga & Pasaribu, 2021).

In this study, pragmatics is chosen to aid in analyzing the communicative goals of speech used by Mark and Zuck in their social media fight and the apparent social context. Pragmatics can help analyze the variation in speech used in the communication employed by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg in their fight on their respective social media platforms. Thus, through a pragmatic approach, this research can further understand the phenomenon of the fight between 'two tech siblings' and how it influences social interaction and life on social media more broadly.

Research on politeness has been extensively conducted, especially involving political figures such as Donald Trump (Aulia & Srijono, 2023), Anies Baswedan (Silitonga & Pasaribu, 2021b), Arya Permana (Octaviani & Haryanto, 2023), and Ren Ozawa (Azzahra et al., 2023). The studies aim to determine the types of politeness strategies they use in their speech. Additionally, there is research on positive politeness through TV programs, such as Mata Najwa (Handayani et al., n.d.), Breakout (Meiliana et al., 2023), and Denny Summargo Podcast (Oktriyani, 2023). Not only that, positive politeness can also be obtained through film media, such as in the films Lion King (Widiasari, 2023) and Moana (Melga et al., 2023), which aims to find out the most dominant positive type of politics used in the main characters. From the above research to date, no research specifically explores the aspect of politeness in communication between the world's technographic figures.

There is still a need for in-depth exploration into how world technology

figures communicate, especially on social media. As technology evolves, social media becomes increasingly dominant, and ethical issues become more complex, there is still a need to investigate how technology figures interact with stakeholders and society politely.

By gaining a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, several implications arise. Firstly, there will be a better understanding of the dynamics of social interaction on social media. In this context, this research can provide a clearer picture of interaction dynamics between two major technology figures on social media, particularly in maintaining their image. This can help researchers and social observers better understand how major technology figures communicate on social media and how speech and politeness strategies can influence these interactions.

Furthermore, by exploring the politeness strategies of world technology figures, this research can help understand how industry leaders manifest politeness values in various aspects of their work. In the continuously evolving digital era, tech company founders or CEOs are crucial in shaping corporate culture and providing direction for their companies. In a broader context, through analyzing politeness strategies used by these figures, we can learn how they maintain relationships with employees, customers, competitors, and the general public. Additionally, this research can aid in identifying how politeness can influence a company's reputation and long-term success in the highly competitive technology industry. By understanding the politeness strategies of world technology figures, we can glean valuable lessons in building an inclusive, sustainable, and ethical business culture.

The phenomenon of online communication has become an integral part of everyday life, especially in the current digital era. Two renowned figures, Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, play key roles in the technology and business industries. Studying the language policy strategies they use in online interactions can provide valuable insights into how communication in the virtual world influences social dynamics and public perception. In particular, this research can help us understand how tone, word choice, and responses to opposing comments can affect the direction and intensity of online debates. This has significant implications for understanding how celebrities and technology companies manage their image on social media and how their communication affects public perception (Mukherjee & Hussain, 2021).

This research chooses Mark Zuckerberg's Thread account and Elon's X account, two influential figures in the technology, business, and social media industries. Their communication activities on social media platforms significantly impact public opinion, and studying their politeness strategies can provide insights into how influential figures' communication can affect society at large. These accounts are selected for several reasons. Firstly, Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg have different communication styles. Musk tends to be more eccentric and provocative in his messages, while Zuckerberg may lean towards being more formal and controlled. This creates an interesting contrast in studying their politeness strategies in online interactions. Secondly, both figures are active on social media, especially on X (formerly Twitter) and Thread, popular platforms with wide reach. The frequency of their activities allows researchers to gather

sufficient data for in-depth analysis. Another advantage is that much of their interaction is public and accessible to anyone. This allows researchers to easily collect data without relying on limited access,

Additionally, during the fight conversation, they did not solely post about their rivalry. Both also shared content unrelated to the fight on their respective social media accounts. This variety of posts provides a broader context for analyzing their communication styles and politeness strategies beyond the immediate fight.

This research assumes that Zuck and Elon will announce a fight on their respective social media platforms. The further assumption is that their social media accounts express that the planned fight failed to materialize. The final assumption is that through pragmatic analysis, it will be possible to uncover the politeness strategies expressed, thereby influencing their identity image.

B. Research Question

Based on the background described above, the researchers formulated the research question as follows:

1. How are politeness strategies used in the fight conversation of Elon Musk in X?
2. How are politeness strategies used in the fight conversation of Mark Zuckerberg in Threads?

C. Significance of The Study

The results of this research are expected to have significant practical relevance in understanding how politeness strategies influence the dynamics of

communication on social media. By examining interactions between public figures like Musk and Zuckerberg, this research not only provides insight into how online language style in perspective politeness strategies can impact public perception and their reputation but also contributes significantly to the development of more effective and ethical communication strategies in the digital environment. This can benefit communication practitioners in understanding better ways to manage online conflicts and can aid social media platforms in designing policies that support more courteous and responsive user interactions. Overall, this study can provide substantial benefits to the general public engaged in social media, policymakers, and academics interested in digital communication studies.

D. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is pragmatics involving the collection and analysis of text from relevant conversations or tweets on social media platforms, specifically focusing on analyzing the politeness strategies used by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg in their online conversation in Thread and X. It aims to identify and understand the use of positive and negative politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987)

The present study is subject to several limitations. First, the analysis focuses exclusively on the use of politeness strategies in online conversations between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, limiting the scope to two prominent technology figures. Additionally, the study is restricted to interactions occurring

on two specific social media platforms, X and Threads, which may not fully capture the breadth of their online presence across other platforms or media channels. The conversations analyzed were collected from a narrow time frame, specifically from August 5th to 20th, 2023, during which no other significant "fight" conversations occurred. This limited timeframe may not reflect the full range of politeness strategies used by either figure over a longer period. Moreover, the study only examines data related to the debate surrounding X and Threads, which may result in findings that are context-specific and not generalizable to other types of interactions. The study also differentiates politeness strategies based on type, but it does not delve into the influence of contextual factors such as audience demographics, external media coverage, or cultural influences on the use of these strategies, which could be significant in shaping online communication behaviors. These limitations highlight the need for broader and more diversified research to fully understand the nuances of politeness strategies in online interactions.

E. Definition of Key Terms

1. **Politeness strategies** refer to communication approaches used to maintain politeness, manage social relationships, and mitigate potential conflicts in online interactions. These strategies involve choices in language, tone, and message, reflecting respect or aggressiveness while adapting to social norms and audience expectations on platforms like X and Threads.
2. **Positive politeness** refers to communication strategies aimed at strengthening social bonds, showing appreciation, and fostering a sense of

closeness with the interlocutor, even in situations of conflict or rivalry. These strategies often highlight positive aspects, such as shared perspectives, mutual respect, or acknowledgement of the other person's contributions, with the goal of maintaining productive interaction and reducing tension.

3. **Negative Politeness** refers to communication strategies aimed at acknowledging and respecting the interlocutor's need for autonomy and freedom from imposition. These strategies are often employed to mitigate the impact of potentially face-threatening acts by using indirect language, hedging, or formal expressions to avoid offending or imposing on the other person.
4. **Online fight conversation** refers to the exchange of messages, posts, or comments between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg on their respective social media platforms, that exhibit elements of rivalry, conflict, or disagreement. These interactions are characterized by competitive or confrontational tones, often involving sharp remarks, challenges, or indirect criticisms, which are publicly visible to their audiences.
5. **Thread** refers to a social media platform launched by Meta, owned by Mark Zuckerberg. Threads is designed as a text-based platform for sharing updates, engaging in discussions, and fostering community interactions. It serves as a competitor to X (formerly Twitter) and emphasizes connectivity with Instagram, allowing users to carry over their Instagram networks seamlessly.

6. **X** refers to the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, owned by Elon Musk. X is a platform designed for real-time communication through short messages, known as posts, and serves as a space for public conversations, debates, and personal expressions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with the discussion of the theoretical framework and the previous study about politeness strategies.

A. Theoretical Framework

In this study, the politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson (1987) serves as the theoretical for understanding the politeness strategies used in online communication. This theory helps explain how individuals maintain their own and others' public image in conversations, especially when involved in interactions that potentially threaten one's self-image (face-threatening acts). Therefore, this theoretical framework will outline the various relevant politeness strategies and how these strategies are applied in the context of digital communication.

1. Politeness Strategies

Politeness is an aspect of pragmatics, and its use in language is determined by context. According to Yule (1996), politeness is the act of demonstrating awareness of another person's face or one's public persona. In this situation, being polite can help us demonstrate consideration for other people, including our friends, relatives, and those who are socially distant from us. According to pragmatics, being polite is a person's strategy for upholding their sense of self to be seen as polite and deserving of respect. According to (Brown & Levinson, 1987), being polite is the act of avoiding and reacting to verbal acts (also known as face-threatening behaviors) that are directed toward oneself or others and that

pose a threat to one's self-image. Brown and Levinson (1987) classified the associated facial aspect into two categories:

- a) Positive face. It refers to the self-image of a person who wants what he or she does to be recognized by others as good, enjoyable, and worthy of respect. It involves a person's wish for their actions and qualities to be acknowledged positively. Examples include: "You did an amazing job on this report! Your attention to detail and thorough analysis really stand out". This compliment helps the colleague feel valued and respected for their efforts, catering to their positive face.
- b) Negative face. It refers to the self-image of someone who wants to value themselves by giving them freedom of action or to do something. It involves the need to act freely and avoid constraints or pressures from others. For examples, "I was wondering if you could help me move this weekend. If you're busy or have other plans, I completely understand." This request respects the other person's freedom to say no and does not impose on them, which is sensitive to their negative face.

Politeness strategies are techniques to reduce or steer clear of a speaker's Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). Being polite means having a considerate attitude regarding one's appearance and that of the conversation partner, according to Brown and Levinson (1987). In this instance, "face" refers to self-esteem, a person's public persona in society, rather than their physical face. One universal feature that all humans have in common is their faces. The face is then separated into two parts: the positive face and the negative face. A negative face is a desire

to be free from other people's interference and to act independently. Positive face refers to a person's need to be appreciated and accepted by others. This can be seen, for instance, when someone asks for feedback about a certain garment they are wearing or when they beg them to be happy to see them wearing it.

2. Type of Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson (1987) divided the strategy for doing FTA into four strategies. Those are:

a. Bald on record

This strategy is usually used by speakers and listeners already familiar with one another, though it can also be applied to more family members. Bald on record, as defined by Brown and Levinson, refers to a technique where speakers do nothing to lessen the effects of movements that influence the face. This tactic will make the other person uncomfortable, shocked, and ashamed. Bald on Record consists of two sub-strategies: FTA-oriented Bald-on-Record Usage and Non-minimization of the Fact Threat.

1) Bald-on-Record oriented to Face-Threatening Acts (FTA)

This sub-strategy is used in situations where the speaker's primary goal is to efficiently communicate a message, often in contexts where the face-threatening nature of the act is mitigated by the urgency or the speaker's authority. The speaker directly performs the face-threatening act without any redressing action to soften it, but it is considered acceptable due to the context. For **example** "Get out now!" This an emergency, the need for efficiency overrides concerns about politeness,

so the speaker uses a direct command without softening it. "Pass me the salt."

When a boss or someone in a position of authority gives a direct order, the FTA is mitigated by the social role, making it more acceptable.

2) **Non-Minimization of the Face-Threatening Act**

This sub-strategy is used when the speaker deliberately does not minimize the threat to the listener's face, often because the speaker feels that the circumstances justify it. The speaker uses a direct, blunt approach, indicating that the face-threatening act is intentional and necessary. For example "This report is full of mistakes. Fix it immediately."

Here, the speaker is not concerned with mitigating the threat to the listener's face because the situation (e.g., the need for accuracy in the report) is more important. "No, I'm not going to do that." The speaker directly refuses a request without softening the refusal, indicating that they do not feel obligated to minimize the face-threatening nature of the act.

b. Positive Politeness

Positive Politeness Strategy is a speaking technique that is used as a sort of metaphorical extension of intimacy to imply common ground or sharing of wants, even between strangers who perceive themselves for the aim of interactional communication, according to Brown & Levinson (1987: 85). A strategy known as "positive politeness" is to act as though the speaker

and the listener are close. The purpose of this strategy is to encourage communication between speakers and listeners. Speakers use this technique to convey the idea that they share the same goals as their interlocutors. Speakers also employ this strategy to convey their desire to know the other person better. By demonstrating care and friendship, this strategy aims to reduce the gap between speakers and listeners. Speakers decrease FTA as a result. According to Brown & Levinson (1987, p.103-129), these strategies include the following: Positive Politeness strategies:

- 1) Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)
- 2) Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)
- 3) Intensify interest to H
- 4) Use in-group identity markers
- 5) Seek agreement
- 6) Avoid disagreement
- 7) Presuppose/raise/assert common ground
- 8) Joke
- 9) Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of concern for H's wants.
- 10) Offer, promise
- 11) Be optimistic
- 12) Include both S and H in the activity
- 13) Give (or ask for) reasons
- 14) Assume or assert reciprocity
- 15) Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

c. **Negative Politeness**

The act of being disrespectful to another person is known as negative politeness. There is a chance that the speaker and the listener are separated by space. This act is the basis of polite conduct and is also present in constructive civility strategies. The difference is that speakers carry out extra tasks that reduce some obligations the hearer is powerless to avoid, making this method more targeted and concentrated. According to Brown & Levinson (1987: 75), negative politeness strategies are a type of technique that repressive action-oriented to the addressee's negative confront: his demand to have his consideration and chance for activity unrestrained. It is a heart-centred conduct that is equivalent to good neighbourliness. When employing this strategy, it is important to acknowledge that the speaker can disturb the listener's personal space and exert pressure. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that there may be some social distance or burdensomeness in the situation. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.132-211) identify these strategies as follows:

- 1) Be conventionally indirect
- 2) Question, hedge
- 3) Be pessimistic
- 4) Minimize the imposition
- 5) Give deference
- 6) Apologize
- 7) Impersonalize S and H

- 8) State the FTA as a general rule
- 9) Nominalize
- 10) Go on record as incurring debt, or as not incurring H

d. Off-record strategies

The strategy calls for the other person to explain how they understand a certain action. This strategy is employed when the speaker wishes to make a bold statement but is unwilling to accept accountability. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), a communicative act is done off-record if it is performed in a way that makes it impossible to link the act to a single, distinct communicative intention. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.132-211) identify these strategies as follows:

- 1) Give hints/clues
- 2) Give association clues
- 3) Presuppose
- 4) Understate
- 5) Overstate
- 6) Use tautologies
- 7) Use contradiction
- 8) Be ironic
- 9) Use metaphors
- 10) Use rhetorical questions
- 11) Be ambiguous
- 12) Be vague

- 13) Over generalize
- 14) Displace H
- 15) Be incomplete, use ellipsis

The politeness theory by Brown and Levinson provides a systematic classification of positive and negative politeness strategies, offering a clear theoretical foundation to understand how social interactions, including in digital contexts, are influenced by norms of politeness.

One of the main strengths of this theory in the context of this research is its ability to distinguish between various types of politeness strategies that Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg might use in their online conversations. For example, the theory allows researchers to identify the use of positive politeness strategies such as compliments or agreement, as well as negative politeness strategies like avoidance or maintaining distance.

However, there are several limitations to consider in applying this politeness theory to this research. Firstly, the interpretation and application of politeness theory can be subjective, depending on the researcher's interpretation of the available data. This variability can lead to different results when analyzed by different researchers. Secondly, the theory may not fully capture the nuances and specific contexts of online communication, which are often complex and rapidly changing. The use of politeness strategies on social media can also be influenced by factors such as digital cultural norms and changes in social media dynamics.

Considering these strengths and weaknesses, the use of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory in this research provides a strong foundation for understanding politeness strategies in online debates between Musk and Zuckerberg. However, researchers need to exercise caution in interpreting and analyzing the data to avoid subjective biases and ensure the theory's relevance to the dynamic digital context.

B. Previous Study

The first research is the Analysis of Politeness Strategies Found in Donald Trump Junior's Speech (Aulia & Srijono, 2023). In this research, the researchers used qualitative research. This research focused on Donald Trump's Junior Speech in three videos. From the data analysis, the researchers found that politeness strategies were used in Donald Trump Junior's speech. The researchers found that Donald Trump used Off Records more than other strategies from the analysis.

The second is An Analysis of The Politeness Strategy used in the Mata Najwa Talk Show on Trans7 (Handayani et al., 2022). The research was done in 2022. The researchers only focused on the participants' interactions in the Mata Najwa Talk Show. The result showed that the host used a positive strategy to reveal the guests' issues and a negative strategy to reduce interference with the guests' freedom of action. The guests use Positive Politeness to convince society about their new policies and state that they share the same specific wants. The researchers found out that positive politeness is about 75%, and no bald record strategies exist.

The third research is Politeness Strategies Performed by The Characters In The Lion King Movie (Pragmatics Approach) (Widiasari, 2023). In her descriptive qualitative approach, she tried the types of politeness strategies used by the characters and the factors that influence the use of politeness strategies in The Lion King Movie. In the end, she concluded that the result of the data found, the most dominant data is Positive Politeness, which shows 38 data. The factor most commonly found is relative power.

The fourth research study entitled Language Politeness Strategies Spoke by Boy William in the Breakout Interview with Ruel (Meiliana et al., 2023). The researchers conducted this research using the theory of Brown and Levinson. This research revealed four strategies: bald on record, negative politeness, off the record, and positive politeness, with the most frequent politeness strategy being positive politeness.

The fifth is the Analysis of Politeness Strategies Contained in The Denny Sumargo Instagram Comments (Oktriyani, 2023). This analysis explored the role of politeness as a communicative strategy to enhance the pleasantness of language and avoid rudeness. Various types of politeness strategies were identified, including direct, negative, positive, and indirect politeness or off-record. However, the research specifically focused on positive politeness and negative politeness. The primary objective was to analyze the presence of politeness strategies in Denny Sumargo's personal Instagram comments. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, the researcher selected a video from Denny Sumargo's Instagram, examined the comments, and singled out those containing

politeness for analysis. The findings revealed 20 comments with politeness, comprising 14 positive and six instances of negative politeness. This outcome indicated a prevalence of positive politeness in the comments analysed, shedding light on the communicative preferences within the context of Denny Sumargo's Instagram interactions.

The sixth is a Pragmatic Analysis of Congratulation Expressions Addressed to Arya Permana Given by Social Media Users (Octaviani & Haryanto, 2023). This research aimed to investigate the congratulatory and politeness strategies social media users employ when congratulating Arya Permana. Data were gathered through the documentation method, focusing on comments made by Netizens on different accounts uploaded on October 18, 2019. A total of 25 congratulations from Facebook users were analysed using Pishghadam's classification theory (2011), Elwood's taxonomy, and Brown and Levinson's politeness methods (1987). The six identified types of congratulations included offering congratulations (8%), mentioning opportunities (24%), blessing prayers (12%), expressing feelings (40%), the divine statement (30%), and bold records (8%). Politeness strategies revealed positive politeness (84%) and negative politeness (4%). The study highlighted the presence of emotional attitudes in social media responses and emphasised the importance of user behaviour in providing congrats. The findings contribute to the understanding of politeness strategies employed by social media users, serving as a valuable reference for further analysis of congratulatory expressions.

The seventh aimed to qualitatively analyse the politeness strategies

employed by Indonesian Netizens in their comments on Anies Baswedan's Twitter and Instagram accounts (Silitonga & Pasaribu, 2021). The researchers collected data by observing and documenting netizens' comments on both platforms, utilising screenshot comments. The findings revealed that Indonesian netizens employed four politeness strategies: Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off Record. On Twitter, with a total of 35 comments, 2 (5.71%) were Bald on Records, 13 (37.14%) were Positive Politeness, 9 (25.71%) were Negative Politeness, and 11 (31.42%) were Off Record. Meanwhile, on Instagram, there were 69 comments, with 36 (52.17%) categorised as Positive Politeness, 22 (31.88%) as Negative Politeness, and 11 (15.94%) as Off Records. The study concluded that the Positive Politeness Strategy was more frequently employed by Indonesian netizens when commenting on Anies Baswedan's Twitter and Instagram accounts.

Analysis of Politeness Strategies on Comments in Influencers' Instagram Accounts aimed to investigate politeness strategies netizens employ in the comments section of Instagram accounts belonging to influencers. Utilising a qualitative descriptive research design, the study collected data from 45 comments on three influencers' accounts, with each account subjected to an analysis of 15 comments. Data collection involved the observation and documentation of comments through screenshot captures. The findings revealed the prevalence of four types of politeness strategies: 22 instances of Positive Politeness, four instances of Negative Politeness, 11 instances of Bald on Records, and eight instances of Off Records. The conclusive outcome indicated that positive

politeness was netizens' most dominant politeness strategy in their interactions on these Instagram accounts.

The previous study titled "The Use of Politeness Strategy on Comment in Politician Twitter Account (Sholehah & Kusumaningtyas, 2022) addressed two primary research questions: the types of politeness strategies employed by netizens when commenting on politician Twitter accounts and the functions of these politeness strategies. The research was conducted through a descriptive qualitative method to identify, classify, and analyse the various types and functions of politeness strategies evident in Twitter comments. The data collection process focused on extracting utterances containing politeness strategies from netizens commenting on politicians' Twitter accounts. The study's findings revealed four main strategies netizens utilised: bald-on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record.

This study contributes significantly to our understanding of politeness strategies in online communication, particularly in conflict situations involving famous figures. By highlighting how Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg interact and maintain their social face in front of the public, this study offers valuable insights for academics and practitioners in the field of digital communication. In the future, further research could expand this analysis by considering various social media platforms and more diverse types of interactions.

The main difference between this study and previous research lies in its specific focus on politeness strategies in the context of social media and online debates between public figures. In contrast to many studies focusing on political

speeches, this research analyzes interactions between two leaders in the technology field. It highlights politeness strategies in the context of online debates on social media, whereas many previous studies have focused more on formal speeches or oral communication. Thus, this research not only provides new insights into politeness strategies in digital communication but also complements existing literature with contemporary and relevant case analyses.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, the researcher described the method used in this research. These included the research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis. Therefore, the reader could understand the process conducted by the researcher in carrying out this research.

A. Research Design

This research employs a qualitative design. Its objective is to analyze the politeness strategies used by prominent technology figures Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg on their social media platforms. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to uncover data on the use of politeness strategies between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg on their social media platforms, namely X and Threads. This research uses a qualitative methodology to deeply examine and understand the politeness strategies employed by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg in their fight conversations. As per Creswell (2009), qualitative research is an inquiry that examines and comprehends the significance of individuals or groups in addressing social or human issues. It involves posing questions and employing methods that utilize diverse sources of data, such as words or images, rather than numerical data for analysis. This research adopts a qualitative methodology to analyze and explain the politeness strategies used by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg in the "fight" conversations on the social media platforms X and Threads.

This study is classified as descriptive due to its presentation of data in the

form of words or phrases. Creswell (2009) states that qualitative research data is characterized by its descriptive nature, where information is conveyed through words or visual representations rather than numerical or graphical formats. Thus, the results will be presented descriptively or narratively rather than in the format of a scientific report (Creswell, 2009). The findings of this research are explained and analyzed through the framework of politeness strategies developed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The results of the data analysis reveal specific politeness strategies employed by each figure, which are subsequently examined by the researcher to identify the politeness strategies they use in their fight conversations on social media.

B. Research Instrument

The key instrument in this study is the researcher. The researcher is directly responsible for collecting data from online conversations between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg on social media platforms. Furthermore, the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis of the politeness strategies employed by both individuals, whether in the form of compliments, agreement, or conflict avoidance. Thus, the presence of the researcher as the instrument ensures the accuracy and success in depicting the dynamics of online communication between these famous figures. As auxiliary tools, the researcher used a laptop, smartphone, books, journals, e-books, and theses from the internet, as well as a notepad as supporting instruments. Like ordinary users, the researcher also used a laptop or mobile device to participate in Threads and X.

C. Data Source

The research data source is the conversations between Elon Musk on X (@elonmusk) and Mark Zuckerberg on Threads (@zuck), specifically focusing on the post of the fight conversation. The data consists of words, emoticons, phrases, and sentences in the conversations between Elon Musk on X (@elonmusk) and Mark Zuckerberg on Threads (@zuck), specifically focusing on posts of the fight conversation. The data is collected from Elon and Zuck's conversations from August 5th to August 20th, 2023.

D. Data Collection

Social media is the primary tool in digital social research, allowing unrestricted data collection regardless of time and distance constraints. However, the researcher must place ethics at the heart of their work when doing digital social research (Rahardjo, 2021). To get the data needed, the researcher followed several steps that led to the analysis, results, and discussion of the data. To start, the researcher logged into the Thread and X applications. The researcher then observed Elon Musk's and Mark Zuckerberg's social media accounts. All the fight conversations were meticulously collected by taking screenshots. Following this, the researcher read and compiled writings on all the fight conversations.

E. Data Analysis

Upon data collection, the researcher initiated the analysis process using several steps. The data would be analysed based on Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) of politeness strategies, which includes four types: Bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies. In analyzing the research

questions, the data would be examined through three stages. First, the researchers would identify the positive politeness strategies used by Elon Musk on X, focusing on specific words, phrases, or actions that reflect these strategies. Second, the same process would be applied to Mark Zuckerberg on Threads, where his politeness strategies would be categorized and analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion. The findings consist of the result of the analysis of positive politeness used by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg. The data is taken from the conversation between Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk in Threads and X social media. Besides the data analysis of this research is to answer the research questions. The findings and discussion are further discussed in the following part.

A. Finding

The data in this research consisted of written utterances by Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk. The content of the data was fight conversations written by Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk on Threads and X that took place from August 5th to August 20th, 2023, over 15 days. The conversations received many likes and comments from the threads or X itself. The conversation began when Zuck launched a new app called Threads, which had similar features to X/Twitter. This prompted Elon (the owner of the X app) to write and upload memes directed at Zuck, leading to a back-and-forth exchange using their respective platforms. This conversation then developed into a 'fight' where both parties responded to each other's statements through their posts. Elon Musk used the X platform to post sarcasm and memes referencing Zuckerberg, while Zuckerberg responded on Threads with a more formal yet competitive tone. This exchange of messages attracted public attention, as evidenced by the numerous responses in the form of likes, comments, and reposts from the followers of both figures.

These interactions illustrate how these two major figures in the tech world employ politeness strategies in their public conversations. Based on the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson, various strategies can be observed in their conversations, including positive politeness, where both seek to reduce tension and maintain professional relationships amidst real competition. This study will further explore these strategies, focusing on the use of positive politeness by Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk in their efforts to present a good image in the eyes of the public, despite being involved in verbal conflict online.

In this study, 18 posts were found regarding the fight conversations between Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk, consisting of 11 posts by Elon on X (Data 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11) and 7 posts by Zuckerberg on Threads (Data 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18). Each post contains several sentences analyzed according to the communication strategies used. From the available data, the use of positive politeness strategies by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg was identified through various statements and responses they made.

Based on the analysis of politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson's theory, the data from the interactions between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg reveal the use of various politeness strategies that reflect different communication goals. The general findings show that bald-on record strategies were used by both figures to deliver messages directly, often accompanied by elements of positive politeness to build closer social relationships with their audience. Additionally, off-record strategies with elements of negative politeness and subtle irony frequently appeared, especially in conversations involving

criticism, aiming to maintain emotional distance and avoid confrontation. The use of humor, irony, and ambiguity was also commonly found as a way to diffuse tension and convey messages in a more subtle manner.

1. Elon Musk's Statements on X Related to The Fight Conversation

a. Datum 1

“Legacy media” with a meme that says *“I’m here, just joking, I’m here, hahaha fine fine, I’m here”* on August 5, 2023.



Figure 4 1Elon's X on 05/08/2023

Off-record strategy is expressed in Elon Musk's meme that states, *“I’m here, just joking, I’m here, hahaha fine fine, I’m here”*. According to

Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory, this statement uses indirect and ambiguous communication, allowing Musk to imply his presence in a humorous way without stating it outright, leaving the listener to interpret the intended meaning.

In the meme, Elon employs a joking and ironic style, which is characteristic of the off-record strategy. The use of humor and the phrases *"I'm here just joking"* and *"fine fine I'm here"* creates ambiguity and allows Elon to convey a jab at Zuck without explicitly attacking or cornering him directly. This gives Zuck (and the audience) the freedom to interpret the true intent behind the statements.

Therefore, this meme employs an off-record strategy because it relies on humor, irony, and ambiguity to convey the message without making direct claims that could be seen as confrontational.

b. Datum 2

"Am lifting weights throughout the day, preparing for the fight. Don't have time to work out, so just bring them to work." On August, 6 2023.



Figure 4 2 Elon's X on 06/08/2023

Bald on-record strategy is evident in Elon Musk's statement, *"Am*

lifting weights throughout the day, preparing for the fight. Don't have time to work out, so just bring them to work." According to Brown and Levinson's theory (1987), the bald on-record strategy is characterized by clear, unambiguous statements where the speaker does not mitigate or soften the language. In this case, Elon uses direct language to share his intense preparation routine, effectively minimizing any distance between himself and his audience.

The straightforwardness of his words—"*lifting weights throughout the day*" and "*don't have time to work out*"—demonstrates Musk's confidence and willingness to share personal details without hesitation. By being candid about his preparation routine, he creates a sense of immediacy and transparency, reflecting the unfiltered nature of bald on-record strategy. His statement carries no indirectness or polite hedging, underscoring that his message is intended to be taken at face value.

Furthermore, by sharing his commitment to preparing for a fight, Elon builds rapport with his audience, adding a layer of relatability and personal touch. This sharing of personal routines serves as a form of self-disclosure that enhances familiarity and reduces social distance, inviting his audience into a more casual and intimate interaction.

In summary, Elon Musk's statement exemplifies the bald on-record strategy by combining directness with an open, almost conversational tone. His willingness to disclose his dedication and lifestyle reinforces the

directness typical of bald on-record strategies while also engaging the audience on a more personal level.

c. Datum 3

“Zuck v Musk fight will be live-streamed on X. All proceeds will go to charity for veterans.” On August, 6 2023



Figure 4 3 Elon's X on 06/08/2023

Bald on record strategy is exemplified in Elon Musk's statement, *“Zuck v Musk fight will be live-streamed on X. All proceeds will go to charity for veterans.”* Within the framework of Brown and Levinson's theory, this statement presents a clear and direct communication style, delivering information without any ambiguity or indirectness, effectively conveying the message to the audience.

This statement is delivered directly, without any elements of politeness or mitigation. Elon straightforwardly announces that the fight will be live-streamed on X and that all proceeds will be donated to charity. The sentence does not include forms of politeness such as apologies, additional explanations, or efforts to soften the impact of the statement, which are characteristic of the bald-on-record strategy. In such a situation, Elon feels no need to reduce the force of the message because his goal is to provide clear and effective information to the audience.

Overall, this statement from Elon is an example of the use of the bald on record strategy, as he conveys information directly and efficiently, without using language that attempts to add politeness or consider the feelings of the audience.

d. Datum 4

"The fight will be managed by my and Zuck's foundations (not UFC). Livestream will be on this platform (X) and Meta. Everything in camera frame will be ancient Rome, so nothing modern at all. I spoke to the PM of Italy and the Minister of Culture. They have agreed on an epic location," on August, 11 2023



Figure 4 4 Elon's X on 11/08/2023

Bald-on-record strategy is evident in Elon Musk's statement, *"The fight will be managed by my and Zuck's foundations (not UFC). Livestream will be on this platform (X) and Meta. Everything in camera frame will be ancient Rome, so nothing modern at all. I spoke to the PM of Italy and Minister of Culture. They have agreed on an epic location."* as described in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. In this

case, Musk directly conveys information about the fight's arrangements, with minimal softening or indirect language.

This statement is highly explicit. Musk is straightforward about the fight's management, specifying that it will be handled by their respective foundations rather than the UFC, reinforcing his message in an unambiguous manner. He also clearly mentions the streaming platforms (X and Meta), giving a detailed description of the setup: *"Everything in camera frame will be ancient Rome, so nothing modern at all."* By including the specific involvement of Italy's PM and Minister of Culture, Musk further underscores the authenticity and grandeur of the event location, adding credibility to his announcement.

The use of bald on-record strategy is evident in his direct communication style, as he efficiently shares a considerable amount of information without any indirectness or hedging. This approach not only emphasizes Musk's confidence in the event's logistics but also his openness with his audience, as he includes details about conversations with Italian government officials, which may otherwise have been kept private. Such transparency serves to engage his audience by drawing them into the planning process and providing an inside look at how the event is being organized.

In summary, this statement is a clear example of the bald on-record strategy. Musk communicates directly and confidently about the fight's

logistics, leaving little ambiguity for interpretation. The straightforwardness of his language fosters a sense of transparency and builds rapport with his audience, enhancing their engagement with the event's unique and historical setting.

e. Datum 5

“Everything done will pay respect to the past and present of Italy”

Elon’s additional post on August, 11 2023



Figure 4.5 Elon’s X on 11/08/2023

Positive politeness strategy is evident in Elon Musk's statement, *“Everything done will pay respect to the past and present of Italy.”* In the context of Brown and Levinson's 1987 theory. Positive politeness strategies are used to emphasize friendliness, camaraderie, and to build a connection with the audience by showing consideration and respect for their values or identity.

In this case, Musk uses positive politeness by highlighting his respect for Italy’s cultural heritage with the phrase *“pay respect to the past and present of Italy.”* This phrase reflects an understanding and appreciation of Italian history and culture, which aligns with the values of an Italian audience or anyone with respect for historical preservation. By

acknowledging Italy's cultural legacy, Musk fosters goodwill and closeness, demonstrating sensitivity to the event's setting and reinforcing his commitment to honoring Italian traditions.

This use of positive politeness serves to reduce any potential face-threatening implications of hosting an unconventional event in a culturally significant location. Instead, Musk reassures the audience that the fight will be conducted thoughtfully, with an emphasis on respect for Italian heritage, thereby making the statement more palatable and appealing.

In summary, Musk's statement uses positive politeness to create rapport and demonstrate respect for Italy's cultural legacy. By promising that *"everything done will pay respect to the past and present of Italy,"* he reinforces the sense of cultural sensitivity and shared values, fostering a positive connection with his audience.

f. Datum 6

"And all proceeds go to veterans" on August 11 2023



Figure 4 6 Elon's X on 11/08/2023

Positive politeness strategy is evident in the addition of 'And all proceeds go to veterans' to the statement. The statement, *"And all proceeds go to veterans,"* aligns with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategy in politeness theory (1987). Positive politeness often involves

showing generosity, understanding, or solidarity, thereby creating a positive relationship between the speaker and the audience.

In this case, Musk uses positive politeness by highlighting that “*all proceeds go to veterans.*” This statement indicates a commitment to a cause that many people view positively, which can build rapport and goodwill with his audience. By framing the event as a charitable initiative, Musk emphasizes empathy and a sense of social responsibility, reinforcing shared values around supporting veterans. This approach strengthens the connection with the audience, as it demonstrates that the fight serves not only as entertainment but also as a means to support a meaningful cause.

Moreover, the simplicity of the phrase and Musk’s straightforward wording further support a tone of sincerity and trustworthiness, as he refrains from embellishing or diluting the message. This aligns with positive politeness by showing transparency and alignment with the audience’s values.

In summary, “*And all proceeds go to veterans*” serves as a clear example of positive politeness, as Musk appeals to shared values by committing to a charitable cause. This statement not only builds a positive image for the event but also fosters goodwill with the audience by aligning his actions with a socially responsible and compassionate purpose.

"And pediatric hospitals in Italy" adding on August 12, 2023



Figure 4 7Elon's X on 12/08/2023

Positive politeness is reflected in the addition of “*And pediatric hospitals in Italy*” to Elon Musk's statement according to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). Positive politeness is used to establish a friendly, relatable connection with the audience by appealing to values that resonate with them. In this context, Musk adds an additional charitable cause, expanding the beneficiaries to “*pediatric hospitals in Italy*.”

This statement deepens the appeal to shared values by showing a commitment to supporting children's healthcare, a cause widely respected and valued. By including pediatric hospitals in Italy as recipients of the proceeds, Musk demonstrates attentiveness to Italian society, showing that his support extends beyond veterans to a cause that directly benefits children's health in the local community. This mention fosters goodwill and respect from an Italian audience, as it signals both empathy and respect for local needs.

Furthermore, this statement supports the positive politeness strategy through its simplicity and sincerity. Musk's wording is straightforward and avoids any embellishment, conveying a genuine intent

to contribute meaningfully to causes that align with his audience's values. This transparency reinforces the connection with the audience by making it clear that the event has a charitable dimension intended to benefit both veterans and Italian pediatric care.

In summary, *“And pediatric hospitals in Italy”* is a strong example of positive politeness, as it shows Musk's commitment to meaningful, socially responsible goals. By highlighting a cause that resonates widely, he builds rapport with his audience and reinforces his respect for Italian society, fostering a positive, relational connection.

h. Datum 8

“Knock, knock... challenge accepted... open the door @finkd” on August 15 2023.



Figure 4.8 Elon's X on 15/08/2023

Bald on-record strategy is exemplified by Elon Musk's statement, *“Knock, knock... challenge accepted... open the door @finkd,”* within Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework. Bald on-record statements are characterized by directness and a lack of softening, where the speaker communicates their intentions clearly without hedging or ambiguity. Here, Musk is issuing a direct challenge to Mark Zuckerberg (using his handle, @finkd) with an assertive tone, making his intent

unmistakable.

The statement, beginning with “*Knock, knock... challenge accepted,*” is direct and playful, capturing Musk’s intention to engage Zuckerberg in a straightforward manner. By saying “*open the door,*” Musk implies that Zuckerberg should acknowledge or respond to the challenge, leaving little room for interpretation. The brevity and confidence of this message reflect the classic characteristics of bald on-record strategy, where the speaker aims to communicate clearly and concisely, often emphasizing confidence or boldness.

Additionally, the use of playful language and a direct address with Zuckerberg’s handle creates a sense of immediacy and casualness. This familiarity minimizes social distance between them and draws the audience in, making the interaction feel more accessible and engaging. While this is a direct approach, the informal tone helps balance the challenge with an element of humor, reducing potential face-threatening impact by conveying the challenge in a light-hearted way.

In summary, “*Knock, knock... challenge accepted... open the door @finkd*” demonstrates bald on-record politeness by delivering a direct, unambiguous challenge. Musk’s confident and playful language allows him to be assertive while still engaging his audience with a sense of camaraderie and humor.

i. Datum 9

"(Zuck thread coming soon about how he would of course love fight anytime, but blah blah blah UFC something something)" on August, 15 2023.



Figure 4.9 Elon's X on 15/08/2023

Off-record strategy is evident in Elon Musk's statement, *"(Zuck thread coming soon about how he would of course love to fight anytime, but blah blah blah UFC something something)."* according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

Off-record politeness involves indirectness, where the speaker conveys a message in a way that allows the listener to infer the meaning, rather than stating it explicitly. In this case, Musk indirectly critiques or mocks the anticipated response from Zuckerberg about the fight. By using phrases like *"blah blah blah"* and *"UFC something something,"* Musk avoids directly stating his opinion about Zuckerberg's position, leaving room for interpretation. The use of *"blah blah blah"* suggests that Musk is not fully engaged with the specifics of Zuckerberg's argument, instead downplaying the content of the expected thread with humor and sarcasm.

This indirectness serves as a way of distancing himself from an

outright confrontation or criticism, while still signaling his position. The tone is somewhat playful and mocking, which helps mitigate the face-threatening act of openly criticizing or dismissing someone's viewpoint. It allows Musk to express his thoughts without directly confronting Zuckerberg, thus employing an off-record strategy to maintain politeness.

In summary, Musk's statement uses off-record politeness by being indirect and playful. Rather than directly challenging Zuckerberg's potential response, he leaves his message open to interpretation, using humor and indirectness to convey his meaning.

j. Datum 10

“For the Tesla FSD test drive in Palo Alto tonight, I will ask the car to drive to @finkd’s house. Will also test latest X livestream video, so you can monitor our adventure in real-time! If we get lucky and Zuck my 🍷 actually answers the door, the fight is on!” on August, 15 2023



Figure 4 10 Elon's X on 15/08/2023

Bald-record strategy is evident in Elon Musk's statement, *“For the Tesla FSD test drive in Palo Alto tonight, I will ask the car to drive to*

@finkd's house. Will also test the latest X livestream video, so you can monitor our adventure in real-time! If we get lucky and Zuck my 🍷 actually answers the door, the fight is on!" according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

Bald on-record politeness involves making statements directly and without any attempt to soften the impact or show deference to the listener's face needs. In this case, Musk is straightforward in describing his plans: *"I will ask the car to drive to @finkd's house"* and *"the fight is on."* There is no ambiguity in his intentions or communication, as he clearly states his actions and the potential outcome. He conveys his message with confidence, leaving no room for misunderstanding.

Additionally, the playful tone of *"If we get lucky and Zuck my 🍷 actually answers the door"* adds a touch of humor and informality, but it does not dilute the directness of his message. This blend of confidence and casualness reinforces the bald on-record strategy, as Musk is not attempting to soften or mitigate the force of his statement, but rather making it in a bold, direct manner.

In summary, the strongest politeness strategy in this statement is bald on-record, characterized by Elon Musk's clear and unambiguous communication. He directly conveys his plans and expectations, while incorporating humor and informality to maintain a playful tone without diminishing the directness of his message.

k. Datum 11

“Fight recap: I joked on X about fighting Zuck. Zuck then said ‘SEND ME LOCATION.’ Italy graciously offered a Colosseum. Zuck declined. I suggested his home as a ‘safe space.’ Tragically, he was ahem ‘travelling.’ Is there anywhere he will fight?” on August 16, 2023, accompanied by a news article featuring a cover image of a person engaged in a fight with the caption “SEND ME LOCATION,” highlighting the news as Zuck V Musk: Meta boss tells Tesla CEO ‘send me location’ for tonight.

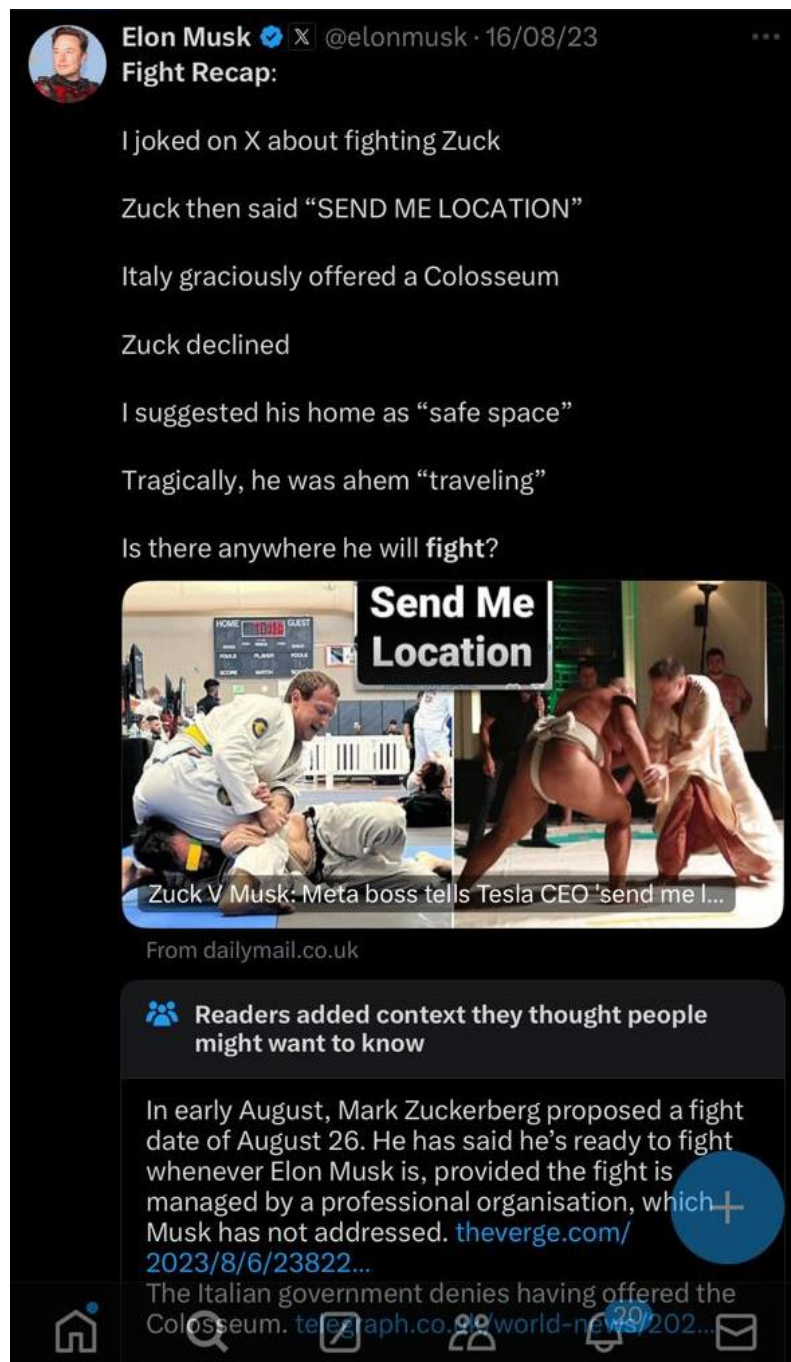


Figure 4 11 Elon’s X on 16/08/2023

Bald on-record politeness is reflected in Elon Musk’s statement, “Fight recap: I joked on X about fighting Zuck. Zuck then said ‘SEND ME LOCATION.’ Italy graciously offered a Colosseum. Zuck declined. I suggested his home as a ‘safe space.’ Tragically, he was ahem ‘travelling.’

Is there anywhere he will fight?” according to Brown and Levinson's 1987 theory, but the strongest strategy identified is bald on-record politeness.

Bald on-record politeness is characterized by directness and clarity, where the speaker's message is communicated without any attempt to soften or mitigate its impact. In this case, Musk straightforwardly recaps the sequence of events related to the fight, with direct statements such as “*I joked on X about fighting Zuck*”, “*Zuck then said ‘SEND ME LOCATION’*”, and “*Zuck declined*”. These phrases are clear and unambiguous, relaying the sequence of events without any unnecessary hedging or indirectness.

Additionally, Musk's inclusion of “*I suggested his home as a ‘safe space’*” is a direct and playful comment, which maintains the straightforwardness of his message. The use of the phrase “*tragically, he was ahem ‘travelling’*” adds humor and a slight mockery, but does not dilute the directness of the earlier points.

The statement ends with a direct question, “*Is there anywhere he will fight?*”, which reinforces the bald on-record strategy. The question is posed without any attempt to soften it, further emphasizing Musk's directness and confidence in his communication.

In summary, the strongest politeness strategy in this statement is bald on-record, as Musk clearly recounts events, issues a direct question, and makes playful remarks with confidence, without softening or hedging

his statements.

2. Mark Zuckerberg's Statements on Threads Related to The Fight Conversation

a. Datum 12

"Shouldn't we use a more reliable platform that we can actually raise money for charity?" on August 7 2023.



Figure 4 12 Zuck's Thread on 07/08/2023

Negative politeness is reflected in Mark Zuckerberg's statement, *"Shouldn't we use a more reliable platform that we can actually raise money for charity?"* in response to Elon Musk's announcement about the fight being live-streamed on X with proceeds going to charity for veterans, can be classified as an example of negative politeness according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

Negative politeness is characterized by an emphasis on avoiding imposition, respecting the listener's autonomy, and hedging or softening statements to prevent threatening the listener's face (their social identity or dignity). In this case, Zuckerberg's statement implies a potential criticism

of X as a platform for fundraising by questioning its reliability without directly attacking it. By phrasing the statement as a question, “*Shouldn’t we use a more reliable platform...*”, Zuckerberg softens the impact of the criticism, allowing him to raise the issue without making a direct accusation. This use of a question also serves as a polite way of suggesting that there may be a better option without being overly confrontational.

The question form and the polite phrasing of “*Shouldn’t we*” serve to distance Zuckerberg from the direct critique of X, showing consideration for the platform while still offering a suggestion. This is a classic example of negative politeness because it minimizes the potential threat to Musk’s face by indirectly questioning the platform's effectiveness for charitable purposes.

In summary, Zuckerberg’s statement uses negative politeness, softening his critique by framing it as a suggestion rather than a direct criticism, which helps to avoid face-threatening implications while still conveying his concern about the platform’s reliability for charity fundraising.

b. Datum 13

"I love this sport and will continue competing with the people who train no matter what happens here," on August 7 2023.

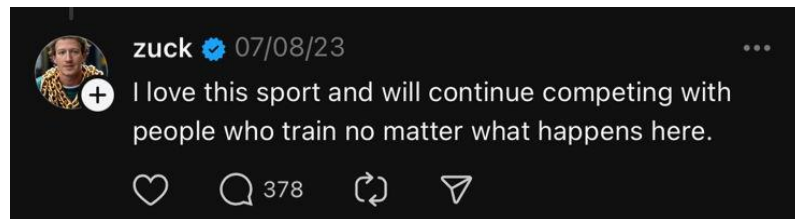


Figure 4 13 Zuck's Thread on 07/08/2023

Positive politeness strategy is evident in Mark Zuckerberg's response, *"I love this sport and will continue competing with the people who train no matter what happens here."* According to Brown and Levinson's 1987 theory.

Positive politeness is used to build rapport and emphasize solidarity or shared interests with the listener. In this case, the statement expresses enthusiasm and commitment to the sport, which helps create a connection with the audience or other competitors. By saying *"I love this sport"*, the speaker signals a shared passion, which is a typical strategy for strengthening positive relationships. The statement also emphasizes the intention to continue competing regardless of the outcome, which shows resilience and determination, reinforcing a positive, shared value of perseverance.

The speaker is focusing on expressing affection for the sport and camaraderie with others in the community, signaling that their motivations and commitments are not dependent on external factors, but on their intrinsic love for the sport and the people involved. This fosters a sense of community and solidarity, aligning with the positive politeness strategy.

In summary, *"I love this sport and will continue competing with the*

people who train no matter what happens here” uses positive politeness by highlighting a shared passion and commitment to the sport, fostering a sense of connection and camaraderie with others involved in the activity.

c. Datum 14

“I’m ready today. I suggested Aug 26 when he first challenged, but he hasn’t confirmed. Not holding my breath.” on August 7 2023



Figure 4 14 Zuck's Thread on 07/08/2023

Bald on record strategy is classified in Mark Zuckerberg's statement, *“I’m ready today. I suggested Aug 26 when he first challenged, but he hasn’t confirmed. Not holding my breath.”* in response to Elon Musk’s comment about preparing for the fight according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

Bald on-record politeness is characterized by directness and clarity, where the speaker conveys their message without any attempt to soften the impact or reduce the force of the message. In this case, Zuckerberg’s response is straightforward and unambiguous. He states that he is ready for the fight, gives a clear reference to when he suggested a date (Aug 26), and

bluntly mentions that Musk has not confirmed the date. The phrase “*Not holding my breath*” further emphasizes the directness of the message, indicating that Zuckerberg does not expect a response from Musk anytime soon.

Zuckerberg's statement does not attempt to mitigate the challenge or soften the potential face-threatening nature of calling out Musk for not confirming the fight. There is no hedging or indirectness, which is characteristic of bald on-record politeness. While the tone might carry some frustration or impatience, it remains direct and assertive.

In summary, Zuckerberg's statement uses bald on-record politeness, characterized by its directness and clarity in addressing the issue without softening the message or providing any indirectness.

d. Datum 15

“Not holding my breath for Elon, but I’ll share the details on my next fight when I’m ready. When I compete, I want to do it in a way that puts a spotlight on the elite athletes at the top of the game. You do that by working with professional orgs like the UFC or ONE to pull this off well and create a great card,” on Augustus, 12 2023.

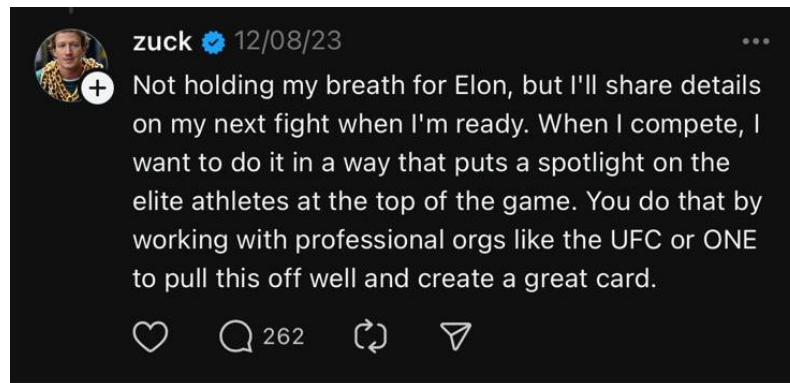


Figure 4 15 Zuck's Thread on 12/08/2023

Negative politeness strategies is evident in Mark Zuckerberg's response, *"Not holding my breath for Elon, but I'll share the details on my next fight when I'm ready. When I compete, I want to do it in a way that puts a spotlight on the elite athletes at the top of the game. You do that by working with professional orgs like the UFC or ONE to pull this off well and create a great card."* According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

Negative politeness involves strategies to avoid imposing on others, showing respect for their autonomy, and minimizing the threat to their face. In this case, Zuckerberg uses several negative politeness strategies. First, hedging with "Not holding my breath for Elon", Zuckerberg downplays his expectations about Musk's response to the challenge. By using the phrase *"Not holding my breath"*, Zuckerberg softens the frustration that might come across from the situation, showing that he is not overly invested in waiting for Musk's confirmation. This phrase reduces the potential for face-threatening acts and shows respect for Musk's autonomy, as he is not demanding an immediate commitment. Second, Delaying the announcement with "I'll share the details on my next fight when I'm ready"

This statement implies that Zuckerberg has control over the timing of the fight, thus minimizing the pressure on Musk and allowing Zuckerberg to maintain authority over the situation. It also avoids imposing any expectation on Musk to act quickly or make an immediate decision. Third, expanding the conversation to include professional organizations by saying, *“When I compete, I want to do it in a way that puts a spotlight on the elite athletes at the top of the game,”* Zuckerberg shifts the focus from his personal challenge with Musk to the broader context of the sport, which serves as a face-saving device. This helps to de-emphasize the direct conflict, showing that his goal is to support the sport and its athletes, not just a personal rivalry. And last, suggesting professional organizations like UFC or ONE. This statement softens the critique of Musk’s approach (especially if Musk’s plans don’t align with professional organizations) by presenting it as a matter of doing things the *right* way for the sport, not as an attack on Musk personally. It shows a degree of professionalism and respect for the athletes, further minimizing potential face-threatening impacts.

In summary, Zuckerberg’s statement employs negative politeness by using hedging, delaying, and shifting the focus to professional organizations. This allows him to express his thoughts without directly confronting or pressuring Musk, thus respecting both Musk’s autonomy and the broader context of the competition.

“I love this sport and I’ve been ready to fight since the day Elon challenged me. If he ever agrees on an actual date, you’ll hear it from me. Until then, please assume anything he says has not been agreed on.” On August, 12 2023



Figure 4 16 Zuck’s Thread on 12/08/2023

Bald on record strategies is evident in Mark Zuckerberg's statement, *“I love this sport and I’ve been ready to fight since the day Elon challenged me. If he ever agrees on an actual date, you’ll hear it from me. Until then, please assume anything he says has not been agreed on.”* according to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory.

First, the directness and clarity in Zuckerberg's words show characteristics of bald on-record politeness. He is very straightforward about his readiness to fight and his expectations regarding the fight’s confirmation. The phrase *“I’ve been ready to fight since the day Elon challenged me”* is clear and unambiguous, conveying that Zuckerberg has been prepared and is not hesitating to take on the challenge. Similarly, the statement *“If he ever agrees on an actual date, you’ll hear it from me”* is direct, outlining that any real information about the fight will come directly from him. By saying *“Until then, please assume anything he says has not been agreed on,”*

Zuckerberg sets the record straight, telling the audience to disregard any previous statements made by Musk about the fight, reinforcing the clarity and confidence in his position.

However, the use of “*please assume*” introduces a slight element of negative politeness. This phrase softens the directness by offering the audience an instruction with some degree of politeness, minimizing the potential imposition on the listeners. Zuckerberg’s inclusion of “*please*” shows some consideration for how the message may be received, which is characteristic of negative politeness.

In conclusion, Mark Zuckerberg’s statement is primarily a use of bald on-record politeness due to its directness and clarity in communicating his position. However, the phrase “*please assume*” introduces a minor form of negative politeness, softening the message slightly to avoid being overly forceful. The overall tone is assertive, with a clear emphasis on setting expectations and correcting any misinformation regarding the fight.

f. Datum 17

“*Separately, here’s a photo from today’s Friday Morning Fights in my backyard octagon. Good times.*” on August, 12 2023



Figure 4 17 Zuck's Thread on 12/08/2023

Positive politeness strategy is demonstrated in Mark Zuckerberg's statement, *"Separately, here's a photo from today's Friday Morning Fights in my backyard octagon. Good times."* According to Brown and Levinson's 1987 theory.

Positive politeness is used to create rapport, show solidarity, and emphasize shared interests. In this case, Zuckerberg shares a photo of a personal event, *"Friday Morning Fights in my backyard octagon,"* in a casual and friendly manner, which invites the audience into a shared experience. By saying *"Good times"*, Zuckerberg further builds a sense of connection with his audience, implying that the event was enjoyable and reinforcing the idea of sharing positive experiences. The informal, friendly tone of the statement conveys that he is relating to his audience on a personal

level, trying to connect over a common interest in the sport and his activities.

This statement avoids any form of imposition or challenge and instead focuses on establishing camaraderie and showing off a fun aspect of his personal life. By sharing something lighthearted and informal, Zuckerberg uses positive politeness to foster goodwill and maintain a friendly tone with his audience.

In summary, Zuckerberg's statement uses positive politeness, sharing a fun, personal experience with his audience to foster a sense of connection and camaraderie while avoiding any confrontation or imposition.

g. Datum 18

"I think we can all agree Elon isn't serious and it's time to move on. I offered a real date. Dana White offered to make this a legit competition for charity. Elon won't confirm a date, then says he needs surgery, and now asks to do practice rounds in my backyard instead. If Elon ever gets serious about a real date and official event, he knows how to reach me. Otherwise, time to move on. I'm going to focus on competing with people who take the sport seriously," on August, 132023

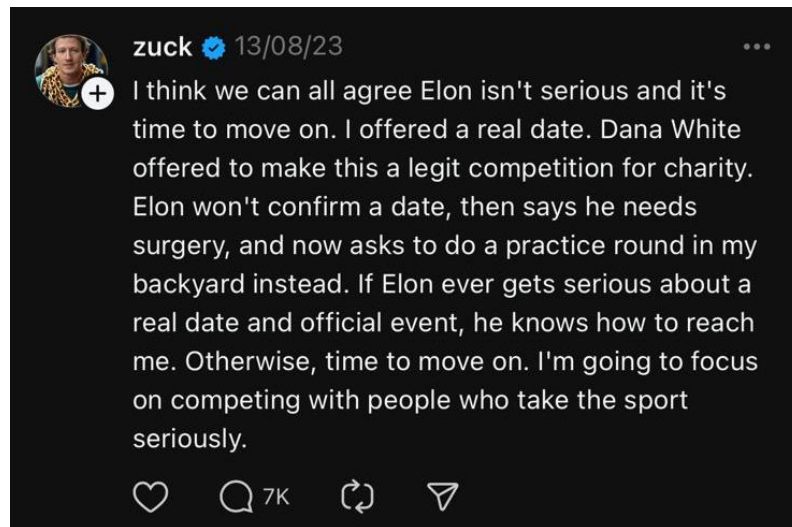


Figure 4 18 Zuck's Thread on 13/08/2023

Bald on record is evident in Mark Zuckerberg's response, *"I think we can all agree Elon isn't serious and it's time to move on. I offered a real date. Dana White offered to make this a legit competition for charity. Elon won't confirm a date, then says he needs surgery, and now asks to do practice rounds in my backyard instead. If Elon ever gets serious about a real date and official event, he knows how to reach me. Otherwise, time to move on. I'm going to focus on competing with people who take the sport seriously,"* according to Brown and Levinson's 1987 theory.

The statement is direct and unambiguous, making it clear that Zuckerberg believes Elon Musk is not serious about the fight and that it is time to move on. The phrase *"I think we can all agree Elon isn't serious and it's time to move on"* is very straightforward, expressing Zuckerberg's opinion without hedging or softening the message. Similarly, *"I offered a real date. Dana White offered to make this a legit competition for charity"* conveys the facts in a clear and assertive way, without any attempt to lessen

the impact of the words. Zuckerberg's use of "*time to move on*" further emphasizes his directness, signaling that he is no longer willing to engage in this back-and-forth.

However, there are subtle elements of negative politeness in the statement as well. For example, the phrase "*If Elon ever gets serious about a real date and official event, he knows how to reach me*" introduces a slight degree of hedging. While it is a direct way of saying that Musk can reach out if he is serious, it is softened by the suggestion that Musk can make the first move, respecting his autonomy and minimizing any imposition on Musk. This makes the request less confrontational and more polite. Zuckerberg's statement is primarily an example of bald on-record politeness due to its directness and clarity in expressing his thoughts and frustrations about the fight. At the same time, the line "*he knows how to reach me*" adds a slight layer of negative politeness, where Zuckerberg gives Musk the space to take the initiative without pressuring him directly. Overall, the tone is assertive and clear, while still allowing for a degree of respect for Musk's autonomy.

B. Discussion

Positive politeness strategies, according to Brown and Levinson's theory, refer to communication techniques used to show appreciation for social relationships and a desire for others to be accepted or liked. In the context of online communication, especially on social media platforms like Threads and X, these strategies function to maintain harmonious relationships and manage public

images. Positive politeness involves efforts to create feelings of closeness and mutual respect, avoiding direct confrontation, and demonstrating care for others' social needs.

1. The Use of Politeness Strategies by Elon Musk in X

In the context of the fight conversation between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg on X, the politeness strategies used by Musk can be analyzed through the lens of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Several politeness strategies identified in Musk's statements include bald on-record, positive politeness, and off-record strategies. Each of these strategies serves its own function and purpose in delivering the message, both in terms of maintaining social relations with the audience and responding to the interlocutor.

First, the bald on-record strategy dominates most of Musk's statements, where he communicates in a very direct and clear manner without attempting to soften or obscure the message. For example, statements like "The fight will be managed by my and Zuck's foundations (not UFC)" on August 11, 2023, show Musk being clear about how the fight will be organized, including details about the location and the streaming platform used. Musk also employs a direct style when responding to challenges, as seen in "Knock, knock... challenge accepted... open the door @finkd" on August 15, 2023, where he openly issues a challenge to Zuckerberg with a confident tone. This straightforwardness reflects Musk's goal of firmly communicating his intentions, which aligns with findings by Handayani et al. (2022) that bald on-record strategies are often used to convey clarity and assertiveness in high-stakes or formal interactions.

On the other hand, Musk employs positive politeness strategies to build rapport with the audience, particularly in relation to respecting Italian cultural heritage and his commitment to social causes. On August 11, 2023, his statement, "Everything done will pay respect to the past and present of Italy," demonstrates Musk's effort to show that the event is not merely about the fight but also about honoring local culture. By acknowledging Italian values, Musk aims to maintain a positive relationship with an audience sensitive to the staging of an event in a historically significant location like the Colosseum. Positive politeness is often employed to reduce social distance and build solidarity, especially when cultural values are involved Widiyanti (2023). Additionally, Musk's statement that all proceeds from the event will be donated to support veterans and pediatric hospitals in Italy adds a humanitarian dimension, further reinforcing a positive impression of himself and the event. Similar strategies were observed by Octaviani and Haryanto (2023) in congratulatory comments, where positive politeness was used to foster emotional engagement and respect for cultural norms.

Furthermore, off-record strategies are evident in Musk's statements, often serving to express sarcasm or indirect criticism. For instance, on August 15, 2023, Musk remarked, "(Zuck thread coming soon about how he would of course love to fight anytime, but blah blah blah UFC something something)." This statement uses indirect language to pre-empt and subtly mock Zuckerberg's potential excuses for delaying the fight. The phrase "blah blah blah" dismisses arguments without outright confrontation, maintaining a level of politeness while delivering the criticism humorously. As Oktiani (2023) highlighted, off-record strategies

can help reduce the impact of criticism and maintain social harmony, especially in informal and public communication settings.

Moreover, Musk incorporates elements of humor and closeness with his audience to reduce social distance and maintain engagement. For example, the phrase “Knock, knock... challenge accepted... open the door @finkd” is not only direct but also playful, inviting interaction. This blending of assertiveness and humor reflects that positive politeness and humor often coexist in online interactions to maintain audience interest and diffuse potential tensions (Sholehah & Wafa, 2023)

Elon Musk’s use of politeness strategies in his fight conversation with Mark Zuckerberg demonstrates a balance between boldness in delivering direct messages and efforts to maintain good relationships with his audience. The bald on-record strategy reflects confidence and transparency, while positive politeness shows his social awareness and respect for cultural and humanitarian values. Simultaneously, off-record strategies allow him to express criticism in a lighter and more indirect manner. Online communication often requires a mix of directness and subtlety to engage diverse audiences effectively (Silitonga & Pasaribu, 2021). Musk’s ability to combine seriousness with playfulness and assertiveness with empathy enriches the dynamics of the conversation (Sholehah & Kusumaningtyas, 2022). By employing these strategies, Musk successfully navigates the challenges of online debates while preserving his public image and fostering engagement with a global audience. This approach not only reflects his

rhetical skills but also contributes to the broader understanding of politeness strategies in digital communication contexts.

2. The Use of Positive Strategies by Mark Zuckerberg in Threads

In the ongoing public conversation about a fight conversation between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, particularly on the platform Threads, we can analyze the politeness strategies used by Zuckerberg through the lens of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Zuckerberg's statements reflect an effort to manage his public image while addressing Musk and maintaining a connection with a broader audience. Various politeness strategies, including negative politeness, positive politeness, and bald on-record strategies, help Zuckerberg navigate this tension by balancing directness, respect for Musk's autonomy, and rapport with his audience.

Negative politeness is evident in Zuckerberg's suggestion of alternative platforms for the charity event, avoiding direct critique of Musk's preferred platform, X. The phrase "Shouldn't we use a more reliable platform..." illustrates how Zuckerberg employs hedging to soften his suggestion, subtly implying that Musk's platform may not be the most reliable without overtly criticizing him. By framing this as a question, Zuckerberg avoids threatening Musk's autonomy and leaves room for disagreement. Hedging strategies in online interactions minimize face-threatening acts and maintain interpersonal harmony (Oktaviani & Santoso, 2022).

Zuckerberg's use of positive politeness appears in statements emphasizing his passion for the sport and his connection to the athletic community. For

instance, he states, “I love this sport and will continue competing with the people who train no matter what happens here.” This reinforces a shared identity with the audience, particularly with fellow athletes, signaling camaraderie and solidarity. By framing the conversation around his love for the sport rather than solely focusing on the rivalry with Musk, Zuckerberg strengthens emotional bonds with his audience and also helps foster a sense of shared values and mutual understanding, particularly in situations where the speaker seeks to build rapport (Rizka and Hidayat (2023)). Another example of positive politeness is Zuckerberg’s casual sharing of personal experiences, such as, “Here’s a photo from today’s Friday Morning Fights in my backyard octagon. Good times.” By offering a glimpse into his personal life and emphasizing the enjoyment of the event, Zuckerberg cultivates a connection with his audience.

Zuckerberg frequently employs bald on-record strategies to assert his readiness for the fight. For instance, he states, “I’m ready today. I suggested Aug 26 when he first challenged, but he hasn’t confirmed. Not holding my breath.” This directness communicates both his availability and frustration with Musk’s lack of commitment. Bald on-record strategies, as highlighted by Silitonga and Pasaribu (2021), are particularly effective when speakers aim to convey urgency or dissatisfaction without ambiguity.

In another instance, Zuckerberg combines bald on-record with slight negative politeness, stating, “I love this sport and I’ve been ready to fight since the day Elon challenged me. If he ever agrees on an actual date, you’ll hear it from me.” While the directness of the bald on-record strategy asserts his readiness, the

phrase “If he ever agrees” introduces a hedge, leaving room for Musk to act on his terms. This nuanced approach reflects that combining directness with hedging can assert authority while preserving the interlocutor’s autonomy (Sholehah and Kusumaningtyas 2022).

Zuckerberg’s politeness strategies also include using negative politeness combined with hedging to manage tension. For example, in his statement, “Not holding my breath for Elon, but I’ll share the details on my next fight when I’m ready,” Zuckerberg hedges his expectations, signaling that he does not anticipate an immediate response from Musk. This strategy respects Musk’s autonomy by giving him space to decide if and when to engage further

Finally, Zuckerberg’s statement, “I think we can all agree Elon isn’t serious and it’s time to move on,” combines bald on-record directness with slight negative politeness when he adds, “If Elon ever gets serious... he knows how to reach me.” This phrasing communicates frustration while allowing Musk the autonomy to reinitiate the conversation. As highlighted by Sholehah and Wafa (2023), this blend of directness and tact is effective in maintaining a balanced tone in high-stakes public discourse.

Mark Zuckerberg’s use of politeness strategies in the Threads conversation about the fight conversation with Elon Musk reflects a sophisticated approach to managing public communication. By blending positive politeness to build rapport, negative politeness to avoid direct confrontation, and bald on-record politeness to assert his stance, Zuckerberg effectively navigates the social dynamics of the interaction. These strategies enable him to express frustration, assert readiness,

and maintain respect for Musk's autonomy while preserving his public image as a confident yet considerate figure. As Rizka and Hidayat (2023) argue, such strategic use of politeness in digital interactions is crucial for balancing interpersonal and public expectations in contemporary online communication.

Politeness Strategies Impact in Communication Styles

In the context of the publicized fight conversation between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, their use of politeness strategies reveals much about their communication styles and the way they manage social dynamics. As two influential figures, their choice of words and the manner in which they present themselves in the fight conversation offer insights into their approach to authority, respect, and maintaining relationships with their audience. By analyzing these strategies, we can better understand how politeness shapes their online personas and influences public perception in high-stakes conversations.

Musk's communication style is marked by a mixture of directness, assertiveness, and humor, using a combination of bald on-record, positive politeness, and off-record strategies. His frequent use of bald on-record politeness, characterized by direct and unambiguous statements, signals his confidence and transparency. This straightforwardness allows him to communicate with clarity, as seen in statements like "The fight will be managed by my and Zuck's foundations (not UFC)" or "Knock, knock... challenge accepted... open the door @finkd." Through this directness, Musk maintains control of the conversation, presenting his intentions without hesitation, which reinforces his image as a bold

and confident leader and it will be effective for leaders in maintaining transparency in public discourse (Fathi, 2024)

However, Musk also utilizes positive politeness strategies to connect with his audience on a more personal level, emphasizing his commitment to cultural values and social causes. By expressing respect for Italy's cultural heritage ("Everything done will pay respect to the past and present of Italy") and promoting the event's charitable aspect, Musk positions himself as a figure who is attuned to the needs and values of his audience. This approach not only serves to foster goodwill but also positions Musk as a socially responsible individual, one who is concerned about the broader impact of the event beyond the fight itself. The positive politeness strategies used by Musk soften the confrontational nature of the interaction, allowing him to maintain rapport with his audience while still asserting his stance.

Musk also employs off-record strategies, often using indirect language and humor to convey sarcasm or criticism. His use of phrases like "blah blah blah UFC something something" serves to subtly dismiss Zuckerberg's potential responses without directly confronting him. This strategy allows Musk to maintain a casual, even playful, tone while avoiding direct conflict, which helps preserve his public image as someone who does not take the situation too seriously. This mix of directness and humor, along with the occasional use of sarcasm, contributes to Musk's reputation as a confident, assertive, and occasionally irreverent figure.

Overall, Musk's use of politeness strategies creates a communication style that is bold, confident, but also adaptable in responding to social dynamics. Musk successfully balances assertiveness with a sense of empathy for the audience, even though his communication style can sometimes come across as too direct or challenging.

In contrast, Zuckerberg's communication style is more nuanced, as he combines bald on-record, positive politeness, and negative politeness strategies to navigate the tension of the conversation while maintaining a sense of professionalism and respect. His use of negative politeness strategies, such as hedging and suggesting alternatives, helps him avoid direct criticism of Musk and keeps the conversation tactful. For example, his suggestion, "Shouldn't we use a more reliable platform..." softens the implication that Musk's platform, X, may not be the best choice for the event, leaving room for Musk to respond without feeling attacked. This hedging allows Zuckerberg to express his concerns while preserving Musk's autonomy, avoiding direct confrontation, and demonstrating a high level of respect for Musk's decision-making.

Additionally, Zuckerberg employs positive politeness strategies to engage with his audience on a more personal and enthusiastic level. By emphasizing his passion for the sport and his commitment to competing, as seen in statements like "I love this sport and will continue competing with the people who train no matter what happens here," Zuckerberg reinforces his shared identity with sports enthusiasts, thus strengthening his rapport with his audience. This strategy frames the conversation in terms of a broader sports community rather than a personal

rivalry with Musk, allowing Zuckerberg to maintain a more likable and relatable image. His use of casual, relatable language, like sharing photos from his "Friday Morning Fights," humanizes him, presenting him as an approachable figure who is engaged in the sport for the joy and camaraderie it provides, rather than solely for the competition with Musk. Positive politeness, as described in recent literature, is a powerful tool for creating relatability and fostering audience goodwill (Brown & Levinson, 1987)

Zuckerberg also integrates bald on-record strategies when asserting his readiness for the fight. For example, his statement "I'm ready today. I suggested Aug 26 when he first challenged, but he hasn't confirmed. Not holding my breath" directly communicates his frustration with Musk's indecision while reinforcing his availability and readiness. This straightforwardness allows Zuckerberg to assert his position clearly, signaling both his frustration and his willingness to move forward without ambiguity.

The way Musk and Zuckerberg use politeness strategies profoundly impacts their overall communication styles, shaping how they are perceived by their audiences. Musk's style is characterized by assertiveness, confidence, and humor, utilizing bald on-record and off-record strategies to maintain control over the conversation and engage with his audience in a casual, sometimes playful manner. His positive politeness strategies serve to humanize him, aligning him with cultural values and social causes, which enhances his public image as someone who cares about broader issues beyond the immediate competition.

Zuckerberg's style, on the other hand, is more measured and tactful, blending negative politeness and positive politeness strategies to maintain a balance between assertiveness and respect for Musk's autonomy. His frequent use of negative politeness helps him avoid direct conflict while still conveying his concerns, which demonstrates his consideration for maintaining social harmony. Zuckerberg's positive politeness strategies, such as sharing his passion for the sport and engaging with his audience in a more personal, relatable way, help to soften the competitive nature of the interaction, presenting him as a dedicated, approachable figure.

Ultimately, both Musk and Zuckerberg navigate the tension of their online interactions by balancing directness with tact, humor with seriousness, and personal involvement with public persona management. Their strategic use of politeness shapes their communication styles, influencing not only how they engage with each other but also how they maintain relationships with their respective audiences. While Musk relies more on bold, confident communication, Zuckerberg's approach reflects a blend of assertiveness and consideration, creating a complex but effective dialogue that resonates with their followers.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher provides the result of this study as the conclusion based on findings and discussion. In addition, the suggestion is given to the next researchers to have more improvement in this field of study.

A. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion regarding the use of politeness strategies by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg in their conversation about their fight, it can be concluded that both have very different yet effective communication styles in shaping public perception and maintaining relationships with their audiences. Musk adopts a more direct and assertive communication style using bald on-record strategies that firmly state his position and intentions without hesitation, combined with humor and sarcasm that reveal a casual and less serious side. His use of positive politeness, such as expressing respect for cultural and social values (e.g., his statements about honoring Italy's heritage), showcases his humanity and efforts to build a closer connection with his audience, even within a competitive context. Additionally, Musk uses off-record strategies to alleviate tension and maintain his public image as laid-back and non-intimidating.

In contrast, Zuckerberg takes a more careful and measured approach, blending negative politeness to avoid direct conflict, such as when he gently suggests alternatives, and positive politeness to connect with his audience on an emotional level, for instance, by expressing his passion for the sport and sharing

personal experiences. While both employ different approaches, both Musk and Zuckerberg succeed in establishing effective communication that aligns with their roles and public personas, with Musk leaning more toward strong confidence and humor, while Zuckerberg prioritizes caution and professionalism.

The audience's reaction to their communication styles reveals an interesting dynamic. Musk's casual and humorous style is more appealing to the younger demographic that dominates the user base of X (formerly Twitter). This group tends to prefer a more relaxed and entertaining communication style, making Musk's approach more widely accepted and gaining more support during the "fight" conversation. Comments on Musk's posts often highlight his relatability and entertainment value, with many users expressing admiration for his confidence and intelligence. On the other hand, Zuckerberg's more formal and measured tone is appreciated by those who value professionalism and thoughtful communication, but it may seem less engaging to a younger audience, leading to a relatively calmer public response. This communication style influences the audience's perception of their images, with Musk being seen as more attractive and energetic, while Zuckerberg appears more serious and focused on harmony.

This observation aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies theory, which emphasizes that individuals use various strategies to manage face, or the positive social value a person claims for themselves in interaction. According to the theory, bald on-record strategies, such as those employed by Musk, are used when individuals seek directness and clarity, often

disregarding politeness to maintain efficiency. In contrast, positive politeness strategies, used by both Musk and Zuckerberg, focus on showing solidarity, respect, and building rapport to ensure that the speaker's face is maintained and valued. Negative politeness, seen in Zuckerberg's approach, involves hedging and indirectness to avoid threatening the listener's autonomy. Together, these strategies highlight how Musk and Zuckerberg navigate the complexities of their social and professional identities in a public, competitive conversation.

These findings have practical implications for communication practitioners and social media platforms in managing online conflicts. For practitioners, understanding the nuances of politeness strategies can guide the development of communication approaches that balance assertiveness with empathy, ensuring messages resonate effectively with diverse audiences. For social media platforms, these insights can inform policy-making to foster more courteous and constructive interactions. For example, platforms could implement features that encourage reflective posting.

This research can be considered successful, as it has achieved its objectives in analyzing how politeness strategies are used by Musk and Zuckerberg to shape public perception, maintain their public personas, and influence audience engagement. By addressing the differences in their communication styles, the study highlights how these strategies affect public perception and the dynamics of online interactions. Furthermore, the study contributes to the development of ethical and

effective communication strategies, providing actionable insights for practitioners and policymakers in digital communication.

In conclusion, the study not only sheds light on how influential figures like Musk and Zuckerberg use politeness strategies to navigate their social and professional identities but also provides valuable recommendations for promoting ethical and effective communication in the digital space. By integrating these strategies, social media users, policymakers, and communication professionals can collectively contribute to a more respectful and engaging online discourse.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings obtained from the analysis of politeness strategies employed by Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg in their social media interactions, this research provides an understanding of how public figures utilize various politeness strategies to maintain their image and manage social relationships in a competitive context. However, the scope of this research can still be further developed by considering aspects that may not have been fully revealed. The author shares suggestions for future researchers to enrich the study of positive politeness strategies.

Future researchers could consider using more specific politeness theories, such as Leech's (1983) Pragmatic Politeness Theory, which focuses on the principles of politeness maxims. This would allow for a deeper exploration of politeness aspects in online communication, especially in the context of cross-

cultural or cross-platform communication.

In addition to public figure interactions, researchers may shift their focus to corporate interactions or communications from influencers on social media. Positive politeness strategies are often employed by companies in managing reputation and maintaining relationships with consumers, such as in handling customer complaints on social media or interactive marketing campaigns. Such studies could provide new perspectives on how positive politeness is used in the business realm to build image and customer loyalty.

This research primarily focuses on interactions between public figures. Future researchers could explore how politeness strategies are applied in communication between ordinary users and public figures (celebrity-fan interaction). This approach could reveal whether public figures tend to use different politeness strategies when interacting with a broader audience to maintain harmonious relationships and create a sense of closeness.

Future research could adopt a multi-platform approach to observe whether the positive politeness strategies of a single figure change when interacting on different platforms. For example, the same figure might exhibit different communication styles between Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, depending on the audience and communication goals.

By considering these suggestions, it is hoped that future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the application of positive politeness strategies in various communication contexts, as well as enrich the discourse on politeness in increasingly complex online interactions.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



Aifa Khilyatun Nisa was born in Malang on April 11, 2001. She is the third of four siblings and the only daughter in her family. Aifa completed her secondary education at SMA Negeri 1 Tumpang, then she continued her education at Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang to complete her undergraduate education in the Department of English

Literature which she completed in 2024. She not only excelled in her studies but also immersed herself in community service. Her dedication to social development was reflected in her involvement with a social organization in the Poncokusumo tourist village. Through this organization, she contributed to promoting local culture and fostering sustainable tourism initiatives.

APPENDIX

Table 4. 1 Classification types of politeness strategies

Data	Strategies			
	Blad on Record	Positive Politeness	Negative Politeness	Off Record
Data 1 (Elon) “Legacy media” with meme which says “I’m here, just joking, I’m here, hahaha fine fine, I’m here”				√
Data 2 (Elon) “Am lifting weights throughout the day, preparing for the fight. Don’t have time to work out, so just bring them to work.”	√			
Data 3 (Elon)	√			

“Zuck v Musk fight will be live-streamed on X. All proceeds will go to charity for veterans.”				
Data 4 (Elon) "The fight will be managed by my and Zuck's foundations (not UFC). Livestream will be on this platform (X) and Meta. Everything in camera frame will be ancient Rome, so nothing modern at all. I spoke to the PM of Italy and the Minister of Culture. They have agreed on an epic location,"	√			
Data 5 (Elon) “Everything done will pay respect to the past		√		

and present of Italy”				
Data 6 (Elon) “And all proceeds go to veterans”		√		
Data 7 (Elon) "And pediatric hospitals in Italy"		√		
Data 8 (Elon) “Knock, knock... challenge accepted... open the door @finkd”	√			
Data 9 (Elon) "(Zuck thread coming soon about how he would of course love fight anytime, but blah blah blah UFC something something)"				√
Data 10 (Elon) “For the Tesla FSD test drive in Palo Alto tonight, I will ask the car to drive to	√			

@finkd's house. Will also test latest X livestream video, so you can monitor our adventure in real-time! If we get lucky and Zuck my 🍷 actually answers the door, the fight is on!"				
Data 11 (Elon) "Fight recap: I joked on X about fighting Zuck. Zuck then said 'SEND ME LOCATION.' Italy graciously offered a Colosseum. Zuck declined. I suggested his home as 'safe space.' Tragically, he was ahem 'travelling.' Is there anywhere he will fight?"	√			

Data 12 (Zuck) "Shouldn't we use a more reliable platform that we can actually raise money for charity?"			√	
Data 13 (Zuck) "I love this sport and will continue competing with the people who train no matter what happens here,"		√		
Data 14 (Zuck) "I'm ready today. I suggested Aug 26 when he first challenged, but he hasn't confirmed. Not holding my breath."	√			
Data 15 (Zuck) "Not holding my breath for Elon, but I'll			√	

share the details on my next fight when I'm ready. When I compete, I want to do it in a way that puts a spotlight on the elite athletes at the top of the game. You do that by working with professional orgs like the UFC or ONE to pull this off well and create a great card,"				
Data 16 (Zuck) "I love this sport and I've been ready to fight since the day Elon challenged me. If he ever agrees on an actual date, you'll hear it from me. Until then, please assume anything he says has not been	√			

agreed on.”				
Data 17 (Zuck) “Separately, here’s a photo from today’s Friday Morning Fights in my backyard octagon. Good times.”		√		
Data 18 (Zuck) "I think we can all agree Elon isn’t serious and it’s time to move on. I offered a real date. Dana White offered to make this a legit competition for charity. Elon won’t confirm a date, then says he needs surgery, and now asks to do practice rounds in my backyard instead. If Elon ever gets serious about a real date and	√			

official event, he knows how to reach me. Otherwise, time to move on. I'm going to focus on competing with people who take the sport seriously,"				
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