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**CONCEPTS OF INTERACTION AND POLITENESS ANALYZED
THROUGH TWO PLAYS *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF* AND A
*STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE***

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Abstract

Politeness is very important in terms of human interaction. It may lead to positive, negative or somewhat ambiguous conversations and it can affect our everyday lives. In our society, it is generally expected to show kindness and good manners when addressing and interacting with other people, however, sometimes our intentions can be misinterpreted. We will take a closer look at politeness strategies and distinguish their importance under different circumstances. This paper is going to focus on two plays by Tennessee Williams; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This paper will look deeply into what makes a conversation polite or impolite and how these strategies can help us cherish and develop more respectful and meaningful relationships. This paper will discover and analyze face threatening acts, positive politeness, negative politeness and how these concepts are being used in the plays mentioned above. We are going to analyze and observe characters' behaviors, personalities and dialogues. Ultimately, the results of this paper will help us find answers on the importance of politeness and how we can use it to improve our society.

Key words: politeness, interaction, comparison, behavior, personality, negative politeness, positive politeness, face threatening act, literature

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1. Introduction

The main goal of this master's thesis is to analyze politeness strategies and interaction in two plays written by Tennessee Williams; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1957) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). Based on this observation we will draw conclusions about their importance in today's world. While analyzing these works and observing its characters we will be able to recognize in which ways politeness strategies affects their relationships and see if they can use these strategies to their advantage.

Politeness is a very diverse system and it consists of several theories. Throughout history, many linguists and pragmatists have tried to define politeness and understand in which ways it affects human interaction. George Yule in his book *The Study of Language* (2010, p. 135) states that politeness is connected to ideas such as being tactful, modest and nice to other people. Yule also states that one of the most important aspects of linguistic politeness is face, also known as public self image. Being aware and considerate to someone else's face is what Yule defines as politeness.

Richard J. Watts in his book *Politeness* (2003, p. 1) states that polite behavior and politeness are different for everyone. Some people might think that being polite is a socially acceptable behavior and others may think that they are being standoffish or insincere.

Robin Lakoff also talks about politeness in her book *Language and Woman's Place* (1973, p. 57). She states that politeness usually involves the absence of a strong statement and that women are discouraged from having strong statements which makes them more polite compared to men.

It is important to mention that politeness can also be culturally defined and because of this sometimes our conversations with other people can leave us dissatisfied or confused. We are all different and what might be seen as a harmless joke, to some people it might be an insult. However, Brown and Levinson (1987) have devoted their time to distinguishing several politeness strategies and acknowledging their linguistic and cultural differences. Knowledge of politeness and its theories could help us understand other people better and their ways of communicating. That being said, I'd like to emphasize that we should all take responsibility for our words and meanings that we are trying to convey. Words can leave a big impact and we should always try to understand our collocutors and their cultural background before

jumping to conclusions. This is why the first part of this paper will focus on discussing Brown and Levinson's research on politeness strategies.

According to the works of Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness can be seen as avoiding face threatening acts and looking for common ground with your collocutor. It can also be recognized through emphasized friendliness and attending to other people's needs and interests. They also indicate different politeness strategies that can be used in order to achieve one's goal. We will summarize main points which are relevant to this paper and apply them to the above-mentioned plays. We will also focus on the use of face threatening acts and the ways to redress them in order to save other person's face.

The main body of this paper will focus on the analysis of the two plays. We will analyze relevant characters and look for politeness strategies that are being used. This paper will find answers on how politeness strategies are used in different situations and why politeness is necessary in everyday communication. We will also discuss characters' relationships and find answers on how politeness affects their lives.

1.1 Methodology

This study is based on the qualitative research. Its main focus will be two plays written by Tennessee Williams: *Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. I will analyze dialogues, sentences, and utterances, and determine if the characters in these plays are using politeness strategies defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) and in which way they are using them. I will use the qualitative approach because it will help me take a closer look at characters' experiences and it might help the reader understand characters' thoughts, feelings and actions.

In the theoretical part of the paper, I will describe the concept of face threatening acts and present positive, negative, bald on record and off record politeness strategies and their realizations in the language.

Research will be based on the primary data taken out from the plays and on the secondary data gathered by Brown and Levinson in their book *Politeness- Some Universals in Language Usage* (1987). The primary data consists of dialogues containing politeness strategies and the secondary data consists of Brown and Levinson's research on politeness. I will compare and

describe in which way characters are using different strategies and whether their usage is helping them achieve their goals or not.

The study was based on the following research questions:

1. What effect do politeness strategies have on characters' relationships?
2. What impact do face threatening acts have on characters' behaviors?
3. Do different situations allow the calculated use of politeness strategies?
4. Do politeness strategies matter in the everyday life?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Face

Each person has its own "face". In terms of linguistic politeness, this is not just a physical face that we show to other people. It is a face that we use to portray a public self-image that is pleasing to us and reaffirms our self-esteem. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) make a distinction between two types of faces: negative face (claiming your territories, freedom from imposition and action) and positive face (positive self-image that is appreciated and approved of by others).

To maintain the face all interactants should be willing to show vulnerability and count on the other person to be considerate of their face in the interaction. If someone's face is threatened, the person may become defensive and possibly threaten another person's face. However, it is generally expected that it is in everyone's best interest to maintain each other's face.

2.1.1 Face as wants

Both negative and positive faces have their own wants. Negative face wants their actions to be unimpeded by others and positive face wants their desires to be desirable by others. Negative face is also related to "formal politeness", and it can be quite clear how to respond in specific situations. However, positive face requires interactants to react in a certain way, i.e., to understand, approve or admire one's goals, desires, actions, etc. These wants can be directed to non-material as well as material things. Another important point to bring up is that people

usually want their goals or possessions to be desired or valued by specific people that are related to their wants. For example, a student wants their teacher to admire their passion for studying. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 65)

2.1.2 Face Threatening Acts

There are two types of acts that may threaten the addressee's face; the acts that threaten the positive face and the acts that threaten the negative face.

The act that threatens the negative face, usually involves putting pressure on the addressee, ordering, requesting something, making suggestions and directly threatening or daring the addressee. These acts violate the addressee's desire for freedom and will threaten their negative face. However, we should not forget about other less explicit acts such as making promises and giving compliments which may incur an involuntary debt on the addressee's part.

The act that threatens the positive face usually involves the speaker indicating that they don't care about the addressee's feelings and that they don't want addressee's wants. These acts also include expressions of disapproval, criticism, disagreement, expressions of violent emotions and talking about taboo or divisive topics such as religions or politics, not paying attention to the addressee and interrupting them. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.67)

These acts are specifically directed towards addressee's face. However, there are other acts that threaten primarily speaker's face, both negative and positive.

Acts that threaten the negative face: expressing thanks, accepting or thanking for an apology, using excuses to justify themselves for failing to do something, accepting offers which incurs a debt, committing themselves to promises and doing something even if they don't want to.

Acts that threaten the positive face: expressing regrets and apologizing which damages their own face, accepting compliments, not being in control of their body such as falling down, not being in control of their emotions, acting stupid or humiliating themselves, confessing and admitting guilt or responsibility for something they did or did not do.

2.1.3 Strategies for doing FTAs

Everyone's face is vulnerable to a certain extent and any rational being would like to protect it from being threatened. It can be very hard to communicate without using face threatening acts, so Brown and Levinson have come up with a few strategies that can help us minimize these threats.

Going on record is one of these strategies. It means to unambiguously express yourself so that your message is perfectly clear, and all addressees can understand it. For example, "I'm going to buy a strawberry cake." This sentence is not open for another interpretation and the speaker has committed themselves to buying a strawberry cake.

Off record strategy contains ambiguous messages and sentences can have more than one meaning. The speaker is not willing to commit themselves to a particular intent. For example, "I haven't eaten anything since breakfast." The speaker may want you to offer them some food, but they also can't be held accountable for that intent.

Bald on record without redress is the most direct and concise way of expressing yourself. The speaker will only use this strategy if there is no fear of retribution from the hearer. This can happen in situations where both, the speaker and hearer suspend the relevance of face in order to maximize efficiency. For example, "Give me the fire extinguisher!" in case of fire is more direct and efficient than "Would you please give me the fire extinguisher?" In this case the hearer's face is not at risk since the relevance of it is not as important as the state of urgency. Another situation where using bald on record without redress is not threatening hearer's face is in offers, requests or suggestions that are in hearer's interest and don't require specific effort and sacrifice from the speaker. For example, "Have a cookie!" And the last type of situation is when speaker is superior in power to hearer. Should the speaker try to endanger hearer's face, it would also destroy their own.

Redressive action is another strategy that gives face to the hearer. In this way the speaker clearly indicates that no face damage is intended or desired. This action can take two forms, positive and negative.

Positive politeness strategy focuses on the hearer's positive face. Speaker indicates that hearer's wants are also speaker's wants. Speaker respects the hearer, treats them as part of the group and shows awareness of hearer's desired public self-image.

Negative politeness strategy focuses on the hearer's negative face. The speaker respects hearer's claims of freedom and self-determination. Negative politeness strategy is also avoidance-based, and the speaker will not interfere with the hearer's freedom of action. Face can be saved with apologies for interfering. Using this strategy can be seen as very formal and impersonal and the speaker may use passive forms to distance themselves and the hearer from the face-threatening act. It also gives hearer enough space to give a response that is not coerced.

2.1.4 Distance, Power, Ranking

The concepts of distance, power and ranking play an important role in assessing the seriousness of the face threatening act. Interlocutors will make certain calculations that might help them reach a desirable outcome. Both speaker and the hearer will assess the distance, power and ranking between themselves while participating in a face threatening act. These factors determine the weightiness of the face threatening act. The distance is also known as a "social distance", and it is a symmetric relation while power is an asymmetric relation. Assessing the ranking involves the overall ranking of imposition which may be different in certain cultures. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 74)

Distance is a symmetric relation in the sense that it is based on the frequency of interaction and the material or non-material things being exchanged between hearer and the speaker. Reciprocity of giving and receiving the positive face also determines the distance between the interlocutors. The more distant we are, the more polite we are going to be in our conversation.

Power is an asymmetric relation, and it contains two sources: material control (economic control or physical force) and metaphysical control (controlling actions of others by virtue of metaphysical forces). Individual's power depends on these two sources, and it allows the person who has more power, to impose their own plans and public image at the expense of others. Power can also be seen as a value attached to a specific role, for example, parent or a bank manager.

Ranking depends on the situation and culture. The imposition that we are trying to calculate also depends on the agent's wants and positive or negative face approval. Ranking involves impositions requiring services and goods and some impositions can be lessened with the fact

that an act required from the agent is also their obligation or the fact that the agent enjoys performing the required act.

2.2 Super-strategies

Brown and Levinson (1987, p.92) have come up with four super-strategies for doing a face threatening act. These strategies serve to help us achieve higher-order goals and they are: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. In order to reach your goals, it would be best to learn these strategies and use them as deemed necessary in certain situations. However, these strategies cannot be learned and utilized in that way since we are human beings, and our subconscious plays a major role in the way we respond to the world. Still, there are some important factors that distinguish these super-strategies, and we may want to use them as a guide towards a better understanding. In the next section we will dive deeper into these strategies and provide additional explanations for their use.

From the linguistic point of view, there are certain traits that are applicable to all strategies and in the research part of this paper we will draw more examples from the two plays that are being analyzed.

Organization and ordering: 1) is considered to be more polite than 2) due to topicalization and focus.

1) If you don't mind me asking, where did you see that show?

2) Where did you see that show, if you don't mind me asking?

Another trait worth mentioning is the amount of speaker's effort in satisfying hearer's face wants. For positive politeness it means that the speaker will show their care for hearer and their face; and for negative politeness it means the speaker will emphasize that they don't want to impinge on hearer's wants. In this process they may even apologize, belittle themselves and express reluctance.

The third and final observation is the language structure. Some strategies have become a part of the grammar through the encoding process. These are: lexicalizations, transformations (passivization, ellipsis, inflections, and nominalization) and phonetic modifications (high pitch, creaky voice). (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.94)

2.2.1 Bald on record

Using the bald on record strategy ensures a very straightforward and direct communication. It is concise, unambiguous and it works to provide maximally efficient communication. Whenever speaker wants to communicate in an efficient way, they will use the bald on record strategy. There are two kinds of bald on record usages: non-minimization of the face threat and minimization of the face threat by implication.

Non-minimization of the face threat is used in cases of great urgency. In this case the face redress is not necessary. Urgency can also be metaphorical, and speaker will usually use imperatives, such as “Excuse me.” Whenever interlocutors are performing a task, face redress is also deemed irrelevant as shown in this example “Give me the hammer.” Another important case when face redress is not necessary is when speaker cares for hearer and the face threatening act is done in hearer’s interest, such as: “Be careful! It’s really slippery here.”

Minimization of the face threat by implication involves mutual orientation. Speaker may assume that in a certain situation, hearer feels anxiety about transgressing speaker’s preserve. In this case speaker may want to help hearer by preemptively inviting them to impinge on their preserve. This can happen in welcomings, farewells and offers. If the invitation is firm and decisive, hearer won’t feel that they are impinging. For example, the invitation “Come in” or the offer “Have some cookies!” are delivered in the imperative and are considered more polite. In these situations, hearer won’t feel as if they are imposing on speaker. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 100)

2.2.2 Positive politeness

Positive politeness is usually used in intimate conversations and relationships. It is directed towards addressee’s positive face, and it helps us highlight the friendship, approval of their personality and establish common ground. However, it can also be used when two strangers in specific situation find themselves to be similar. We also use it when we want to emphasize that hearer’s wants are desirable to us. Positive politeness consists of three mechanisms. One of those mechanisms is called “claiming common ground” and it points out that both speaker and hearer belong to the same group that shares goals and values. This mechanism gives us eight positive politeness strategies. These are:

- Strategy 1: Notice, attend to hearer (their interests, wants, needs, goods)

Speaker will notice anything that might stand out and anything that the hearer might want the speaker to notice. Also, when hearer makes a face threatening act against themselves, speaker should notice it and emphasize they are not embarrassed by it.

- Strategy 2: Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with the hearer)

Speaker can emphasize their interest with the hearer even more by using exaggerated intonation and intensifying modifiers such as absolutely or exactly.

- Strategy 3: Intensify interest to hearer

Speaker can show they share the same interests with the hearer by being fully engaged in the conversation. They can use vivid present by pulling the hearer in the middle of the conversation with tag questions and expressions such as “you know” or by going back and forth with the present and past events to make the story more interesting.

- Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers

Speaker can use this strategy to implicitly claim the common ground with the hearer. Using in-group address forms such as sister, sweetie, honey, and so on, softens face threatening acts.

- Strategy 5: Seek agreement

Speaker can decide to speak about safe topics to claim the common ground with the hearer. This way they can both agree and share similar opinions.

- Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement

Speaker can have a desire to agree with the hearer even when they don't actually agree. This strategy allows the speaker to hide their disagreement by twisting their utterances in expressions such as “Yes, but...” Speaker may also use a white lie to avoid disagreement and save hearer's face.

- Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground

Speaker may use this strategy when they want to redress the face threatening act by talking about unrelated topics or general shared interests with the hearer. The speaker can also use

different point of view operations such as putting themselves into addressee's point of view to bring them closer to each other.

- Strategy 8: Joke

Speaker can use jokes to indicate shared background or values with the hearer. However, jokes can also be used to exploit politeness strategies and to redefine the seriousness of the face threatening act.

Second mechanism that gives us another six positive politeness strategies is also known as "Conveying that speaker and hearer are cooperators". This means that speaker and hearer are cooperators in a certain activity in which they share goals. This mechanism also reflects the knowledge and sensitivity that speaker has of hearer's wants and vice versa. It is realized by the reciprocity between the speaker and hearer. These strategies are:

- Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose speaker's knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants

Speaker can imply knowledge of hearer's wants and indicate that hearer's wants fit into speaker's wants as well.

- Strategy 10: Offer, promise

Speaker can let the hearer know that whatever hearer wants, speaker wants for them as well and will help them get it. Speaker can use this strategy to satisfy hearer's positive face.

- Strategy 11: Be optimistic

Speaker may assume that hearer wants what speaker wants for themselves. Speaker and hearer will cooperate because of the mutual interest.

- Strategy 12: Include both speaker and hearer in the activity

Speaker can use "we" instead of "you and I" to be inclusive and promote cooperativeness.

- Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons

When speaker gives reasons to the hearer for doing a certain face threatening act, the hearer can see the reasonableness of the act and accept to be included in the activity.

- Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity

Speaker can assume or assert reciprocity to establish cooperation between the speaker and the hearer. Speaker can give evidence of reciprocal right by saying “I helped you out last week, so now you can help me.”

Third mechanism is known as “Fulfilling hearer’s want for something”. Here, speaker will redress hearer’s face by fulfilling some of hearer’s wants. This indicates that they want for the hearer what hearer wants for themselves. This mechanism gives us the last positive politeness strategy:

- Strategy 15: Give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

Speaker can satisfy hearer’s positive face and by giving them something they want. This can be a material or non-material gift. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 129)

2.2.3 Negative politeness

In certain situations, speakers may need to use negative politeness to redress the face threatening act. This means the speaker will take into consideration the hearer’s negative face, which is to be independent, not be imposed upon by others and have freedom of action. Negative politeness is also considered to be the heart of the respect behavior. It is used to minimize the imposition caused by the face threatening act and to emphasize social distance.

There are ten negative politeness strategies and the first one comes from the want to be direct. This want comes into a clash with the want to be indirect since indirectness usually works to weaken the imposition. The first strategy is a compromise that partially satisfies both of these wants.

- Strategy 1: Be conventionally indirect

The speaker may utilize this strategy by using indirect speech acts to question felicity conditions. A successful felicity condition request depends on the addressee’s ability to comply with the request. For example, “Can you close the window?” is not an actual question but a request. This usage has been conventionalized to the extent that we can consider this as an on-record expression.

Another mechanism that gives us the second strategy is to carefully avoid assuming or presuming anything about the hearer's beliefs, desires or interests. The speaker using this strategy will question or hedge such assumptions in order to redress the face threatening act. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 132)

- Strategy 2: Question, hedge

We use hedges and questions to mitigate and avoid commitment to our assumptions. This strategy is also useful when we want to say that something is partially true or even more true than expected. We can divide them into two groups: strengtheners (exactly, absolutely), and weakeners (perhaps, I wonder, sort of). Both groups determine the speaker's level of commitment to what they're saying.

If we find ourselves in a situation where we need to request an aid from the hearer, or offer them something that requires them to accept, in order to save their negative face, we should avoid coercing their response. This mechanism also prompts us to explicitly give them the option to not perform the act. In this case, speaker should be pessimistic and assume that hearer is not likely to do the act. This gives hearer the space to easily reject the offer or the request. This mechanism gives us the third, fourth and fifth strategy.

- Strategy 3: Be pessimistic

Speaker can save hearer's negative face by immediately expressing doubts that the hearer can/will do what they're asking for.

- Strategy 4: Minimize the imposition, Rx

Speaker may want to use expressions such as just, a little bit, a tiny bit, only, to redress the negative face and minimize the imposition.

- Strategy 5: Give deference

There are two ways to give deference to the hearer. The speaker can either humble and belittle themselves or raise the hearer and make them feel superior. In these cases, hearer has more power and a higher social status than the speaker. The speaker emphasizes that they are in no position to coerce the hearer in any way. While doing a face threatening act, the speaker may also use sir, Mr. Mrs. Miss, etc., to soften the act.

The mechanism that involves speaker communicating their want to not impinge on the hearer, gives us strategies 6, 7, 8, and 9. The speaker will acknowledge the face threatening act and will let the hearer know that they are not taking this lightly. The speaker can apologize for the infringement, try to make amends for the act, or show reluctance to impose on the hearer. The reluctance can be achieved by dissociating one, or both of them, from the face threatening act. This way, speaker may show that it is not their wish to impose on the hearer, but that someone else is responsible for that. Speaker can dissociate themselves by making it look like the agent of the face threatening act is unknown, or by rephrasing the act so it will not sound like they are imposing.

- Strategy 6: Apologize

Speaker can redress the face threatening act by showing remorse and reluctance for causing impingement to the hearer.

- Strategy 7: Impersonalize speaker and hearer

This can be achieved by not using pronouns *you* and *I*, especially when using a direct expression as in the form of imperatives. The commanding tone is quite threatening to the face so the speaker may soften the act by omitting these pronouns. Another great way to impersonalize the speaker and hearer is to use passives and circumstantial voices. This way the speaker avoids referencing anyone involved in the face threatening act. For example, “It is expected” instead of “I expect”.

- Strategy 8: State the face threatening act as a general rule

Speaker can explain that the face threatening act in this case is a general social rule or obligation and dissociate from the imposition.

- Strategy 9: Nominalize

Nominalization is the process of turning verbs, adjectives and expressions into nouns. According to the Brown and Levinson, p. 208, the more nouny the expression, the more removed an actor is from doing, feeling or being something.

The last mechanism for redressing the negative face includes redressing other hearer’s wants. This way speaker acknowledges the fact that they have imposed upon the hearer and incurred

a debt. They can also make an offer and minimize the imposition to emphasize that the hearer is not indebted.

- Strategy 10: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not incurring the hearer

Speaker can admit the difficulty that the hearer experienced because of their request and will immediately put themselves in a debt. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 210)

2.2.4 Off record

Off record is a strategy where speaker talks in an ambiguous way and ends up conveying unclear messages. This is a good strategy to use if we want to have an “out” or avoid being accountable for our communicative intentions. If the speaker is doing a face threatening act, they can avoid the responsibility by letting the hearer interpret the message. This is also known as the indirect use of language. The hearer’s comprehension of the message depends on two factors:

- Trigger – hearer realizes that they need to make an inference
- Obtaining an inference on what was intended from what was said

There are two mechanisms that the speaker can use to achieve certain off record strategy. The first one involves using conversational implicatures. This means the speaker will imply another meaning beyond the literal one. Speaker can give hints to the hearer and hope the hearer will pick up those hints and understand the suggested interpretation. The use of this mechanism also involves violating Gricean Maxims. There are four maxims: relevance, quantity, quality and manner. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 213)

First three strategies violate the relevance maxim. These are:

- Strategy 1: Give hints

Speaker can say something that is not quite relevant or clear and this will trigger the hearer to look for hidden meanings.

- Strategy 2: Give association clues

Speaker can give association clues when they want to trigger the hearer to do something. Speaker will use this strategy if they have mutual experiences or shared knowledge because then the hearer will understand their request.

- Strategy 3: Presuppose

Relevance maxim is violated whenever speaker decides to do the face threatening act indirectly and by not being explicitly relevant. Speaker can say “I’m cold” and expect the hearer to understand the hint and give them a jacket or turn up the heating.

Quantity Maxim is violated in the next three strategies. These are:

- Strategy 4: Understate

Speaker can generate the implicature by saying less than what is required.

- Strategy 5: Overstate

Speaker can say more than what is required by exaggerating and use this strategy to generate the implicature.

- Strategy 6: Use tautologies

Speaker can say the same word two times to indicate something that must be true or to convey a criticism. For example, “Boys will be boys”. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.221)

Whenever speaker doesn’t provide enough information, or provides more than what is necessary, they violate the quantity maxim. The hearer will wonder why the speaker is not providing enough information, or why are they exaggerating and saying more than what is necessary.

The next four strategies violate the quality maxim. These are:

- Strategy 7: Use contradictions

Speaker can convey implicatures by stating something that contradicts itself. It can be used to complain or criticize something/someone.

- Strategy 8: Be ironic

Speaker can say something that is completely opposite of what they actually mean, and the hearer is inclined to identify clues and look for the intended meanings.

- Strategy 9: Use metaphors

Speaker can use metaphors to convey the implicature and to indirectly express their opinion. Metaphors contain hedging particles such as sort of, real, perhaps etc.

- Strategy 10: Use rhetorical questions

Speaker will use this strategy to provide certain information. For example, this rhetorical question “What can I say?” serves to indicate that the situation is so bad that the speaker has nothing to say. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 223)

When speaker is using these strategies, they are encouraging the hearer to look for interpretations. The meanings behind their contradicting sentences, rhetorical questions metaphors or irony statements are not sincere and there are multiple hidden meanings.

The second mechanism doesn't involve conversational implicatures, but rather going off record by being vague or ambiguous. This gives us the last five strategies and they all violate the maxim of manner.

- Strategy 11: Be ambiguous

Speaker can use metaphors to convey their thoughts. Metaphors have different connotations, and some metaphors can be seen as a compliment or as an insult. The real meaning depends on the connotation attached to it.

- Strategy 12: Be vague

Speaker can do the face threatening act off record by being vague about the object of the face threatening act.

- Strategy 13: Over-generalize

Speaker can go off record by mentioning general rules for the certain situation. It's not clear who the object of the face threatening act is. The hearer may decide for themselves if this rule applies to them.

- Strategy 14: Displace the hearer

Speaker can decide to use this strategy when they don't want to indicate the target of the face threatening act. They can direct the face threatening act to someone whose face wouldn't be threatened and then wait and see if the real target will pick up on their hint.

- Strategy 15: Be incomplete, use ellipsis

Speaker can decide to leave the face threatening act incomplete by simply not completing their sentence or by using ellipsis.

3. Findings and Discussion

In this part of the paper, I will present the findings from both plays, *Streetcar Named Desire* and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. I will provide more details about the plays and bring up the dialogues that show us how different politeness strategies are being used. Findings will not be separated from the discussion. Each dialogue will be presented and then immediately afterwards analyzed and discussed.

3.1 Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

The play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) is written by Tennessee Williams and has three acts. The play focuses on the Big Daddy's family dynamic. Big Daddy is the head of the Pollitt family, and everyone gathered to celebrate his birthday. Margaret is his daughter in law, and she's married to his son, Brick. Mae is his second daughter in law, and she's married to his other son, Gooper. His wife is Big Mama. There are also other characters in the play such as Reverend Tooker, Dixie, Trixie, Daisy, Brighter, Small, Doctor Baugh, Lacey and Sookey, Big Daddy is rich and powerful, and the other family members know that. Margaret is unhappy in her marriage and Brick has developed an alcohol addiction when his friend died. Mae and Gooper have a lot of children and are hoping to inherit Big Daddy's estate.

Data 1.

Margaret: ... - It goes on **all the time**, along with constant little remarks and innuendos about the fact that you and I have not produced any children, are totally childless and therefore

totally useless! – Of course it's comical but it's also disgusting since **it's so obvious what they're up to!**

Brick: What are they up to, Maggie?

Margaret: **Why, you know what they're up to!**

Brick: No, I don't know what they're up to. (Act one, p. 18)

Margaret is concerned about Mae and Gooper's intentions to acquire Big Daddy's estate by portraying a perfect family with a lot of children. She's using an off-record strategy (overstate) to exaggerate and warn Brick. However, when he says asks her to provide more information, she uses another off-record strategy (understate) where she says less than what is required.

Data 2.

Brick: I didn't remember his birthday.

Margaret: I got one for you.

Brick: All right. You write the card, **then**.

Margaret: And have him know you didn't remember his birthday?

Brick: I didn't remember his birthday.

Margaret: **Just write 'Love, Brick!' for God's-**

Brick: **No.**

Margaret: **You've got to!**

Brick: **I don't have to do anything I don't want to.** You keep forgetting the conditions on which I agreed to stay on living with you. (Act one, p.28)

Brick did not remember his father's birthday. Margaret is trying to convince him to sign the card and she feels the imposition is not that high. She uses 'just' as a mitigating device to make it clear that her request does not require any special effort on his side. He used a positive politeness strategy (avoid disagreement) and tried to come up with a pseudo agreement by using a conclusory marker *then* in order to cooperate with Margaret. He is

resisting to this request in a very clear and decisive way; however, she keeps pressuring him. At one moment she uses the bald on record strategy with the imperative insisting that he has to sign the card. To her, this situation calls for an urgent reaction because she wants to leave a good impression on Big Daddy, and she does not try to minimize the face threatening act. This threatens Brick's negative face, and he claims his right for the freedom of action and freedom from imposition. The face threatening act causes Brick to lose his temper and reminds her that he could leave her at any point.

Data 3.

Mae: **Oh, my! Brick – Brick, you should've been downstairs after supper!** Kiddies put on a show. Polly played the piano, Buster an' Sonny drums, an' then they turned out the lights an' Dixie and Trixie puhfawmed a toe dance in fairy costume with spahklus! Big Daddy just beamed! He just beamed!

Margaret: **Oh, I bet! It breaks my heart that we missed it!** But Mae? **Why did y'give dawgs names to all your kiddies?**

Mae: Dogs' names?

Margaret: **Dixie, Trixie, Buster, Sonny, Polly! – Sounds like four dogs and a parrot... animal act in a circus!**

Mae: Maggie? Why are you so catty?

Margaret: 'Cause I'm a cat! **But why can't you take a joke, Sister Woman?** (Act one, p. 29)

Mae is talking with Brick and Margaret about her children and the show they put on after the supper. Margaret responds with an off-record strategy (be ironic) when she says that it breaks her heart that she and Brick weren't able to see their show. She proceeds with a positive face threatening act when she tells Mae that her children's names are like dog names. When confronted, she tries to mask her statement as a joke in order to redefine the seriousness of the face threatening act. She also uses a positive politeness strategy (use in group identity markers) when she calls her "Sister Woman" which serves to establish common ground.

Data 4.

Margaret: Oh! I think he had a highball after supper.

Big Mama: Don't laugh about it! – **Some single men stop drinkin' when they git married and others start! Brick never touched liquor before he - !**

Margaret: THAT'S NOT FAIR!

Big Mama: Fair or not fair I want to ask you a question, one question: **D'you make Brick happy in bed?**

Margaret: Why don't you ask if he makes me happy in bed?

Big Mama: Because I know that –

Margaret: It works both ways!

Big Mama: Something's not right! You're childless and my son drinks! **When a marriage goes on the rock, the rocks are there, right there!** (Act one, p. 35)

Big Mama is asking Margaret about Brick and if he has been drinking a lot lately. Margaret replies in a relaxed way. However, Big Mama takes this issue seriously and she decides to use an off-record strategy (be vague) to criticize Margaret and possibly accuse her of being the main reason for Brick's drinking. Big Mama then goes bald on record by asking Margaret about their relationship in the bedroom. This hurts Margaret's negative face and she confronts her. Big Mama switches to the off-record strategy (over-generalize) where she starts talking about marriages in general. She points out that problems usually arise when couples are having issues being intimate.

Data 5.

Big Mama: Here he is, here's **my precious baby!** What's **that you've got in your hand? You put that liquor down, son, your hand was made fo' holdin' somethin' better than that!** (Act two, p. 48)

Big Mama is Brick's mother and she noticed he has been drinking a lot lately. She doesn't approve of his destructive behavior, and she wants him to stop drinking. She is using a positive politeness strategy, (using in-group identity markers). "My precious baby" is an endearment and it shows her love and care for him. She also uses an off-record strategy,

(rhetorical question) and proceeds to use a bald on record strategy by asking him to put down the liquor. Her request is followed by an off-record strategy (give hints) where she points out, in an ambiguous way, that he should be holding something else, something better than a liquor.

Data 6.

Margaret: Brick, **honey, aren't you going to give Big Daddy his birthday present?** (Act two, p. 50)

Here we can see Margaret using an in-group identity marker “honey” which is a positive politeness strategy. She implicitly claims the solidarity and tries to soften the face threatening act. The couple had already argued about Big Daddy's birthday gift, so she uses a negative politeness strategy (question, hedge) where she avoids assuming that Brick is willing to do the act.

Data 7.

Big Mama: Big Daddy, **blowout the candles on your birthday cake!**

Margaret: I want to propose a toast to Big Daddy Pollitt on his sixty-fifth birthday, **the biggest cotton-planter in –**

Big Daddy: I told you to stop it, **now stop it, quit this– !**

Big Mama: Big Daddy, **I will not allow you to talk that way, not even on your birthday, I**
–

Big Daddy: **I'll talk like I want to on my birthday**, Ida, or any other goddam day of the year and anybody here that don't like it knows what they can do! (Act two, p.53)

Big Mama brought the cake in front of the Big Daddy and she's asking him to blow out the candles. She's using a bald on record strategy since the cake is for Big Daddy's birthday and she doesn't think the imposition is high. Margaret wants to congratulate Big Daddy and she proceeds to compliment him. She is using a positive politeness strategy by complimenting him and engaging in the safe topic, his wealth and success, but Big Daddy interrupts her. Big Daddy is the most powerful one in this family and this gives him the freedom to raise his voice and be brutally honest without any fear of retribution. He uses a bald on record strategy and tells them to stop with the party. Big Mama doesn't think he is serious, and she responds

with another remark carried out in the bald on record strategy. This is a direct impingement on Big Daddy's negative face and his desire for freedom of action and he responds by telling her he's going to speak however he wants.

Data 8.

Brick: And **so if you'll excuse me** –

Big Daddy: **No, I won't excuse you.**

Brick: **I'd better sit by myself** till I hear that click in my head, it's just a mechanical thing but it don't happen except when I'm alone or talking to no one....

Big Daddy: You got along, longtime to sit still, boy, and talk to no one, but **now you're talking' to me. At least I'm talking to you. And you set there and listen until I tell you the conversation is over!**

Brick: But this talk is like all the others we've ever had together in our lives! It's **nowhere, nowhere!** – it's – it's painful, Big Daddy.... (Act two, p. 67)

Brick wanted to escape the conversation with Big Daddy, and he used a negative strategy (question, hedge). He used it to save his father's face, to show respect and because he made an assumption that Big Daddy will give him an automatic permission to go. However, Big Daddy interrupts him with a bald on record strategy and doesn't allow him to leave. Brick then uses a positive politeness strategy (avoid disagreement) by saying "I'd better" instead of "I don't want to". Big Daddy still doesn't allow him to leave and continues to use a bald on record strategy without redress.

Data 9.

Big Daddy: **Is liquor the only thing that'll kill this disgust?**

Brick: Now. Yes.

Big Daddy: But not once, huh?

Brick: Not when I was still young an' believing. **A drinking man's someone who wants to forget he isn't still young an' believing.**

Big Daddy: **Believing what?**

Brick: **Believing....**

Big Daddy: **Believing what?**

Brick: **Believing....**(Act two, p.74)

Big Daddy and Brick are having a conversation and Brick told him that he drinks to kill the disgust he feels. He says that he did not need to drink when he was young and believing, and then he continues with the negative politeness strategy (impersonalize speaker and hearer). He starts talking about himself in the third person to establish a point-of-view distancing and when Big Daddy asks him to provide more details, he starts using an off-record strategy (be incomplete, use ellipsis) and doesn't give additional explanations.

Data 10.

Big Mama: No, son. I wish you wouldn't!

Brick: **I wish I didn't have to**, Big Mama, but I'm still waiting for that click in my head which makes it all smooth out! (Act three, p. 88)

Big Mama tries to stop Brick from drinking, but he doesn't want to comply with her request. He continues to drink, and he uses a positive politeness strategy (avoid disagreement) by justifying himself and trying to remove himself from the act – he doesn't want to drink, he has to.

Data 11.

Big Mama: You told me and Big Daddy there wasn't a thing wrong with him but –

Mae: Big Mama, they always –

Gooper: **Let Doc Baugh talk, will yuh?**

Big Mama: - little spastic condition of –

Doctor Baugh: Yes, that's what we told Big Daddy. But we had this bit of tissue run through the laboratory and **I'm sorry** to say the test was positive on it. **It's –well – malignant....** (Act three, p. 91)

The Pollitt family and the doctor gathered around to tell Big Mama the bad news about Big Daddy's condition. She is in disbelief because they first told her that Big Daddy had a spastic

colon, which was not as serious as cancer. Mae tries to comfort her and explain, but Gooper cuts her off using a bald on record strategy followed by a tag question that serves to save Mae's face. This is an important moment and getting the doctor's confirmation and explanation asks for an urgent reaction which is why this face threatening act goes unnoticed. The doctor is trying to soften the face threatening act and he uses negative politeness strategy (question, hedge) to express sympathy because he is the one conveying the bad news.

Data 12.

Mae: For a newcomer in the family you sure do show a lot of understanding.

Margaret: Understanding is needed on this place.

Mae: I guess you must have needed a lot of it in your family Maggie, with your father's liquor problem and now you've got Brick with his!

Margaret: Brick does not have a **liquor problem at all**. Brick is devoted to Big Daddy. This thing is a terrible strain on him. (Act three, p. 94)

Mae and Margaret are talking with Big Mama about Big Daddy's illness. Mae is suspicious of Margaret and the way she agrees with Big Mama. She uses an off-record strategy (presuppose) to question Margaret's honesty. She presupposes that a newcomer like her, couldn't show a lot of understanding, and yet, she does. Mae continues using this strategy and she uses a euphemism for Brick's addiction – liquor problem – to avoid addressing a taboo topic in a direct way. Margaret replies by using an emphatic negation.

Data 13.

Big Mama: Oh, Brick, son of Big Daddy! Big Daddy does so love you! Y'know what would be his fondest dream come true? If before he passed on, if Big Daddy has to pass on, you gave him a child of yours, a grandson as much like his son is like Big Daddy!

Mae: Such a pity that Maggie an' Brick can't oblige!

Margaret: **Everybody listen.**

Mae: Listen to what, Maggie?

Margaret: I have an announcement to make.

Gooper: **A sports announcement, Maggie?**

Margaret: Brick and I are going to – have a child!

Big Mama: Maggie! Brick! This is too good to believe!

Mae: **That's right, too good to believe.** (Act three, p.101)

Big Mama is asking Brick to give his father a grandson, since that is his biggest wish. Mae responds with an off-record strategy (be ironic) saying that that won't be possible. All of a sudden, Margaret has an announcement to make, and she uses a bald on record strategy fully committing herself to make an announcement. Gooper responds by an off-record strategy (be ironic) as well. When Margaret says that she and Brick are going to have a baby Mae doesn't believe her and she ironically says that her announcement is too good to believe. Mae and Gooper are desperately trying to convince Big Mama that they should inherit Big Daddy's estate and this announcement disrupts their plan.

Data 14.

Margaret: **Thank you for – keeping still...**

Brick: OK, Maggie.

Margaret: **It was gallant of you** to save my face!

Brick: - **It hasn't happened yet.**

Margaret: What?

Brick: **The click....** (Act three, p. 103)

Margaret is thanking Brick for not exposing her lie by using a negative politeness strategy (go on record as incurring a debt). Then, she proceeds to further compliment his behavior by using another negative politeness strategy (impersonalize speaker and hearer) where she uses a passive voice to avoid referencing Brick directly in this face threatening act. However, Brick isn't listening to her, and he ambiguously points out that something hasn't happened yet. This is an off-record strategy (be vague) and the speaker is being vague about the object of the face threatening act. When Margaret asks for more clarification, he simply states "the click..." which is another use of an off-record strategy (be incomplete, use ellipsis).

3.2 A Streetcar Named Desire

The second play we're going to analyze and use to observe politeness strategies is *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). This play is also written by Tennessee Williams. The play revolves around Blanche's visit to Stella, her sister. Stella is married to Stanley Kowalski, and they are expecting a baby. Blanche and Stella come from a wealthy family and Blanche doesn't approve that Stella married someone from a working class. The characters are Blanche, Stella, Stanley, Mitch, Eunice, Steve, Pablo, Negro woman, doctor, nurse, young collector and a Mexican woman.

Data 15.

Eunice: She showed me a picture of your home-place, the plantation.

Blanche: Belle Reve?

Eunice: A great big place with white columns.

Blanche: Yes...

Eunice: **A place like that must be awful hard to keep up.**

Blanche: **If you will excuse me. I'm just about to drop.**

Eunice: Sure, **honey**. Why don't you set down?

Blanche: **What I meant was I'd like to be left alone.**

Eunice: Aw. I'll make myself scarce, in that case. (Scene one, p.18)

Eunice is the first one to see Blanche and she opens Stella's apartment for her. They were chatting and Eunice wanted to learn more about their home. She used an off-record strategy (give hints) to ask her about the place and to question if she has the money to keep up the plantation. Blanche ignores the hint and uses a negative politeness strategy (question, hedge) to stop the conversation because she's tired. Eunice doesn't see this as the request to leave so she offers her to sit down. She also uses a positive politeness strategy (use in-group identity markers), but Blanche responds with a negative politeness strategy (be conventionally indirect) by saying that she wants to be alone (*I'd like to* instead of *I want to*) and Eunice leaves the apartment.

Data 16.

Blanche: Now, then, let me look at you. But don't you look at me, Stella, no, no, no, not till later, not till I've bathed and rested! And **turn that over-light off! Turn that off!** I won't be looked at in this merciless glare. **Come back here now! Oh, my baby! Stella! Stella for Star! I thought you would never come back to this horrible place! What am I saying?** I didn't mean to say that. I meant to be nice about it and say – Oh, what a convenient location and such – Ha-a-ha! **Precious lamb! You haven't said a word to me.**

Stella: You haven't given me a chance to, **honey!**

Blanche: Well, now you talk. **Open your pretty mouth and talk** while I look around for some liquor! I know you must have some liquor on the place! **Where could it be, I wonder?** Oh, I spy, I spy! (Scene one, p.19)

Blanche and Stella finally greet each other, and they are both very happy. Blanche is using a positive politeness strategy (use in-group identity markers) and she's also telling her to turn off the light while using the same strategy. Blanche thinks the relative power between she and her sister is small and that's why the use of imperatives doesn't threaten hearer's face. Her requests are not driven by power-backed commands. Blanche is doing a face threatening act by explicitly insulting Stella's home and calling it "a horrible place" and she combines it with the use of off record strategy (use rhetorical questions) and positive politeness strategy (use in-group identity marker) to soften the act. She is older and more experienced than Stella and she is not afraid of her reaction. Blanche then uses another off-record strategy (give hints) to motivate Stella to talk more. Stella tries to explain that she didn't get a chance to talk more. Blanche starts looking for the liquor and she uses a negative politeness strategy (question, hedge) to ask for the liquor. "I wonder" in this case also serves as a tentativizer that implies a request for the liquor in this situation.

Data 17.

Blanche: **You sit down, now, and explain this place to me!** What are you doing in a **place like this?**

Stella: Now, Blanche –

Blanche: Oh, I'm not going to be hypocritical, **I'm going to be honestly critical about it! Never, never in my worst dreams could I picture** – Only Poe! Only Mr. Edgar Allan Poe! – could do it justice! **Out there I suppose is the ghoul-hunted woodland of Weir.**

Stella: No, honey, those are the L & N tracks.

Blanche: No, now seriously, putting joking aside. **Why didn't you tell me, why didn't you write me, honey, why didn't you let me know?**

Stella: Tell you what, Blanche?

Blanche: **Why, that you had to live in these conditions!**

Stella: Aren't you being **a little intense** about it? It's not that bad at all! New Orleans isn't like other cities. (Scene one, p.20)

Blanche is criticizing Stella's apartment and she's not sure why Stella decided to live there. She uses a bald on record strategy by questioning her willingness to live in this apartment. She doesn't minimize the face threatening act because she genuinely seems to be concerned. She conveys that she cares for Stella and wants what is best for her. Blanche uses an off-record strategy (overstate) where she exaggerates her disapproval of the apartment. Blanche then uses another off-record strategy (be ironic) and combines it with the dubitative particle "I suppose". This softens the face threatening act and turns her statement into a question. Stella replies using the positive politeness strategy. Blanche then continues asking her about the place, but her questions are not very clear. This is an off-record strategy (be incomplete, use ellipsis). Blanche then proceeds to tell her that Stella should have told her about her living conditions. This face threatening act threatens Stella's positive face because Blanche makes it quite clear that she does not want what Stella wants. Stella then uses an off-record strategy (use rhetorical questions) with a softener "little" to save Blanche's face.

Data 18.

Blanche: **You haven't said a word about my appearance.**

Stella: You look just fine. (Scene one, p.21)

Blanche has now moved on to another topic, her appearance. She uses an off-record strategy (give hints) to inspire Stella to talk about her looks. Stella correctly interprets the hint and tells her she looks fine.

Data 19.

Stanley: My clothes're stickin' to me. **Do you mind if I make myself comfortable?**

Blanche: Please, please do.

Stanley: **Be comfortable is my motto.**

Blanche: **It's mine, too.** It's hard to stay looking fresh, I haven't washed or even powdered my face and – here you are! (Scene one p. 30)

Blanche finally meets Stanley, Stella's husband. They are slowly getting to know each other. She is aware that Stanley was not expecting her, and she does not feel quite comfortable imposing and staying at their place. Stanley uses a negative politeness strategy (question, hedge) to see if she does not mind him changing the clothes. He proceeds to say that being comfortable is his motto and Blanche responds by a positive politeness strategy (seek agreement) by agreeing with his statement.

Data 20.

Blanche: **Honey, do me a favor. Run** to the drug-store and **get** me a lemon-coke with plenty of chipped ice in it! – Will you do that for me, **Sweetie?**

Stella: Yes. (Scene two, p. 40)

Here we can see Blanche asking Stella to buy her a lemon-coke. She uses an imperative which indicates a commanding tone. However, this isn't a power-backed command since the speaker is using a positive politeness strategy (use in-group identity markers) which softens the imperative and we have already established that Blanche's and Stella's difference in power is very small.

Data 21.

Stanley: **You hens cut out that conversation in there!**

Stella: You can't hear us.

Stanley: **Well, you can hear me and I said to hush up!**

Stella: **This is my house and I'll talk as much as I want to!** (Scene three, p. 50)

Stella and Blanche have returned from their dinner, and they are talking while Stanley and his friends are playing poker. They are gossiping and giggling but Stanley can hear them, and he tells them to stop talking and performs a face threatening act bald on record without any redress. Stella replies back saying that this is her house as well and claims her right for the negative face– freedom of action and territory.

Data 22.

Mitch: Miss DuBois?

Blanche: Oh!

Mitch: **All quiet on the Potomac now?**

Blanche: She ran downstairs and went back in there with him. (Scene three, p. 60)

Stanley and Stella had a fight and Mitch, Stanley's friend, is asking Blanche if they have stopped fighting. However, he uses an off-record strategy (use metaphors) to ask this question. This phrase comes from a poem by Ethel Lynn Beers, All Quiet along the Potomac Tonight (1861). It refers to the Civil War and it means that nothing is happening at the moment.

Data 23.

Blanche: Is that coke for me?

Stella: **Not for anyone else!**

Blanche: Why, **you precious thing**, you! Is it **just coke**?

Stella: You mean you want a shot in it! (Scene five, p. 79)

Stella and Blanche are talking, and Stella is making her a drink. Blanche asks her if the drink is for her, and Stella responds by using a negative politeness strategy (impersonalize speaker and the hearer). She replaces the pronoun "you" by an indefinite pronoun "anyone" which serves as a distancing device. Blanche responds by using a positive politeness strategy (use in group identity markers) and an off record (give hints) by asking if the drink is "just" coke and hinting that she wants a shot in her drink.

Data 24.

Blanche: **Well –**

Mitch: **Well...**

Mitch: **I guess it must be pretty late – and you're tired.**

Blanche: **Even the hot tamale man has deserted the street, and he hangs on till the end. How will you get home?**

Mitch: I'll walk over to Bourbon and catch an owl-car. (Scene six, p. 85)

Blanche and Mitch went out together and they are about to say goodbye to each other. They are using an off-record strategy (be incomplete, use ellipsis). Mitch then uses an off-record strategy (give hints) to say that he should probably go. Blanche also responds with an off-record strategy (use metaphors) saying that it is very late, and their date has come to an end.

Data 25.

Blanche: **Sit down! Why don't you take off your coat and loosen your collar?**

Mitch: I better leave it on.

Blanche: **No. I want you to be comfortable.**

Mitch: **I am ashamed of the way I perspire.** My shirt is sticking to me.

Blanche: **Perspiration is healthy. If people didn't perspire they would die in five minutes. This is a nice coat. What kind of material is it?**

Mitch: They call that stuff **alpaca**.

Blanche: Oh, **Alpaca**.

Mitch: It's very **light weight alpaca**.

Blanche: Oh. **Light weight alpaca.** (Scene six, p. 88)

Blanche notices that Stella and Stanley are not home, and she invites Mitch to enter the house. She asks him to sit down, and she is using a bald on record strategy. Mitch's face is not threatened by this act because she wants him to feel comfortable. She also uses a negative

politeness strategy (question, hedge) to encourage him to take off the coat and loosen the collar. He does not want to because he is ashamed of his sweat. Blanche responds with a positive politeness strategy (notice, attend to hearer's interests, wants, needs, goods) and says that sweating is normal, and this indicates that she is not embarrassed by it which reassures Mitch and makes him more comfortable. Blanche continues using this strategy and she shows interest in his coat. She also uses another positive politeness strategy (seek agreement) when she repeats the words "alpaca" and "light weight alpaca". The repetition serves to emphasize her interest and approval in Mitch and his coat.

Data 26.

Mitch: **Guess how much I weigh, Blanche?**

Blanche: Oh, **I'd say in the vicinity of** – one hundred and eighty?

Mitch: Guess again.

Blanche: Not that much?

Mitch: No. More.

Blanche: **Well, you're a tall man and you can carry a good deal of weight without looking awkward.**

Mitch: I weigh two hundred and seven pounds and I'm six feet one and one-half inches tall in my bare feet – without shoes on. And that is what I weigh stripped.

Blanche: **Oh, my goodness, me! It's awe-inspiring.** (Scene six, p. 90)

Guessing someone's weight can easily threaten their positive face and Blanche is aware of that in this scene. Blanche uses a negative politeness strategy (question, hedge) by saying "I'd say" which is a quality hedge. It indicates that the speaker is not taking full responsibility for their words. When Mitch says he weighs more than what she suggested, she responds with a positive politeness strategy (notice, attend to hearer's interests, wants, needs, goods). She compliments him and explains that even if he does weigh more, he is carrying the weight gracefully. She continues the conversation with another positive politeness strategy (exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy with the hearer).

Data 27.

Mitch: I told you already I don't want none of his liquor and I mean it. **You ought to lay off his liquor.** He says you been lapping it up all summer like a wild-cat!

Blanche: **What a fantastic statement! Fantastic of him to say it, fantastic of you to repeat it!** I won't descend to the level of such cheap accusations to answer them, even! (Scene nine, p.115)

Mitch found out that Blanche was lying to him about her age, her past, her reasons for coming to see Stella and he is mad at her. He came to see her after her birthday celebration, and she offered him a drink. Stanley told him that she has been drinking the entire summer and he confronts her with the truth. He uses a bald on record strategy and tells her to stop drinking but she denies the accusation using an off-record strategy (be ironic).

Data 28.

Blanche: Mr. Shep Huntleigh. I wore his ATO pin my last year at college. I hadn't seen him again until last Christmas. I ran into him on Biscayne Boulevard. Then – just now – this wire – inviting me on a cruise of the Caribbean! The problem is clothes. I tore into my trunk to see what I have that's suitable for the tropics!

Stanley: **And come up with that – gorgeous – diamond tiara?**

Blanche: **This old relic? Ha-ha! It's only rhinestones.**

Stanley: **Gosh, I thought it was Tiffany diamonds.**

Blanche: Well, anyhow, I shall be entertained in style.(Scene ten, p. 124)

Stanley came home while Stella is having a baby at the hospital. Blanche is by herself, and she has been drinking all night. She was going through her clothes, and she put on a white satin gown and a rhinestone tiara to see if this would be suitable for her cruise. Stanley notices her tiara and uses an off-record strategy (be ironic) however she does not understand the inference and thinks that he is using a positive politeness strategy (exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy with the hearer) which threatens her positive face. She tries to diminish the object of his compliment, the tiara, by saying that it is an old relic. Stanley continues using irony and Blanche does not seem to notice.

Data 29.

Eunice: No, **honey, no, no, honey. Stay here. Don't go back in there. Stay with me and don't look.**

Stella: What have I done to my sister? Oh, God, what have I done to my sister?

Eunice: **You done the right thing, the only thing you could do. She couldn't stay here; there wasn't no other place for her to go.** (Scene eleven, p. 141)

Blanche has become delusional, and Stella and Stanley have decided to put her in a hospital. Stella is quite shaken by this, and Eunice is trying to comfort her and justify her actions. Eunice is using two positive politeness strategies (use in-group identity markers and seek agreement) to soften the face threatening act and to claim common ground by saying that she did the right thing.

4. Conclusion

In this final paper I have presented and explained politeness strategies devised by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson. I have analyzed two plays written by Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* and I have observed characters' interaction and their use of the politeness strategies. I have also explained the concepts of saving face and face threatening acts.

I have analyzed 14 dialogues in the play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and characters have used politeness strategies 33 times. The most frequent politeness strategy that was used was an off-record politeness – 12 times.

Overstate	1	This shows us that the characters speak in an ambiguous way and do not want to be held accountable for their implications. If the hearer understands the implication and the intended meaning, great! If not, or if someone misinterprets their implication, speakers can save their face and avoid responsibility.
Understate	1	
Be ironic	3	
Be vague	1	
Over-generalize	1	Big Mama is using an off-record politeness strategies <i>be vague</i> and <i>over-generalize</i> to address Brick and Margaret's marital issues and to discuss Brick's drinking habits. These are serious face threatening acts and addressing them indirectly provides an easy way out if it anything backfires.
Use rhetorical questions	1	
Give hints	1	
Be incomplete, use ellipsis	2	Brick also tends to leave face threatening acts incomplete by not finishing his sentences.
Presuppose	1	

Positive politeness and bald on record strategies are tied. Characters have used them 8 times. When it comes to *bald on record* strategy, the character that uses it most is Big Daddy. This does not come as a surprise since he is the most powerful one due to his wealth and he is not afraid of anyone's retribution. He expresses himself in a clear way and is prone to giving orders and talking with a commanding tone.

Avoid disagreement	3
Use in-group identity markers	3
Seek agreement	1
Go on record as incurring a debt	1

Here we can see that characters use positive politeness strategies to establish common ground and to indicate that they are cooperators. The use of *in-group identity markers* has only been used by women and Brick tried to avoid the disagreement while talking to Big Daddy, Margaret and Big Mama. Margaret *sought agreement* with Big Daddy when she tried congratulating him and complimenting him on his achievements.

Question, hedge	3
Impersonalize speaker and the hearer	2

When it comes to the negative politeness strategies, the most frequent one was *question, hedge* strategy. Here we can see Reverend Tooker using this strategy to soften the bad news about Big Daddy's illness, and Brick trying to escape the conversation with Big Daddy while being respectful. Both Margaret and Brick

use the *impersonalize speaker and the hearer* strategy. Margaret uses it while thanking and complimenting Brick and Brick uses it in a conversation with Big Daddy.

When it comes to the play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, I have analyzed 15 dialogues and characters have used politeness strategies 39 times. The most common one is again, off record politeness and it was used 16 times.

Give hints	4
Use rhetorical questions	2
Be ironic	4
Overstate	1
Be incomplete, use ellipsis	3
Use metaphors	2

Eunice uses *give hints* strategy to ask Blanche about her home, Belle Reve. Blanche tends to use this strategy to motivate Stella to talk and to comment on her appearance.

Stanley uses *be ironic* strategy to comment on Blanche's appearance and Blanche uses this strategy to defend herself against accusations that she was drinking. Stanley is criticizing Blanche's tiara and being indirect gives him an easy way out in case Blanche confronts him.

Blanche and Mitch use *be incomplete, use ellipsis* strategy when they need to say goodbye to each other, but they are not sure how.

The next most frequent politeness strategy that was used is positive politeness. Characters used it 12 times and it shows that they care about preserving each other's positive face.

In-group identity markers	6	<p>The most frequent strategy is the use of <i>in-group identity markers</i>. Female characters tend to use this strategy more often than men and it allows them to implicitly establish common ground with their hearers. Blanche uses this strategy whenever she asks Stella to do something for her.</p> <p>Blanche uses the strategy <i>notice, attend to hearer</i> and <i>exaggerate interest</i> when she communicates with Mitch, her admirer and potential suitor.</p>
Seek agreement	3	
Notice, attend to hearer (their interests, wants, needs, goods)	2	
Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with the hearer)	1	

Characters used negative politeness 7 times and the most common one is *question, hedge*.

Question, hedge	5	<p>Blanche uses this strategy to avoid making assumptions when she starts asking about liquor. She also uses it to encourage Mitch to take off his coat. This saves the hearer's negative face and gives them the freedom to reject the request.</p>
Impersonalize speaker and the hearer	1	
Be conventionally indirect	1	

Bald on record strategy was used 4 times. Blanche does not approve of Stella's apartment, and she is not using any redress when she expresses her disapproval. Mitch also uses this strategy when he tells Blanche to stop drinking Stanley' liquor.

Politeness and politeness strategies are extremely important in our everyday lives. We learn some of these strategies at a very young age and we tend to use them as a general rule. This analysis shows us that politeness impacts characters' relationships and behaviors. It also shows us that it is possible to use politeness strategies to obtain things and achieve goals. Saving face is also very important in order to maintain harmony and good relations.

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