BALD ON RECORD POLITNESS STATEGY IN THE WITCHER ASSASSIN OF KINGS GAMEPLAY AND THE WITCHER SERIES NETLIX SEASON 2 EPISODE 2

Sitti Safinatul Askiyah[1]

[1]Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia

Email: askiyahsafina@gmail.com

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti penggunaan strategi Kebijakan "Bald on the Record" dalam waralaba The Witcher, dengan fokus pada dua media naratif, yaitu gim video The Witcher Assassins of the Kings (2011), khususnya Bab 1 "A Rough Landing", dan serial Netflix The Witcher (Musim 2, Episode 2 "Kaer Morhen"). Berdasarkan teori kesopanan Brown dan Levinson (1987), penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana tindakan ucapan langsung dan tanpa basa-basi berfungsi dalam penceritaan interaktif dan sinematik. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, dialog dari kedua sumber tersebut diamati dan diinterpretasikan dalam hal konteks, fungsi, dan dinamika relasional. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa dalam gim, ekspresi "Bald on Record", terutama dalam interogasi Roche, berfungsi untuk menegaskan otoritas dan meningkatkan ketegangan naratif. Sementara itu, dalam serial tersebut, Geralt dan Vesemir menggunakan keterusterangan serupa untuk menyampaikan perlindungan, kasih sayang, dan urgensi, yang menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi yang blak-blakan dapat menandakan kepedulian daripada konfrontasi. Analisis komparatif menunjukkan bahwa meskipun kedua media menggunakan strategi yang sama, formatnya yang berbeda membentuk efek emosional dan pragmatisnya: dalam permainan, keterusterangan membangun rasa hormat melalui konflik, sementara dalam film, hal itu membangun koneksi melalui empati dan kepercayaan. Pada akhirnya, studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa strategi "Bald on Record" melampaui media, mempertahankan esensi pragmatisnya sambil menyesuaikan resonansi emosionalnya. Hal ini mendukung klaim Brown dan Levinson bahwa keterusterangan dapat berfungsi sebagai efisiensi dan keintiman tergantung pada konteks sosial dan situasional.

Kata Kunci: Strategi Kesopanan, "Bald On Record", Pragmatik, The Witcher, Brown Dan Levinson, Analisis Komparatif.

Abstract

The study examines the use bald on the Record Politness strategy in The Witcher franchise focusing on two narrative mediums like the Video games the witcher Assassins of the kings(2011). Particularly Chapter 1 " A Rough Landing", and the Netflix series The Witcher (Season 2, Episode 2 "Kaer Morhen"). Grounded in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, this research analyzes how direct and unmitigated speech acts function across interactive and cinematic storytelling. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, dialogues from both sources were observed and interpreted in terms of context, function, and relational dynamics. The findings reveal that in the game, Bald on Record expressionsespecially in Roche's interrogationsserve to assert authority and intensify narrative tension. Meanwhile, in

the series, Geralt and Vesemir employ similar directness to convey protection, affection, and urgency, illustrating that blunt communication can signify care rather than confrontation. The comparative analysis demonstrates that while both mediums utilize the same strategy, their differing formats shape its emotional and pragmatic effects: in gameplay, directness builds respect through conflict, while in film, it builds connection through empathy and trust. Ultimately, this study concludes that the Bald on Record strategy transcends medium, maintaining its pragmatic essence while adapting its emotional resonance. This supports Brown and Levinson's claim that directness can serve both efficiency and intimacy depending on social and situational context.

Keywords: *Politeness Strategies, Bald On Record, Pragmatics, The Witcher, The Brown And Levinson, Comparative Analyze.*

INTRODUCTION

The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings, a role-playing game developed by CD Projekt Red, presents rich and complex dialogues interwoven with intense character interactions. One of the notable linguistic strategies employed in the game is the Bald On Record politeness strategy, characterized by directness and the absence of mitigation in communication. This paper examines the use of this strategy within the context of the game and its adaptation in The Witcher (Netflix, 2021), focusing particularly on the interrogation scene between Vernon Roche and Geralt of Rivia in 4 Rough Landing and the training scene in Kaer Morhen. Roche, Ciri's, and Gerald, when the speaker is in power, they tend to use the bold on the record expressions while when subordinate they use a positive strategies and hedges to mitigate the threats to the hearer's face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987)

the "bald on record" politeness strategy highlighted as one characterized by direct address without any sort of mitigation regarding the potential harm to the hearer's face. This approach often the case for situations that call for high levels of effectiveness and warm relationship between the speaker and the hearer. In such contexts, the need for clarity and urgency outweighs the risk of threatening the hearer's face. For example, within environments where close social ties exist such as among family members, close friends, or colleagues who share mutual understanding speakers may feel comfortable employing this strategy due to the expectation of minimal offense. The underlying assumption is that the relationship is strong enough to withstand directness without causing interpersonal friction.

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However, it is important to note that the effectiveness of the bald on record strategy is highly dependent on the social dynamics and cultural expectations between speaker. In cultures that value hierarchical respect or indirect communication, this strategy may be perceived as abrupt or even rude unless the relationship permits such frankness. In contrast, in cultures or settings where directness is equated with hon esty or efficiency, such an approach may be preferred.

Brown and Levinson's framework suggests that bald on record usage, while seemingly impolite, serves a pragmatic function in discourse and reflects the speaker's judgment of the social situation. When used appropriately, it can enhance clarity, assertiveness, and even camaraderie, especially when both parties recognize the intent behind the directness. Thus, while it lacks the formal politeness markers seen in other strategies, bald on record communication remains a valid and contextually sensitive approach to interpersonal interaction.
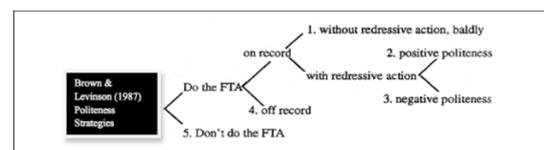
This research will be focusing only on the application of "bald on record" strategies inThe Witcher game season 2 by Netlix TV Series (2021), but some work has been done on the broader

sociolinguistic themes of the series, for example, Sociolinguistic Observations and Characterization Through Language. The writer chose The Witcher game season 2 by Netlix TV series (2021) as the focus of their research because it offers a fresh and intriguing perspective that has not yet been widely explored in academic settings. Unlike the TV series adaptation of The Witcher, which has been the subject of many studies, the television series remains relatively untouched in scholarly research. This gap presents a unique opportunity to analyze a popular and culturally significant media work from a new angle.

The interpretations of the "bald on record" strategy may not have been studied deeply within the context of The Witcher game season 2 by netlix Series (2011), but the characters use of direct speech form a part of the articulation of speech acts within the framework of linguistics politeness theory. Even in the absence of direct examinations of the "bald on record" strategy in The Witcher game by Netflix Series (2021), existing sociolinguistic study analyses strive to manage attention in conjunction with series of politeness strategies. Further studies could be conducted on characterization and situation to broaden communications understanding in the series.

RESEARCH METHODS

The primary data for this Research was derived from secondary sources, including academic articles and game scripts. Qualitative observation techniques were employed during the data collection process, which involved not only reading and analyzing the scripts but also watching actual gameplay to ensure accuracy and gain deeper insight into the context of the dialogue. This method is particularly suitable for examining themes, character development, and linguistic features that cannot be quantified easily but are essential for understanding narrative and discourse elements.

Qualitative observation involved carefully reviewing and interpreting spoken and written content, allowing for the identification of patterns, meanings, and emotional undertones in the dialogue. The context of each utterance was examined to understand the social relationships and situational factors influencing the choice of the Bald On Record strategy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the conducted observations and analyzed data, several dialogues were discovered that employed the Politeness Strategy, Bald on Record from the conversations of the main characters, such as Ciri, Geralt, and Roche.

Episode	Dialogue	Function
The Grain of the truth eps.01	"You fell asleep on your watch, that's what happened."	Unambiguous acceptance; direct threat stance
Gerald(eps.1)	"When you were a boy and your father sent you to plow the field, your hands hurt first, didn't they?"	Identity assertion in response to accusation
Ciri's line	" You're mortal now. Do it yourself."	Unambiguous acceptance; direct threat stance
Roche in asylum scene	"You mean the burned down in insane asylum?"	A blunt imperative devoid of politness
Roche	" I found a patient's chart in the ruins of the Hospital."	Set relationship boundary, definitive and blunt

1. Analysis of Chapter 1 "A Rough Landing" (Game)

In The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings (2011), particularly in the opening chapter "A Rough Landing," the interrogation scene between Roche and Geralt reveals severalinstances of Bald On Record speech. Roche's commands, such as "You mean the burned down insane asylum?" and "I found a patient's chart in the ruins of the hospital," reflect the directness characteristic of this strategy. By referencing disturbing and sensitive content, Roche confronts Geralt with unsparing candor; this serves to assert his dominance in the situation and signals the seriousness of the investigation (Laurelnose, n.d.). This direct approach enhances clarity and immediacy, ensuring that critical information is communicated without ambiguity. Moreover, it mirrors the urgency and high stakes of the interrogation, reinforcing the tension inherent in the narrative (Bhat, 2025). The interactions are grounded in hierarchical relationships, where Roche hold authority while Geralt navigates compliance and resistance, making the dialogue feel authentic and emotionally charged. Roche's bluntness conveys both frustration and determination, while Geralt's measured, terse responses demonstrate restraint and mutual respect born of conflict (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Beyond establishing authority, the Bald On Record strategy contributes to narrative immersion and moral engagement. Dialogue that is unmitigated allows players to sense the consequences of direct communication; choosing how Geralt responds can impact character relationships and the unfolding story. This aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory that bald

on record acts are employed in contexts where efficiency and clarity outweigh potential threats to the hearer's face. Additionally, Roche's use of directness serves as a tool for characterization and relational signaling. His blunt statements communicate competence, urgency, and expectation of compliance, positioning him as both an authority figure and a trustworthy ally within the story's moral framework. From a gameplay perspective, this strategy immerses players emotionally, making them acutely aware of power dynamics and ethical considerations within interactions. The stakes of conversation become tangible, as frank exchanges can lead to respect, tension, or even conflict depending on player choices (Culpeper, 1996).

Furthermore, the application of Bald On Record reflects a subtle balance between dominance and camaraderie. While Roche's direct speech could be perceived as abrasive in another context, within the narrative it functions as a signal of trust and mutual understanding. Players recognize that bluntness here is not mere rudeness but a strategic, socially

informed choice by the character. Culpeper (1996) notes that frankness, when contextualized by mutual respect, can strengthen relationships; a principle clearly exemplified in this chapter.

In summary, the game's use of Bald On Record in "A Rough Landing serves multiple functions: establishing hierarchy, enhancing narrative realism, deepening emotional immersion, and providing players with interactive moral stakes. It demonstrates how direct speech in video games is not only a linguistic choice but also a mechanic for storytelling and player engagement, reflecting both social pragmatics and narrative design (Bhat, 2025)

2. Analysis of Episode 2 "Kaer Morhen" (Netflix Series)

In contrast, The Witcher (Netflix, Season 2, Episode 2 "Kaer Morhen") demonstrates the Bald On Record strategy through emotionally charged interactions between Geralt, Ciri, and Vesemir. One notable instance occurs when Geralt sharply commands Ciri, "Stay close. Don't move unless I say so." This utterance

mirrors Roche's direct commands from the game but functions differently in tone and purpose. While Roche's bluntness in the game asserts authority during interrogation, Geralt's directness in this episode conveys protective urgency and emotional care

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According to Brown and Levinson (1987), Geralt's speech acts exemplify non redressive bald on record, in which the eficiency and immediacy of the message justify the absence of conventional politeness markers. In tense situations, such as when Ciri faces a leshy attack, Geralt's imperatives prioritize safety over decorum, highlighting the adaptive nature of bald on record communication. Although his statements may appear harsh, they function as expressions of care and urgency, reflecting the high stakes of the scenario (Bhat, 2025).

Vesemir's dialogue, "You can't protect her from everything," further demonstrates the strategic use of bald on record communication in a mentorship context. His statement is blunt and devoid of mitigating language, signaling both honesty and

closeness within their relationship. Direct speech in this context reflects affection, exasperation, and trust, illustrating that in environments with minimal social distance, indirectness is unnecessary. The clarity of expression ensures that critical instructions are understood without ambiguity, aligning with the functional premise of Brown and Levinson's theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The Netflix adaptation also leverages visual and auditory storytelling cues to enrich the pragmatic and emotional impact of direct speech. Tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language amplify the urgency, concern, and relational dynamics conveyed in each utterance. Unlike the video game, where dialogue outcomes depend on pleagency, the series provides a predefined cinematic experience in which emotional re. is communicated through multimodal channels (Vulture, n.d.).

Moreover, the use of bald on record in this episode emphasizes the interplay between authority and care. Geralt and Vesemir employ

directness not to assert dominance but to ensure safety and communicate mentorship responsibilities. This demonstrates that the strategy is context dependent, functioning differently across narrative forms while maintaining its core pragmatic essence. By situating blunt speech within familial and protective relationships, the series illustrates how direct communication can reinforce trust, empathy, and relational stability, rather than merely signaling power or confrontation (Bhat, 2025).

In summary, the application of Bald On Record in Kaer Morhen exemplifies how direct speech conveys urgency, care, and relational depth in a cinematic context. Through multimodal cues and narrative framing, the strategy transcends simple efficiency to become a tool for emotional storytelling, highlighting the versatility of Brown and Levinson's politeness framework when applied to audiovisual media (Brown &Levinson, 1987)

3. Comparative Discussion: Game vs Series

Both The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings (2011) and The Witcher (Netflix, 2021) employ the Bald On Record Politeness Strategy to convey power, intimacy, and urgency. However, the narrative mediums of video game and cinematic series shape the interpretation and function of directness in distinct ways (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

In the game, direct speech is mechanically mediated by player choice, making the Bald On Record strategy a tool for interactive engagement. Roche's blunt commands, while seemingly harsh, provide clarity, efficiency, and narrative tension that immerse players in hierarchical power dynamics and conflict resolution (Laurelnose, n.d.). The player experiences a sense of moral responsibility as each direct statement carries consequences, reflecting the pragmatic effectiveness of bald on record communication when efficiency outweighs social politeness.

In contrast, the Netflix series uses cinematic techniques such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and camera angles to convey the

emotional depth behind blunt statements. Geralt's direct commands and Vesemir's honest admonitions function less to assert authority and more to communicate care, mentorship, and relational closeness. Here, directness is contextualized by emotional realism rather than interactive agency, demonstrating how the same linguistic strategy adapts to different media while retaining pragmatic function.

The comparative analysis reveals that Bald On Record acts are universally effective when the speaker assumes the listener will accept unmitigated speech as appropriate to the situation. In both the game and series, characters use directness as a manifestation of trust, necessity, and relationship dynamics, rather than aggression (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Yet, the adaptation from interactive gameplay to cinematic storytelling recontextualizes the strategy: assertiveness in gameplay translates to protective or affectionate directness in film.

Ultimately, the Witcher franchise illustrates the versatility of Bald On Record across narrative

Aspect	"Game A Rough of Landing"	"Series, Kaer Mohen"
Funtion of direcness	Assert dominance, express urgency in interrogation	Express protection, affection, or frustration
Contextual force	Player agency determines tone; directness heightens immersion	Visual and auditory cues emphasize emotional realism
Social Hierarchy	Authority-based; Roche > Geralt	Builds respect through conflict Familial/mentorship-based; Geralt > Vesemir Ciri
Emotional Impact	Builds respect through conflict	Builds connection through care and honesty

forms. While the game emphasizes agency, immersion, and authority, the series highlights emotional resonance, relational intimacy, and mentorship. This underscores the broader applicability of Brown and Levinson's framework, demonstrating that direct communication, when contextually grounded, can convey a wide spectrum of relational and emotional functions (Laurelnose, n.d.). By comparing the two mediums, it becomes evident that narrative form shapes the perceived intent and impact of bald on record strategies, revealing the intricate interplay between language, medium, and audience interpretation.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the Bald On Record Politeness Strategy in both The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings video game and The Witcher Netflix series demonstrates how direct speech functions differently across narrative mediums while retaining its pragmatic core. In the game, directness serves to assert authority, clarify urgent

matters, and immerse players in hierarchical power dynamics. Through interactive dialogue choices, players experience moral responsibility, tension, and relational stakes, making blunt speech a critical tool for both narrative engagement and character development.

In contrast, the Netflix series employs cinematic techniques (such as tone of voice, facial expression, and visual framing) to convey emotional urgency, relational care, and mentorship. Direct speech in this context emphasizes protection, honesty, and relational closeness rather than authority alone. The strategic use of unmitigated speech in familial and mentorship scenarios illustrates that the Bald On Record strategy can communicate care, exasperation, and trust in high-stakes situations, revealing the flexibility of pragmatic strategies when adapted to audiovisual storytelling.

Comparatively, the study shows that while the medium shapes the perceived intent and emotional impact of direct communication, the underlying principles of the Bald On Record strategy remain consistent: it is most effective when the speaker assumes the listener will accept directness as contextually appropriate. This cross-medium analysis highlights the versatility of direct speech in establishing

hierarchy, deepening emotional engagement, and enhancing narrative realism. Ultimately, these findings underscore the intricate interplay between language, context, and medium, demonstrating that strategic bluntness can simultaneously serve multiple communicative and narrative purposes.

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