Bakalářská práce

Politeness in Yes Minister

Zadání bakalářské práce

Politeness in Yes Minister

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Cílem této práce je porovnání zdvořilostních strategií užívaných ministrem Hackerem k dosažení jeho politických cílů na začátku a na konci své kariéry ministra pro administrativní záležitosti. Tato práce se rovněž pokusí objasnit, zda se Hackerův charakter a jeho používání zdvořilostních strategií v tomto období vyvíjely. Dále bude tato práce analyzovat vliv spolupracovníků ministra Hackera na vývoj jeho charakteru a užívání zdvořilosti k dosažení svých cílů. Pro naplnění cílů práce budou porovnány dialogy ministra Hackera z první a poslední kapitoly knihy *Jistě, pane ministře* z hlediska zdvořilosti a vývoje charakteru. Vývoj užívání zdvořilosti ministrem Hackerem bude posuzován dle jeho úspěšnosti v politických dialozích a vývoj jeho charakteru bude hodnocen na základě změn v jeho myšlení a chování.

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11. dubna 2024   Barbora Lidová

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Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na analýzu vývoje zdvořilosti a charakteru ministra Jima Hackera, ústřední postavy knihy Jistě, pane ministře. Teoretická část představuje základní terminologii, jako je zdvořilost, udržování tváře, akty ohrožující tvář a strategie pro zmírnění negativních dopadů aktů ohrožující tvář. Teoretická část se rovněž zabývá jazykovými prostředky zdvořilosti a principy analýzy fiktivních postav. Praktická část je zaměřena na analýzu postavy ministra Hackera a zdvořilostních strategií, které používá. Na základě porovnání první a poslední kapitoly zkoumá Hackerův charakter, jeho používání zdvořilostních prostředků a jejich proměny v čase.

Klíčová slova

zdvořilost, zdvořilostní strategie, akty ohrožující tvář, analýza vývoje postavy

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis focuses on analysing the development of politeness and character of Minister Jim Hacker, the central figure of the book Yes Minister. The theoretical part introduces key concepts, such as politeness, face management, face-threatening acts, and strategies for mitigating the negative effects of face-threatening acts. The theoretical part also covers politeness markers and the principles of fictional character analysis. The practical part aims to analyse the character of Minister Hacker and the strategies of politeness he employs. By examining Hacker's character, his use of politeness and their change over time, this thesis explores the evolution of Minister Hacker from the book's first chapter to the last.

Keywords

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List of Abbreviations

FTA(s)   face threatening act(s)

Characters' names in dialogues

BW   Bernard Wooley

JH   Jim Hacker

SHA   Sir Humphrey Appleby

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Introduction

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to analyse the evolution of politeness of Jim Hacker, the central figure in the political satire book Yes Minister. Minister Hacker became the subject of this study due to his inexperience in the political world as a newly elected Minister of Administrative Affairs. As Hacker strives to succeed in his new role as a Minister and politician, he must cultivate essential soft skills, particularly those related to the strategic use of politeness. Therefore, the analysis will primarily focus on Hacker's self-inflicted successes and missteps in dialogues and politics. Minister Hacker's behavioural alterations will be analysed in connection with the transformations in his character, motivations and goals.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of Minister Hacker's politeness development, this thesis will adopt a theoretical framework informed by the work of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, which claims that politeness serves as a strategic tool for managing face and achieving social goals, particularly in the context of face-threatening acts. By analysing Hacker's interactions with Sir Humphrey Appleby and other co-workers, the study will examine how he employs or fails to employ politeness strategies to maintain his own face, protect the face of others, and achieve his communicative goals. The thesis will, furthermore, address the politeness markers and their application by Minister Hacker.

The reason behind selecting Brown and Levinson's politeness theory as the foundational framework is due to its enduring significance in politeness research. Furthermore, the time period during which the research was conducted coincides with the creation and setting of the book Yes Minister, further solidifying its relevance. Additionally, the theory's focus on the anglophone world aligns with the English setting of the book, making it a fitting core for the thesis.

The study's findings hope to contribute to the ongoing discourse on politeness, framing it within high-level politics and offering a deeper understanding of how politeness impacts the dynamics of power and influence. By linking the theoretical foundation to concrete dialogue instances from a popular humorous novel, the politeness theory becomes more accessible. Thus, the thesis offers readers a guide on utilising politeness to accomplish communication objectives.

Theoretical part

1. Politeness

Politeness is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon that plays a crucial role in human interactions. In Meaning of Interaction, Thomas (1995, 157-158) described a pragmatic viewpoint on politeness as a variety of communicative strategies a speaker uses to accomplish their goals. Leech (2014, 50) expands this viewpoint by claiming that politeness is achieved when the speaker attributes the person with whom they communicate with a greater value than themselves. Based on this definition, attributing a positive value to the other and limiting the value given to the speaker should magnify the politeness within an utterance. While speaker-oriented approaches to politeness emphasise strategies and value attribution, Mills (2003, 9) offers a broader perspective by claiming that politeness extends beyond the individual's choices but reflects the dynamic practices within social groups, which serve as a framework for community members to evaluate their own and others's behaviour.

Shifting the focus from the speaker's role in politeness, researchers have also explored the role of the addressee's perception. This debate centres on the source of politeness: does it originate solely from the speaker's intent, or is it influenced by the hearer's interpretation? Mills (2003, 23-24) contributes to this discussion by arguing that the perception of politeness mostly depends on the hearer's interpretation of the speaker's intentions. In contrast, according to Leech (2014, 52), politeness is in both the speaker and the addressee as the speaker aspires to be polite while the hearer aspires to understand the degree of politeness.

As previously stated, achieving politeness in conversations requires the presence of at least two actors. Both the speaker and the hearer play their respective roles. While the speaker aims to convey their thoughts, the listener strives to comprehend the message. Cooperation is essential for transferring politeness and the degree of politeness from one party to another.

Based on this reasoning, the thesis examines politeness in dialogues rather than solely focusing on dialogue lines spoken by the analysed character, as the hearer's understanding of politeness is equally crucial in determining the effectiveness of politeness usage.

2. Face Management

Face, as defined by Goffman (1976, 5), refers to the perception of oneself based on socially desirable qualities derived from the positive social worth that individuals attribute to themselves and the perception others have of them during a specific interaction. Later, Brown and Levinson (1987, 61) derived their definition of the Face from Goffman's definition and the English folk term 'losing face,' which binds the face to feelings of embarrassment or humiliation. Face is then considered something people are emotionally invested in – it can be enhanced, maintained, or even lost. Face is, therefore, a social phenomenon as it relies on other people, and maintaining one's face depends heavily on cooperation.

Face, as stated by Brown and Levinson (1987, 61), consists of two components: negative face, defined as a desire not to be interrupted by others in one's actions, and positive face, described as a desire of everybody that their wants be desirable for at least someone else. Negative face can be understood as a desire not to be imposed upon and to be able to act freely. On the other hand, a positive face consists of the desire to be appreciated and admired by others.

The idea of face was subsequently redefined by Leech (2014, 25), who viewed face as a positive self-image or self-esteem that an individual possesses based on the perception of others. Furthermore, face serves two distinct objectives: the Negative face goal, which involves evading the loss of face and, consequently, a decline in self-esteem, and the Positive face goal, which involves enhancing face, thereby heightening or preserving one's self-esteem. Since face, according to Brown and Levinson, can be maintained, enhanced or even lost, it is susceptible to change. Some of the facilitators of this change are personal growth and development, changes

in social roles and relationships and experience of face threats and repairs (Brown and Levinson 1987, 64).

In addition to face, Brown and Levinson (1987, 64) established rationality as the second human trait to enter the account of politeness and defined it as "an application of a specific mode of reasoning that guarantees inferences from ends or goals to means that will satisfy those ends." Therefore, politeness can be considered a rational strategy used to achieve social goals and preserve face despite face-threatening acts. While acknowledging the significance of rationality and face in explaining the motivations behind politeness, Leech (2014, 43-44) contends that Brown and Levinson's portrayal of a "model person" embodying these traits is too abstract and fails to account for the main weight of explanations for politeness fully. Thus, while rationality may be considered too simplistic to provide a complete solution to politeness dilemmas, it is crucial for understanding actors' motivation, identifying potential face-threatening acts and developing effective strategies for mitigating their impact.

3. Face-threatening acts (FTAs)

By assuming the universality of face and rationality, Brown and Levinson (1987,65) introduced face-threatening acts that inherently threaten face, namely the acts that intrinsically oppose face wants. Face-threatening acts, FTAs for short, may threaten either the speaker's or the addressee's positive or negative face. Suppose a speaker decides to commit an FTA. In that case, they can and should choose a strategy to express themselves in a way they do not threaten their or the hearer's faces.

Given the inherent vulnerability associated with one's reputation, it is only logical for any rational agent to strive to steer clear of actions that could potentially damage it. To protect their face, individuals commonly employ various strategies to mitigate the potential threat. Essentially, the speaker will consider the varying importance of (at least) three wants: the want

to convey the information of the FTA, the want to be efficient or prompt, and the want to maintain the hearer's face to some degree unless prioritising urgency over maintaining hearer's face (Brown and Levinson 1987, 68). Then, an appropriate strategy is chosen based on the particular scenario and the importance given to each want.

To avoid losing face, the speaker must also carefully evaluate sociological variables that decide the weightiness of an FTA on the addressee. The weightiness of an FTA is dependent on three factors: relative power, social distance, and absolute ranking (Brown and Levinson 1987, 76). Relative power signifies the speaker's authority or dominance over the addressee. These power dynamics can be observed in hierarchies, such as in superior-subordinate relationships in the workplace. Social distance represents closeness and familiarity between individuals, ranging from strangers to close friends. Lastly, the absolute ranking measures the degree of imposition an FTA places on an addressee's negative face.

Apart from the sociological variables discussed earlier, Leech (2014, 53) stresses the importance of conversational context, including the identity of both the speaker and the hearer. Furthermore, Holmes and Stubbe (2007, 8-9) present their perspective on politeness in connection to power, also highlighting the importance of conversational context and claiming that the precise meaning of an utterance can greatly depend on its location in relation to preceding or following utterances. Additionally, the changes in participants' roles, which are constantly constructed and negotiated through interaction, are equally important. Considering that actors assume different roles in different situations, it becomes clear that power is not a commodity that can be possessed but rather a dynamic force constantly negotiated within relationships (Locher 2004, 37).

Another aspect to consider when discussing FTAs, is the issue of impoliteness, as it is closely associated with face-threatening acts. According to Culpeper (2011, 23), Situational behaviours are construed as disrespectful or impolite when they diverge from anticipated,

desired, or established behavioural standards. Impoliteness, therefore, does not have to be reserved for what most people imagine under this category. To be impolite is to deviate from the norm of what is expected and desired or to ignore baselines that have already been established. In order to uphold politeness and preserve the addressee's face, a range of strategies have been introduced to manage face-threatening acts effectively.

3.1. Classification of FTAs

The categorisation of FTAs plays a role in gaining a deeper understanding of the FTAs themselves, which is crucial in effectively applying strategies to minimise the negative impact of face-threatening acts. The classification of FTAs can be determined by the potential threat to either the speaker's or the hearer's face and by the emphasis on positive or negative face aspects. (Brown and Levinson 1987, 65-68). In this concise listing, the reader may encounter several notably relevant examples of face-threatening acts and their classification.

As previously noted, the acts that primarily threaten the addressee's negative face wants are the acts that impede their freedom of action. The acts in question anticipate some future action from the addressee, thereby exerting pressure on them to either execute or abstain from the action. Among the various FTAs of this kind, orders and requests are the most commonly employed. Suggestions and advice also fall under this category, as the speaker implies their belief that the adressee ought to do something (Brown and Levinson 1987, 65-66).

Negative face-threatening acts also refer to anticipating favourable future actions from the speaker towards the addressee. In doing so, these acts exert pressure on the addressee to either accept or refuse them, potentially leading to a future debt. This debt can be observed in promises, where the speaker commits to future action, or in offers, where the addressee can reject them or potentially owe a favour in the future (Brown and Levinson 1987, 66).

Acts threatening the positive-face wants are characterised by the speaker's disregard and lack of interest in the addressee's feelings or wants. Such acts include expressions of disapproval, criticism, insults, complaints, and accusations, all of which convey the speaker's negative evaluation of one or more of the addressee's wants, actions, or personal traits. Positive-face threatening acts include behaviours that indicate the speaker's lack of concern or indifference towards the addressee's positive face. Such behaviours can manifest through overt non-cooperation, such as interrupting the addressee's speech or being nonattentive, as well as through irreverence and broaching inappropriate topics within the given context. In the case of interruptions and complaints, it is vital to comprehend that these, along with certain other face-threatening acts, can pose a threat to both positive and negative faces. Therefore, it is imperative to exercise caution when classifying FTAs (Brown and Levinson 1987, 66-67).

4. Committing FTAs

Brown and Levinson (1987, 68-69) formulated the speaker's strategic options for committing FTAs. These include off and on record strategies; on record strategies may go with redressive action linked to positive or negative politeness or without any redressive action altogether. For further illustration, the strategy model created by Brown and Levinson can be observed below (Figure 1). Each of the strategies mentioned comes with its own set of inherent advantages, and the key lies in identifying the circumstances where one particular advantage would prove to be more beneficial than the rest. It is essential to carefully evaluate both the inherent advantages and the specific circumstances in which they apply. (Brown and Levinson 1987, 71).
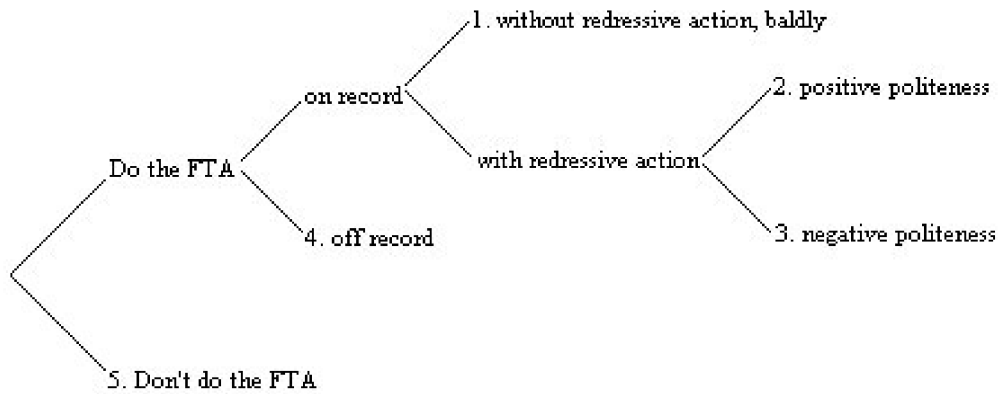
1. without redressive action, baldly

on record

2. positive politeness

with redressive action

Do the FTA

3. negative politeness

4. off record

5. Don't do the FTA

Figure 1: Possible strategies for doing FTAs according to Brown and Levinson (1987, 69)

Before considering a suitable FTA strategy, a speaker must decide whether to communicate their message. If the speaker decides to convey what is needed, they can select an appropriate strategy that best fits the situation and helps them achieve their communication goals. On the other hand, the speaker may choose not to commit the FTA. The key benefit of this approach is evident as it allows the speaker to prevent any potential offence to the listener by not communicating this particular FTA. However, it is important to note that by doing so, the speaker may also face challenges in obtaining their desired communication goals (Brown and Levinson 1987, 72).

4.1. Off and on record strategies

The off record strategy comprises multiple intentions that cannot be definitively attributed to the actor and consists of using metaphors, irony, rhetorical questions, vagueness, and hints to provide insight into the speaker's intended message (Brown and Levinson 1987, 69). In simple terms, what speakers say can be interpreted in specific ways, but they cannot be held to their true intent as they did not fully state it. As Brown and Levinson (1987, 71) point out, the primary advantage of employing an off-the-record method is that the speaker may be appreciated for their tactfulness and can avoid the responsibility for the potential harm done to the addressee's face. However, while the speaker does not fully express their intention and therefore cannot be held to their true intent, the hearer's responsibility of choosing between

these interpretations is not further elaborated on by Brown and Levinson (March 2016, 71). Furthermore, (Locher 2004, 68-69) claims that the relative politeness of an indirect utterance depends not only on the hearer but also on the social norms and context.

The on record strategies revolve around the speaker's intentions, which can be done with or without a redressive action. To do FTA on record without a redressive action is to do it in the most direct, clear and concise manner possible. FTAs are done on record when the speaker is in a significantly superior position of power compared to the hearer and where the face threat is relatively low, as in offers, requests or suggestions that do not demand significant sacrifices from the hearer (Brown and Levinson 1987, 69). When the speaker goes on record with their statements, they can be commended for their honesty and outspokenness, reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation. Additionally, the speaker can mobilise public opinion to pressure the recipient or gain support for their own stance (Brown and Levinson 1987, 71).

4.1.1. Positive and negative politeness

The on record strategies with redressive actions are linked to positive or negative politeness. Positive politeness is oriented toward the hearer's positive face, the positive self-image they claim for themselves. Positive politeness is approach-based, indicating that the speaker's wants are the hearer's wants in some respects. That way, this assurance minimises the threat to the hearer, and the FTA does not mean a negative evaluation of H's face (Brown and Levinson 1987, 70). The advantage of employing positive politeness strategies lies in the speaker's ability to sidestep or reduce the potential debt implications associated with FTAs. This can be achieved by indirectly referencing the reciprocity and ongoing relationship between themselves and the addressee or by portraying both parties as equal participants or beneficiaries of the request or offer (Brown and Levinson 1987, 72). Furthermore, positive politeness redress consists of agreement seeking, avoiding disagreement, and claiming common ground (Brown and Levinson 1987, 113).

Negative politeness redress is aimed at partially satisfying the hearer's negative face, their primary want to uphold their claims of territory and self-determination. Negative politeness is avoidance-based and ensures that the speaker recognises and respects the addressee's negative-face wants and will refrain from impeding the addressee's ability to act freely or at least minimise any such interference. This type of redress uses apologies, deference, hedges, passives and other softening mechanisms that distance the speaker and the hearer from the act and give the addressee a face-saving line of escape, providing an opportunity to respond without feeling pressured (Brown and Levinson 1987, 70). Utilising negative politeness enables the speaker to preserve a certain level of social distance and prevent the potential danger of advancing familiarity towards the addressee. By showing respect or deference to the listener in return for a face-threatening act, the speaker can avoid creating a future debt (Brown and Levinson 1987, 72).

In the analysis of politeness redress, both positive and negative politeness warrant further exploration. Leech (2014, 26) provides an alternative perspective, contending that positive politeness encompasses more than just avoiding face-threatening situations. Furthermore, he redefines positive politeness (pos-politeness) as ascribing a positive value to the addressee, such as through compliments or condolences, while negative politeness (neg-politeness) still focuses on minimising potential offence using indirect language and hedging (Leech, 2014, 11-12). This approach emphasises face enhancement as a key function of politeness, alongside the avoidance of face threats.

According to Leech (2014, 12), the redefinition of positive and negative politeness allows for easier understanding and recognition of whether politeness is neg-politeness or pos-politeness. In the case of neg-politeness, the speaker would try to soften the expression of a negative value in the communicative process. In contrast, in pos-politeness, the expression of positive value is strengthened. Even though Leech stated that these points apply to his pos-

politeness and neg-politeness, similar principles can be found in Brown's and Levinson's on record strategies, which adopt either positive or negative politeness redress.

5. Politeness markers

This chapter serves as an introduction to several morphological and syntactic markers of politeness. These markers can be employed alongside strategies to enhance the politeness of expressions during the commitment of face-threatening acts (FTAs). The markers discussed include different kinds of hedges and downgraders, typical of negative politeness, as well as inclusive forms and intensifiers inherent to positive politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 142), the amount of effort a speaker dedicates to face-preserving work influences the perception of their attempts to meet the face wants of the addressee. Thus, using more hedges and other linguistic elements corresponds to a higher level of politeness in expressions.

Hedges encompass a range of linguistic elements, including words or phrases, which possess the ability to function as negative or even positive politeness redress. The primary function of hedges is to mitigate the strength of the speaker's FTAs, as exemplified by propositional hedges, *I believe, I assume, It is possible that it is not...* (Leech 2014, 97). Adverbial-clause hedges, such as *..., if you can* in *Call me, if you can*, can be used to hedge entire statements. Other examples of such hedges include phrases like *..., in fact, ..., in a sense, ..., don't you agree* (Brown and Levinson 1987, 162). Lastly, relevance hedges modify the performative verb by providing explanations for the speaker's utterance, thereby implicitly asserting its relevance (Brown and Levinson 1987, 170).

Intensifiers are commonly employed in positive politeness, while downgraders are utilised in negative politeness. The function of intensifiers is to heighten the degree of politeness in communication, particularly when giving compliments, expressing gratitude, showing

agreement, or conveying sympathy. This elevation is demonstrated in expressions such as *Thank you very much,* or *I completely agree.* In contrast, downgraders are employed to reduce the weight of requests or assist in mitigating the impact of expressions of gratitude or apologies. Examples of downgraders used in requests can be associated with time, such as *momentarily* or *for a second*, or with quantities, such as a bit or *a tiny bit* (Leech 2014, 120).

The usage of inclusive forms is typical of positive politeness redress. The most prominent inclusive form is the inclusive *we* form, used when the speaker means both themselves and the hearer. When the speaker uses this form, they call upon the cooperative assumptions to claim that both the speaker and addressee are cooperatively involved in the relevant activity, thereby redressing FTAs (Brown and Levinson 1987, 127).

6. The principles of fictional character analysis

As one of the goals of this thesis is to evaluate the development of Minister Hacker by contrasting his inexperienced self in chapter one with his more experienced self in the final chapter, this brief section concentrates explicitly on the two most important pillars of fictional character analysis, the essential characteristics that define the identity of the fictional character and the potential of transformations of such characteristics.

Primarily, it is necessary to establish that it is possible to observe a character's development even when the subject of observation is not a real person but a fictional character. According to Reicher, fictional characters may undergo changes within their stories, which usually happen as time in the stories passes; thus, characters' internal properties are often relative to time (Reicher 2011, 132). These internal properties are closely related to the core of a character. That way, it influences their thinking, behaviour and, therefore, their specific employment of politeness.

While the internal attributes of a character hold significant importance, as indicated by Murray Smith in his Engaging Characters, they do not solely define the essence of a character. Even if a character experiences multiple transformations throughout the narrative and specific attributes are removed, they remain the same; however, the character's agency is essential to continue being themselves (Smith 2011, 235).

Therefore, within the rigorous process of character analysis, particular attention should be given to the internal qualities of the character and their agency. This agency encompasses the character's motivations, as manifested in their goals, the actions they undertake to achieve those goals, and the strategic manoeuvres they employ to navigate the complexities of the narrative world.

Practical part

7. Methodology

Within this chapter the procedure for the analysis of politeness in this thesis is outlined. The primary goal of this study is to assess Minister Hacker's character and the politeness strategies he utilises, as well as to compare potential changes in his character and use of politeness from the first chapter to the last chapter of the book. Moreover, the study will also delve into Hacker's internal properties such as traits, beliefs, values and motives, and their potential evolution throughout the story. The basis for comparison is derived from Brown's and Levinson's face management theory, supplemented by insights from Leech and Culpeper. Additionally, the section Politeness markers overview presents a brief overview of Minister Hacker's usage of politeness markers in the book's first and last chapters' dialogues.

The materials used in the analysis consist of dialogues extracted from the first and the last chapters of *The Complete Yes Minister: The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister by the Right Hon. James Hacker MP*. These dialogues were chosen based on the FTAs found within them and their relative importance in the chapter. Considering that the book's format is a diary written by Minister Hacker, many of the dialogues picked consist not only of dialogue lines but also of additional insights and thought processes of Minister Hacker. Unlike the dialogues, which are accompanied by the initials of the speaker, these are not accompanied by any explanatory note, as their sole purpose is to better understand Hacker's point of view.

The analysis mainly focuses on four FTA categories: orders, disagreement, criticism, and advice, which come from both the book's first and last chapters and can, therefore, be compared. Orders and disagreements are analysed with Minister Hacker as the speaker, while criticism and advice are studied with Hacker as the listener. The reason for this approach is that each of these FTAs displays various forms of face threats. FTA orders illustrate Minister Hacker's

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commitment of FTAs that threaten the hearer's negative face, while FTA disagreements demonstrate how Minister Hacker commits FTAs that threaten the hearer's positive face. Furthermore, FTA criticisms show how Hacker protects his positive face when criticised, and FTA advice reveals how he protects his negative face when receiving advice. Furthermore, each scenario surrounding the analysed FTA is given relevant situational context.

It is crucial to emphasise that the mentioned face-threatening acts are analysed in conversations encompassing the FTAs and responses to these FTAs. This approach is taken to not only understand the specific FTAs and the face-threatening tactics utilised but also to analyse how these FTAs impact the hearers and how they react to them. Hearers' responses, which are also frequently FTAs, are additionally examined within the dialogues. This analysis further delves into the underlying motives of various characters, particularly Sir Humphrey Appleby, as they provide valuable insights for comprehending the dialogues. The last reason behind analysing longer pieces of dialogue is to capture Minister Hacker's internal monologue, which plays a vital role in character analysis.

Notably, the in-depth analysis includes the final conversation of the first and the last chapter. These concluding conversations, situated at the end of each chapter, are essential in resolving the initial problem introduced at the beginning of the chapter. Additionally, they highlight the power struggle between Minister Hacker and Sir Humphrey Appleby, as each chapter explores a conflict of interest that both characters attempt to resolve in their favour. Therefore, the final conversations are an essential part of this thesis's politeness and character research. In addition, the final dialogues allow the reader to examine whether Hacker's time in the Ministry influenced his character and his deployment of politeness strategies.

The comparison presented in the final chapter of each FTA and the final conversations will be drawn to compare and contrast Hacker's communication style, specifically his use or non-use of politeness strategies. Additionally, the analysis will consider any changes in applying these

strategies resulting from Hacker's experience in the office or other sources. Finally, as the practical part of this thesis relies on the dialogues, these were picked and adjusted for the analysis with utmost care and without inflicting changes to the meaning. Each dialogue in this thesis is accompanied by its corresponding page number, indicated within brackets at the end. This notation facilitates easy navigation to the Appendices section, where the dialogues can be readily located.

Lastly, some of the principles of politeness in the Yes Minister analysis need to be established. Examining politeness in this book requires attention to the setting and specific elements. The novel, set in a 1980s Anglophone workplace, features interactions marked by formality, reflecting the professional and institutional environment. This formality is crucial when analysing Face-Threatening Acts. As the chapter on FTAs highlights, power dynamics significantly influence politeness strategies. Within this context, the book portrays a clear power hierarchy. Minister Hacker holds the official position of authority. This societal expectation dictates that subordinates Sir Humphrey Appleby and Bernard Woolley display greater respect towards him.

Consequently, Minister Hacker can employ more casual language, partially mitigating the severity of his FTAs. However, the dynamic is not unidirectional. Despite his subordinate official position, Sir Humphrey possesses an unofficial power advantage due to his extensive political knowledge and experience. This power imbalance is evident in Sir Humphrey's frequent manipulation of Minister Hacker.

8. FTA – Orders

The analysis presented in this chapter revolves around orders, which are considered face-threatening acts (FTAs), as they can challenge the negative face of the hearer by indicating that the speaker assumes the hearer should execute a certain action (Brown and Levinson 1987, 66). In the given situations, Minister Hacker assumes the role of the speaker, and the focus lies on examining his effectiveness in conveying his orders and determining whether he employs suitable strategies to minimise their imposition.

8.1. Orders – the first chapter

As a newly appointed Minister, Hacker elaborates on his new bold plan to transform the Ministry of Administration. The provided monologue offers insight into how Hacker communicates his goals with his subordinates and examines the appropriateness of his language in articulating his vision.

> I decided that the time had come to be blunt and to tell them what's what.
>
> JH: 'Frankly,' I said, 'this Department has got to cut a great swathe through the whole of the stuffy Whitehall bureaucracy. We need a new broom. We are going to throw open the windows and let in a bit of fresh air. We are going to cut through the red tape and streamline this creaking old bureaucratic machine. We are going to have a clean sweep. There are far too many useless people just sitting behind desks.'
>
> JH: 'But, by the clean sweep and the new broom, I mean that we must have more Open Government. We made election pledges about this, and I intend to keep them. We must take the nation into our confidence.' [p. 16]

Through his monologue, Minister Hacker emphasises his dedication to election pledges and exhibits his desire to initiate change and possibly assert his authority over the Department. Hacker uses indirect and vague phrasing such as "cut a great swathe," "throw open the windows," and "cut through the red tape" to signify the character of future major changes in the governmental practices of the Ministry. While these statements are not explicitly stated as orders, Hacker's language is forceful and leaves little room for disagreement.

Hacker's lack of experience in his new Ministerial role is evident through the excessively abstract language used to describe future changes and the failure to consider potential outcomes. Minister Hacker's desire for "a clean sweep" is clearly understood, but the specific steps to accomplish this goal are not as evident. Despite the already mentioned language abstraction, Hacker does not use hedges or downgraders to soften the blow of the radical changes he presents.

Hacker's strong obligational statement: "we must have more Open Government", conveys a directive, a modal verb *must*, which expresses not only a strong obligation but also Hacker's authority as a Minister. Hacker allows little room for opposition and goes bald on record with his statements with the only exception of using inclusive *we* form, through which Hacker calls upon the cooperative assumptions to claim that both he and his subordinate are cooperatively involved in reestablishing the Ministry.

Nevertheless, Hacker is threatening the negative face of the hearers by ordering a significant change in governmental policy. Moreover, as the hearers belong to the Ministry criticised by Hacker, the overall critical tone could also threaten their positive face. Fortunately for Hacker, considering his higher status emerging from his position as a Minister, his straightforwardness and orders should not negatively impact his positive face too much. As claimed by Berger (1994, 487), "status increases perceived competence, which then allows these so perceived to become more dominant" (cited in Locher, 2004, 32). Furthermore, this very straightforwardness seems inherent in Hacker. In his opinion, it is most likely justified through a commitment to his election pledges and the moral high ground he thinks he possesses.

Hacker's statement about "far too many useless people just sitting behind desks" can easily be interpreted as impolite due to its derogatory nature. Calling subordinates "useless people just sitting behind the desk" is impolite as it openly attacks workers' competence. This statement further attributes said workers with items of low value that possibly damage aspects

of their faces within the cultural background (Culpeper 2011, 144). Minister Hacker used impolite wording to justify his "clean sweep", and although it might help him to communicate his argument, impoliteness does not effectively aid him in reaching his goal of staying on good terms with his subordinates and colleagues. His goal of reforming the Ministry was also unsuccessful, as seen in the first chapters of FTA Criticism and the Final Conversation.

8.2. Orders – the last chapter

In this last chapter's dialogue, Minister Hacker participates in a meeting about local government administration. The primary focus of the discussion revolves around South-West Derbyshire, which the Minister's party controls, and their lack of good administration practices. This analysis shall focus on how Hacker uses his authority to obtain the time he requires while also being under pressure.

> SHA: 'So can we take it you approve?'
>
> It was all beginning to look distinctly fishy. I decided not to give an immediate answer.
>
> JH: 'It's a difficult one. They're friends of ours.'
>
> SHA: 'They're no friends of good administration.'
>
> JH: 'Give me twenty-four hours. I'll have to square the party organisation. Get the Chairman invited to a drinkies do at Number Ten or something. Soften the blow.'
>
> And I insisted that we press on to the next item. [p. 651]

In this dialogue, Minister Hacker's order, "give me twenty-four hours", is much milder than the orders in the first chapter. In this instance, Hacker is focused on addressing a particular governmental matter rather than attempting to reestablish an entire ministry. To fulfil his specific goals of avoiding pressure to make decisions that contradict Hacker's beliefs, he utilises indirectness and evasion. Demonstrating hesitation and employing indirect methods when expressing disagreement is favoured over openly expressing disagreement (Leech 2014, 97).

Therefore, Hacker does not immediately disagree with Humphrey; instead, he evades answering, hedging the question by calling it "a difficult one", and further justifies his disapproval by reminding Humphrey that South-West Derbyshire holds importance to them. This on-record strategy, using positive politeness redress by claiming that South-West Derbyshire are "friends of ours" and claiming a collective relation to this district, was supposed to persuade Sir Humphrey to show a little leniency.

When the on-record strategy with redress fails, Hacker goes bald on record, demanding his twenty-four hours. He does, in fact, list reasons why he requires them, claiming he is trying to "soften the blow," which further justifies his demands and shows his awareness of diplomacy deployment. In contrast to the initial dialogue examined, Hacker's current demand can be seen as more reasonable since he provided specific reasons for his need for twenty-four hours, such as getting time "to square the party organisation" or "get the Chairman invited to a drinkies do".

This reasoning further illustrates that Hacker was actively searching for specific steps to take, unlike in the first chapter's analysis. Moreover, in this particular scenario, Hacker tried to utilise different politeness strategies to reach his desired outcome, ultimately establishing a common ground. By taking this approach, Minister Hacker at least partially protected his positive and negative faces.

9. FTA – Disagreements

Disagreement, alongside criticism, are considered FTAs threatening the hearer's positive face by indicating that the speaker does not consider the addressee's wants (Brown and Levinson 1987, 66). To avoid threatening the hearer's face, the speaker (Minister Hacker) should use appropriate strategies to show disagreement when communicating a message. These scenarios show Minister Hacker's handling of his disagreement towards his colleagues.

9.1. Disagreements – the first chapter

Minister Hacker decided to give a speech to the Union of Office Employees regarding purchasing one thousand computer video display terminals from an American company, criticising the involvement of a foreign company instead of buying the terminals in the UK. Hacker's reaction to differing opinions can be examined in the following dialogue.

This is a superb idea of Frank's. My speech to the Union of Office Employees will deal with this scandalous contract. And we will release it to the press in advance. I said as much to Humphrey. Sir Humphrey seemed even more worried. I asked him for his advice, which was totally predictable.

SHA: 'I think it might be regrettable if we upset the Americans.'

JH: I pointed out to Humphrey, in no uncertain terms, that 'It is high time that someone jolted the Americans out of their commercial complacency. We should be thinking about the British poor, not the American rich!'

SHA: 'Minister, if that is your express wish the Department will back you. Up to the hilt.'

This was very loyal. One must give credit where it's due. [p. 28]

Minister Hacker decided to release the speech regarding the contract he considered scandalous due to its failure to aid the needs of the British people. Hacker's beliefs and actions align with his goal to be a good Minister, and his policy stresses the government's transparency with the British. Hacker informs Sir Humphrey about his intentions of releasing the speech yet hesitates upon noticing Humphrey's concern, prompting him to seek Humphrey's input.

Upon discovering that Humphrey holds differing beliefs and advocates for the deal with Americans, Minister Hacker openly disagrees with Sir Humphrey. When Hacker says, "It is high time that someone jolted the Americans out of their commercial complacency," he threatens Humphrey's positive face by rejecting his advice. By disregarding Humphrey's recommendation to refrain from upsetting the Americans, Hacker demonstrated his lack of consideration for Humphrey's advice, challenging his expertise. This highlights Hacker's bald-on record disagreement without any kind of redress in which he would consider any aspects of Sir Humphrey's advice or at least try to find some common ground.

Hacker's latest statement, in which he stresses the obligation to "support the British poor, not the American rich", shows his patriotism and further illustrates his desire to be a good Minister to the people of the United Kingdom. Based on the subsequent dialogue, it can be concluded that Hacker believes he has effectively enforced his will to make his speech public and provides a valid explanation for his motives. His momentary victory, however, carries the pitfall of Hacker's ignorance of the current relations with the Americans that Sir Humphrey had tried to advise him about.

9.2. Disagreements – the last chapter

In this dialogue, Minister Hacker and Humphrey Appleby discuss whether finding the culprit of the governmental error that occurred three decades ago would be possible. Throughout their discussion, Hacker expresses his disagreement with Appleby's perspective.

> SHA: 'But it was so long ago,' he said. 'We can't find out that sort of thing now.'
>
> And then I went for the jugular. This was the moment I'd been waiting for. Little did I dream, after he had humiliated me in front of Richard Cartwright, that I would be able to return the compliment so soon. And with the special pleasure of using his own arguments on him.
>
> JH: 'Of course we can find out,' I said. 'You were telling me that everything is minuted and full records are always kept in the Civil Service. And you were quite right.

Well, legal documents concerning a current lease could not possibly have been thrown away.'

He stood. Panic was overcoming him. He made an emotional plea, the first time I can remember him doing such a thing.

SHA: 'Minister, aren't we making too much of this? Possibly blighting a brilliant career because of a tiny slip thirty years ago. It's not such a lot of money wasted.'

JH: I was incredulous. 'Forty million?'

SHA: 'Well,' he argued passionately, 'that's not such a lot compared with Blue Streak the TSR2, Trident, Concorde, high-rise council flats, British Steel, British Rail, British Leyland, Upper Clyde Ship Builders, the atomic power station programme, comprehensive schools, or the University of Essex.'

JH: 'I take your point,' I replied calmly. 'But it's still over a hundred times more than the official in question can have earned in his entire career.' [p. 674-675]

During the discussion about whether it would be possible to find the culprit of the rather costly governmental mishap done around thirty years ago, Minister Hacker and Sir Humphrey Appleby stand on opposing sides. Sir Humphrey stands his ground that it would be difficult to find the culprit, considering how long it has been since the incident. Minister Hacker disagrees with that statement and reminds Humphrey how Humphrey told him that everything is minuted. By using the inclusive form *we* in the statement, "Of course we can find out", Hacker maintains a calm yet assertive tone and gives a sense of collective effort against the problem.

To minimise the situation's impact, Humphrey argues that the individual's successful career should not be put at risk due to this mishap and that the monetary loss was relatively insignificant. Minister Hacker responds by using omission and asking, "Forty million?" indicating the gravity of the situation and the significant amount of money in question while also providing Humphrey with a clear explanation for the necessity of identifying the culprit. Humphrey once again endeavours to argue that there are other more costly projects, to which Hacker responds by acknowledging the point made but highlighting the significant sum of money involved. By using the phrase "I take your point", Hacker claims a common ground,

demonstrating that he is attentive to Humphrey's perspective and acknowledges it while maintaining his own position. Consequently, the potential harm to Humphrey's positive face is somewhat mitigated, unlike in the first conversation.

The primary distinction between the example in the initial chapter and this one is Hacker's advanced understanding of the topic, specifically his awareness that Humphrey is the man behind the mishap from thirty years ago. This knowledge further shifts the power dynamics in Hacker's favour. In this scenario, Minister Hacker goes a step further as he considers previously gained information about meticulously kept records and uses it to further prove his point and, in his own words, to use Sir Humphrey's arguments against him.

It remains clear that Minister Hacker places great importance on the moral dimension of apprehending the official responsible for the mistake. However, his desire for revenge against Sir Humphrey Appleby, who embarrassed him in front of Dr Cartwright, also significantly influences his actions. In contrast to the previous example, Minister Hacker maintains a professional demeanour throughout the conversation. Moreover, in this conversation, Minister Hacker employs logical reasoning appropriate for the circumstances instead of using phrases reminiscent of election slogans ("We should be thinking of the British poor, not American rich").

10. FTA – Criticism

As previously noted, criticism is seen as a face-threatening act that threatens the positive face of the individual being criticised. Minister Hacker's behaviour was previously evaluated from the point of view of a speaker, the initiator of disagreement in conversation who threatens the face of the hearer but not vice versa. In these examples, Minister Hacker is not criticising or disagreeing with one of his colleagues; instead, he is being criticised and disagreed with. In the course of these dialogues, Minister Hacker needs to devise strategies to protect his positive face.

10.1. Criticism – the first chapter

In this example, Minister Hacker is confronted by Vic Gould, a Chief Whip, who openly criticises Hacker for his speech to inform the general public about the deal with Americans to stop it and provide more work opportunities to the people of Great Britain. This situation allows for examining Hacker's response to such open criticism.

> Vic: 'You're a real pain in the arse, aren't you? The PM's going up the wall. Hitting the roof. You can't go around making speeches like that.'
>
> JH: 'It's Open Government. It's in our manifesto. One of our main planks. The PM believes in Open Government too.'
>
> Vic: 'Open, yes, but not gaping. In politics, you've got to learn to say things with tact and finesse – you berk!'
>
> I suppose he's got a point. I felt very sheepish, but partly because I didn't exactly enjoy being ignominiously ticked off in front of Humphrey and Frank. [p. 33]

In this given scenario, Vic Gould openly expresses criticism towards Minister Hacker by claiming that Hacker "can't go around making speeches like that". This criticism, accompanied by various insults, is a reaction to Hacker's prior mishap and impoliteness. Naturally, Hacker did not intend to be impolite when releasing his speech, but according to the words of the Chief Whip, his actions were seen as such. Impoliteness is, after all, a matter of interpretation

(Culpeper 2011, 22). Because discontinuing the agreement with Americans would harm the relationship between the USA and the UK, Hacker's proposal deviated from what was expected of him as a newly appointed cabinet member. Hacker's actions undermined the prime Minister instead of aiding him, thereby exhibiting a lack of politeness.

Previously unaware of the Prime Minister's initiatives to build a relationship between the USA and the UK, Minister Hacker, now, knowing all the facts, strives to defend his position. Initially, he tried to protect his positive face by mentioning their recently adopted policy and the party's manifesto. Furthermore, he emphasised that the Prime Minister supports and believes in it. By using the hedge *too*, Hacker tried to connect his action to a shared government policy, softening his own position and further supporting it by invoking the authority of the Prime Minister, who also agreed with the policy.

As the reasons given to Vic did not suffice, Hacker was told that he misunderstood the policy as he was supposed to make Open Government "open, but not gaping". Furthermore, Vic tells Hacker to adopt a more tactful approach. When faced with this situation, Hacker no longer tried to defend himself, letting the strong critique damage his positive face. Minister Hacker found it challenging to handle the criticism he faced in front of his colleagues; however, he appeared to acknowledge Vic's advice regarding the importance of diplomacy and skilfulness in politics. This acceptance can be attributed to Minister Hacker's recognition of such qualities' value, as they could potentially enhance his performance as a Minister.

10.2. Criticism – the last chapter

In this dialogue, Minister Hacker is told by Sir Humphrey that he cannot talk to other people in the Department. This interaction provides an opportunity to observe and evaluate Minister Hacker's response to Humphrey's criticism.

He told me that I cannot just go around talking to people in the Department, and expressed the sincere hope that such a thing would not occur again. I could scarcely believe my ears. I ordered him to explain himself.

SHA: 'Minister, how can I advise you properly if I don't know who's saying what to whom? I must know what's going on. You simply cannot have completely private meetings. And what if you're told things that aren't true?'

JH: 'If they're not true you can put me right.'

SHA: 'But they may be true.'

JH: 'In that case . . .' I began triumphantly. He interrupted me, correcting himself hastily.

SHA: 'That is, not entirely false. But misleading. Open to misinterpretation.'

JH: 'The fact is, you're just trying to keep things from me, aren't you, Humphrey?'
[p. 658-659]

In this dialogue, Minister Hacker is being criticised by Sir Humphrey, who stated that Minister Hacker "cannot just go around talking to people in the Department", implying that Hacker's talking to people in the Department was something negative and should not be repeated. Compared to the previous dialogue, Minister Hacker takes action to protect his positive face, demanding an explanation of the criticism he was given so he could defend himself accordingly. It is noteworthy that in this dialogue, the circumstances, atmosphere, and pressure on Minister Hacker are relatively subdued compared to the previous instance.

Sir Humphrey then explains why Minister Hacker should refrain from interacting with individuals in the Department, hiding his true motivations behind the reasoning that Minister Hacker might obtain incorrect information if he tries communicating with others. Prior to Humphrey's full explanation, Minister Hacker tries to oppose Sir Humphrey, saying, "In that case,…" which would most likely be a hedge of the statement that Humphrey interrupts. Hacker's reaction, "If they're not true you can put me right." can be understood as an offer with a positive politeness redress, pointing out that Humphrey is someone who can provide Hacker with correct information. This logic does not resonate with Sir Humphrey, whose primary goal

is to keep Hacker uninformed but cannot openly express this intention to the Minister for apparent reasons.

Nevertheless, Minister Hacker still understands Humphrey's motivations and demonstrates so by facing Sir Humphrey with the question: "The fact is, you're just trying to keep things from me, aren't you, Humphrey?". Although the tag question "…, aren't you, Humphrey?" makes the whole question sound polite and a bit like a formality, the nature of it is still accusative. By using the adverb *just*, Hacker minimises the legitimacy of Humphrey's reasons, pointing out that Humphrey is only trying to keep things away from him. Through this approach, Hacker successfully protects his negative face from imposition by rejecting Humphrey's demand to abstain from conversing with people in the Department while remaining polite during their interaction, even after recognising Humphrey's manipulative tactics.

In contrast to the preceding dialogue, which demonstrated Hacker's initial incompetence in handling criticism and protecting his positive and negative faces, this chapter's analysis demonstrates Hacker's capability to provide relevant and logical reasoning for his decisions and demands when questioned. Additionally, Hacker maintained a composed and polite demeanour while facing pressure, making him less susceptible to manipulation.

11. FTA – Advice

This section focuses on Minister Hacker's different reactions to the advice he was given. Due to its nature of threatening the hearer's negative face, advice is considered an FTA (Brown and Levinson 1978, 66). When given advice, the hearer must evaluate whether they will act according to the advice, which threatens their negative face as it restricts their freedom from imposition or whether they refuse the given advice, possibly resulting in damaging the positive face of a person with whom they disagree. It is important to note that the advice given may not always be in the hearer's best interest. Especially in the setting of this book, it is crucial for Minister Hacker to understand who will benefit from his adhering to the advice. Lastly, in both examples, the advice given to Hacker is given by his subordinates, giving him more freedom of action due to the given power dynamics.

11.1. Advice – the first chapter

Minister Hacker is discussing his commitment to his political party alongside his new ministerial responsibilities with Bernard Wooley and Sir Humphrey Appleby, who advises him to focus solely on his new ministerial role. The subsequent reaction of Hacker, supported by his beliefs, is explored in this analysis.

> I noticed that everything in the diary is in pencil, so presumably much of it can be and will be changed. I pointed out to Bernard that I have various other commitments.
>
> BW: 'Such as?' he asked.
>
> JH: 'Well . . . I'm on four policy committees of the party, for a start.'
>
> SHA: 'I'm sure you won't be wanting to put party before country,' said Sir Humphrey.
>
> I had never looked at it in that light. Of course, he's absolutely right. [pg. 19]

In the first example, Minister Hacker tries to communicate his need for time to continue the work related to his political party when asked what commitments he has outside his

Ministry. Hacker did not want to appear non-cooperative, so he answered the question "Such as?" relating to his commitments with a slight hesitation. Hacker's reply, "Well . . . I'm on four policy committees of the party, for a start.", contains a hesitation hedge *well* and provides an explanation for his need for time by mentioning his involvement in four policy committees of the party.

As polite and reasonable as Minister Hacker tries to be, Sir Humphrey Appleby still promptly advises him to concentrate on his ministerial work instead. In this instance, Sir Humphrey's advice seems genuine. Furthermore, it is supported by the patriotic statement that Minister Hacker would not want to put his party before his country, which is an excellent tactic on Sir Humphrey's side, considering Hacker's deep patriotism and strong dedication to his ministerial responsibilities.

As a result of this advice, Minister Hacker now believes that it is his moral obligation to prioritise his nation above all other duties, even those tied to the political party that secured his position as a minister. Therefore, Hacker refrained from insisting on his other responsibilities and, without any further question or contemplation of a compromise, obediently followed the instructions given to him, neglecting to protect his negative face from being imposed upon. Hacker's prompt acceptance of the advice without attempting to negotiate for a compromise shows his naivety and susceptibility to manipulation. Given that Humphrey Appleby's primary intention in offering this advice to Minister Hacker was to distance him from individuals who might sway his judgment, thereby reducing Sir Humphrey's desired influence over Minister Hacker. It can be argued that Minister Hacker's decision to comply with this advice was not the most favourable course of action.

11.2. Advice – the last chapter

Minister Hacker received advice from his secretary Bernard Wooley to refrain from engaging in conversation with Dr Cartwright regarding the administration of South-West Derbyshire. The subsequent examination focuses on Hacker's response to this advice.

JH: 'Furthermore, Dr Cartwright seemed to be trying to tell me something. I think I'll drop in on him.'

BW: 'Oh, I wouldn't do that, Minister,' he said rather too hastily.

JH: 'Why not?'

BW: He hesitated. 'Well, it is, er, understood that if Ministers need to know anything it will be brought to their attention. If they go out looking for information, they might, er they might . . .'

JH: 'Find it?'

BW: 'Yes.' He looked sheepish.

JH: I remarked that 'It may be 'understood', but it's not understood by me.' [p. 652]

The dialogue between Minister Hacker and Bernard Wooley illustrates a slight development of Hacker's critical thinking. Undeniably, the reasoning behind this advice is not nearly as strong as the advice in the above example. However, it still serves as a good illustration of development, as Hacker shows his newly-found scepticism by questioning his subordinate. Minister Hacker, disagrees with Bernard Wooley, realising that his advice only serves to keep him uninformed, similar to the scenario from the first chapter. As a result, Hacker does not let his negative face be threatened, as seen in the last line of the conversation. Furthermore, by remarking that the information given is understood but not understood by him, Hacker is telling Bernard that he understands the point of what is said; however, as Bernard's primary motive is to withhold information from Hacker, he opts not to collaborate.

This particular FTA provides specific examples of character development alongside the usage of politeness strategies. In the initial instance, Hacker unquestioningly accepts the information presented to him without further consideration. Conversely, he promptly questions his subordinate in the second example, showcasing a proactive approach to verifying the information provided. Undoubtedly, the initial advice seems to possess fewer grounds for doubts, given that it appears to be grounded on a firm basis. However, Hacker's immediate approval, which would result in his disconnection from his political party, lacked careful consideration. In the second scenario, Hacker skilfully protects his negative face without harming Bernard Wooley's face, despite their disagreement. This example further highlights Minister Hacker's better understanding of the complexities of politics and suggests a decline in his gullibility.

12. The Final Conversations

Final conversations hold particular importance in Yes Minister. As each book chapter presents an issue that must be addressed and solved, the final conversations are where the final solution occurs. In final conversations, Minister Hacker and Sir Humphrey Appleby represent opposing forces, and the solution suitable for Minister Hacker is not often suitable for Sir Humphrey Appleby. Consequently, each of these politicians tries to secure the outcome that would benefit them.

12.1. The Final Conversation – the first chapter

Minister Hacker became aware that the statements he had planned to release to the press could have detrimental consequences for the Prime Minister and even result in his removal from the ministerial role. These statements have not yet been made public due to a procedure that Minister Hacker sought to eliminate through the new Open Government policy. Because Sir Humphrey failed to revoke the procedure, he apologised to Hacker for not adhering to the recently implemented Open Government policy. Consequently, Minister Hacker's reaction to Humphrey's apology becomes a matter of examination.

> This wonderfully fortunate oversight seems to have saved my bacon. Of course, I didn't let Humphrey see my great sense of relief. In fact, he apologised.
>
> SHA: 'The fault is entirely mine, Minister,' he said. 'This procedure for holding up press releases dates back to before the era of Open Government. I unaccountably omitted to rescind it. I do hope you will forgive this lapse.'
>
> In the circumstances, I felt that the less said the better. I decided to be magnanimous.
>
> JH: 'That's quite all right Humphrey,' I said, 'after all, we all make mistakes.'
>
> SHA: 'Yes Minister,' said Sir Humphrey. [p. 36]

This dialogue illustrates Hacker's complete failure to understand the situation he was led into by Sir Humphrey, who has knowingly used the old procedure for holding up press releases,

which Hacker wanted to banish. Sir Humphrey's intention was not to help Minister Hacker but to teach him a lesson that changing the established policies may lead to catastrophic consequences, such as Hacker losing his ministerial position. In addition to various manipulative tactics employed by Sir Humphrey, this particular strategy was designed to "house-train" Minister Hacker. The ultimate goal was for Humphrey Appleby to gain control over both the Minister and the Ministry.

Nevertheless, unaware of the situation, Hacker makes an effort to be "magnanimous" towards Sir Humphrey, unaware of his ingenuity. By characterising Humphrey's "lapse" as a mistake within the context of "after all, we all make mistakes", Minister Hacker seeks to minimise the damage inflicted on Humphrey's positive face. By using the hedge "after all," Hacker implies that making mistakes is a common occurrence and minimises the mistake's seriousness. Furthermore, Hacker establishes Sir Humphrey as part of a group by using the collective identifier *we*, further minimising the possible harm done to his face.

Consequently, Hacker accepts Humphrey's apology, threatening his own negative face as he is compelled to diminish the debt resulting from the apology in question. To minimise this obligation, Hacker chooses to be forgiving by stating, "that's quite alright, Humphrey", and, the already mentioned, "we all make mistakes". Hacker also realises the significance of saying less and chooses not to pursue the matter any further.

12.2. The Final Conversation – the last chapter

The final conversation in the last chapter reveals a notable shift in the dynamic between Minister Hacker and Sir Humphrey. Minister Hacker possesses an advantage over Sir Humphrey, as he discovered a significant blunder from Humphrey's early political days, for which a release of compromising papers is planned. Minister Hacker decides to assist Sir Humphrey in dealing with the impending disclosure of the compromising papers under specific

conditions. This last analysis delves into how Hacker leverages information and employs

politeness strategies to further his objectives.

> JH: 'So what do I do about this?' I asked. 'I've promised to let The Mail see all the papers. If I go back on my word I'll be roasted.' I looked him straight in the eye. 'On the other hand, I might be able to do something if I didn't have this other problem on my plate.'
>
> He knew only too well what I was saying. He's done this to me often enough. So, immediately alert, he asked me what the other problem was.
>
> JH: 'Being roasted by the press for disciplining the most efficient council in Britain.'
>
> He saw the point at once, and adjusted his position with commendable speed. After only a momentary hesitation, he told me that he'd been thinking about South-West Derbyshire, that obviously we can't change the law as such, but that it might be possible to show a little leniency. We agreed that a private word to the Chief Executive would suffice for the moment, giving them a chance to mend their ways. [p. 677]

The dialogue lines of Minister Hacker in the final conversation of the last chapter

demonstrate his awareness of the situation, which is particularly noteworthy in this exchange,

unlike in the first chapter, as he displays a clear understanding of the circumstances and

effectively maintains control. In this instance, Hacker chooses the off-record strategy, starting

with a rhetorical question, "So, what do I do about this?" which is further hedged by the particle

so. Furthermore, Hacker remains somewhat vague, outlining the current situation by stating that

he promised to let The Mail see all the papers, and if he does not adhere to his word, he will

"get roasted". The Minister then promptly hints that if his problem with the press, referred to

as "this other problem", was solved, he would have more opportunity to help Humphrey.

Minister Hacker does not explicitly state his want for Humphrey to solve the problem, thus

avoiding any direct threat to his negative face. Instead, Hacker implies his willingness to assist

Humphrey on the condition that "this other problem" is resolved, thereby asserting the principle

of reciprocity. This reciprocity then negates the debt aspect of Hacker indirectly requesting

Humphrey to give some leniency to South-West Derbyshire. The success of this approach is demonstrated by the final statement made in the conversation.

It is essential to acknowledge that in the first example, Minister Hacker assumes a more passive role as he observes the events happening to him. However, in this second instance, Hacker actively engages as a participant, successfully conveying his goals and attaining them through the effective use of appropriate politeness strategies. An additional aspect to consider can be drawn from the subtle change in Hacker's motivation, as he prioritises evading negative press coverage over contemplating the moral dilemma of penalising a district that does not deserve it. This shift highlights a change in his aspiration from performing well as a minister to securing public approval and avoiding disapproval.

13. Politeness markers overview

This brief section provides insight into Minister Hacker's usage of politeness markers in the dialogues from the first and final chapters of the book. The number of politeness markers used by Hacker, corresponding to the theoretical chapter regarding markers of politeness, is presented in Table 1 below.

Politeness markers	The first chapter	The last chapter
Hedges	2	3
Inclusive forms	3	2
Downgraders	0	0
Intensifiers	0	0

Table 1: Politeness markers overview

Based on the numbers summarised in Table 1, it can be concluded that Minister Hacker's use of politeness markers has not undergone significant changes. Hacker's use of these markers still consists of inclusive forms with few additional hedges without using intensifiers or downgraders. The analysis of the conversational extracts in the practical part, particularly those from the book's concluding chapter, reveals Minister Hacker's continued preference for direct communication.

This directness likely explains the absence of downgraders or intensifiers in Hacker's speech. Furthermore, Locher (2004, 37) states that language choices are one of the dominant means for exercising power. Considering Hacker's high relative power given by his position of authority and his direct communication style, the resulting absence of politeness markers may be a deliberate choice to project his power and influence as a Minister. While a more in-depth analysis of all dialogues in both chapters is feasible, the excerpts provided in the practical section should adequately showcase the changes or their lack in Hacker's communication style.

Conclusion

The analysis of Minister Hacker's deployment of politeness and character provides the following conclusion in researching his character and politeness usage. The observed change in the Minister's character consists of changes in some of his traits, beliefs, and motivations. Moreover, Minister Hacker has evolved beyond his initial naivety and instead applies critical thinking, questions the intentions of those around him, and asserts himself politely. Also, Hacker's situational awareness has noticeably improved.

The results of the politeness analysis show that Minister Hacker understood how to protect his negative face from imposition while also effectively protecting his positive face. Over time, Hacker's employment of politeness gradually evolved, shifting from a bald-on record strategy without any form of redress, which could be seen in most of the first chapter examples, to one that involved some degree of either positive or negative redress or the utilisation of off-record strategies. This strategic shift enabled Minister Hacker to pursue his aspirations without directly threatening the faces of others or being impolite.

However, Hacker's use of politeness markers remained relatively consistent throughout the analysis. As seen in the section Politeness markers overview, Hacker continued to rely mainly on inclusive forms and occasional hedges. These markers were present in both the first and final chapters. The explanation for Hacker's choice not to employ politeness markers, especially downgraders and intensifiers, can be deduced from his preference for direct communication and his position of authority. As a result, Hacker does not necessarily need to rely on these markers to reach his goals while still being polite.

Thus, besides the stagnancy in the usage of politeness markers, the evolution of Minister Hacker's overall usage of politeness, related to the change of his character, should be apparent,

as proven by research informed by the theoretical framework based on Brown and Levinson's theory and the character research examining Hacker's thoughts and behaviour.

This thesis provides insights into Minister Hacker's politeness strategies within a specific framework. However, conducting further research that considers nonverbal cues, explores alternative politeness frameworks, and utilises a broader data set encompassing various communication contexts and comparisons with other politicians could offer a more comprehensive understanding of how Minister Hacker navigates the complexities of political discourse using politeness.

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Appendices

Sir Humphrey reassured me on that. 'Certainly not, Minister,' he replied. 'Not quite all.'

I decided to take charge at once. I sat behind my desk and to my dismay I found it had a swivel chair. I don't like swivel chairs. But Bernard immediately assured me that everything in the office can be changed at my command – furniture, decor, paintings, office routine. I am unquestionably the boss!

Bernard then told me that they have two types of chair in stock, to go with two kinds of Minister – 'One sort folds up instantly and the other sort goes round and round in circles.' On second thoughts, perhaps that was another of Bernard's little jokes.

I decided that the time had come to be blunt and to tell them what's what. 'Frankly,' I said, 'this Department has got to cut a great swathe through the whole of the stuffy Whitehall bureaucracy. We need a new broom. We are going to throw open the windows and let in a bit of fresh air. We are going to cut through the red tape and streamline this creaking old bureaucratic machine. We are going to have a clean sweep. There are far too many useless people just sitting behind desks.'

I became aware that *I* was actually sitting behind a desk, but I'm sure that they realised that I was not referring to myself.

I explained that we had to start by getting rid of people who just make work for each other. Sir Humphrey was very helpful, and suggested that I mean redeploy them – which, I suppose, is what I *do* mean. I certainly want to reduce overmanning, but I don't actually want to be responsible for putting people out of work.

But, by the clean sweep and the new broom, I mean that we must have more Open Government. We made election pledges about this, and I intend to keep them. We must take the nation into our confidence. I said all this to Humphrey and Bernard who, to my surprise, were wholeheartedly in favour of these ideas.

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cessing Appropriation Tables. 'They're unbelievable,' she said. 'Really evil.'

This was a definition of evil? Someone who doesn't return his blue form? 'Yes,' I said with heavy irony, 'I don't see how life still goes on in South Derbyshire.'

Sir Humphrey took my remark at face value. 'Exactly, Minister. They really are in a class of their own for incompetence.'

Still worried about my party problems, I enquired if they had no redeeming features. And my old friend Dr Cartwright piped up cheerfully. 'Well, it is interesting that . . .'

Sir Humphrey cut right across him. 'So if that's all right, Minister, we can take appropriate coercive action?'

Dr Cartwright had another try. 'Except that the Minister might . . .'

Again Sir Humphrey interrupted him. 'So can we take it you approve?' It was all beginning to look distinctly fishy.

I decided not to give an immediate answer. 'It's a difficult one. They're friends of ours.'

'They're no friends of good administration.'

I refused to be pressured. 'Give me twenty-four hours. I'll have to square the party organisation. Get the Chairman invited to a drinkies do at Number Ten or something. Soften the blow.'

And I insisted that we press on to the next item.

As the meeting broke up I noticed Dr Cartwright hovering, as if he wanted a private word with me. But Sir Humphrey took him by the arm and gently guided him away. 'I need your advice, Dick, if you could spare me a moment.' And they were gone.

Having thought about this overnight, I think I'll question Bernard more closely tomorrow.

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Frank spelled out the only alternative. 'If the order can't be cancelled, it must be published.'

Humphrey asked why. For a moment I couldn't quite think of the answer. But Frank saw it at once. 'Two reasons,' he explained. 'First, it's a manifesto commitment. Second, it'll make the last Minister look like a traitor.'

Two unanswerable reasons. I really am very grateful to Frank. And he is running rings around Sir Humphrey. Perhaps Sir Humphrey is not as clever as I first thought.

Humphrey seemed very anxious about the idea of publication. 'But surely,' he said to Frank, 'you're not suggesting that the Minister should make a positive reference to this confidential transaction in a speech?'

'A speech!' said Frank. 'Of course! That's the answer.'

This is a superb idea of Frank's. My speech to the Union of Office Employees will deal with this scandalous contract. And we will release it to the press in advance.

I said as much to Humphrey. Frank said, 'There. Who's running the country now?' I felt his glee was a little juvenile, but quite understandable.

Sir Humphrey seemed even more worried. I asked him for his advice, which was totally predictable. 'I think it might be regrettable if we upset the Americans.'

Predictable, and laughable. I pointed out to Humphrey, in no uncertain terms, that it is high time that someone jolted the Americans out of their commercial complacency. We should be thinking about the British poor, not the American rich!

Humphrey said, 'Minister, if that is your express wish the Department will back you. Up to the hilt.' This was very loyal. One must give credit where it's due.

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Then the door opened, and a desperately worried little face peeped around it.

It was Sir Humphrey Appleby. But not the Humphrey Appleby I knew. This was not a God bestriding the Department of Administrative Affairs like a colossus, this was a guilty ferret with shifty beady eyes.

'You wanted a word, Minister?' he said, still half-hidden behind the door.

I greeted him jovially. I invited him in, asked him to sit down and – rather regretfully – dismissed Bernard. Bernard made a hurried and undignified exit, his handkerchief to his mouth, and curious choking noises emanating from it.

Humphrey sat in front of me. I told him that I'd been thinking about this Scottish island scandal, which I found very worrying.

He made some dismissive remark, but I persisted. 'You see, it probably hasn't occurred to you but that official could still be in the Civil Service.'

'Most unlikely,' said Sir Humphrey, presumably in the hope that this would discourage me from trying to find out.

'Why? He could have been in his mid-twenties then. He'd be in his mid-fifties now,' I was enjoying myself thoroughly. 'Might even be a Permanent Secretary.'

He didn't know how to reply to that. 'I, er, I hardly think so,' he said, damning himself further.

I agreed, and said that I sincerely hoped that anyone who made a howler like that could *never* go on to be a Permanent Secretary. He nodded, but the expression on his face looked as though his teeth were being pulled out without an anaesthetic.

'But it was so long ago,' he said. 'We can't find out that sort of thing now.'

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And then I went for the jugular. This was the moment I'd been waiting for. Little did I dream, after he had humiliated me in front of Richard Cartwright, that I would be able to return the compliment so soon.

And with the special pleasure of using his own arguments on him.

'Of course we can find out,' I said. 'You were telling me that everything is minuted and full records are always kept in the Civil Service. And you were quite right. Well, legal documents concerning a current lease could not possibly have been thrown away.'

He stood. Panic was overcoming him. He made an emotional plea, the first time I can remember him doing such a thing. 'Minister, aren't we making too much of this? Possibly blighting a brilliant career because of a tiny slip thirty years ago. It's not such a lot of money wasted.'

I was incredulous. 'Forty million?'

'Well,' he argued passionately, 'that's not such a lot compared with Blue Streak, the TSR2, Trident, Concorde, high-rise council flats, British Steel, British Rail, British Leyland, Upper Clyde Ship Builders, the atomic power station programme, comprehensive schools, or the University of Essex.'

[*In those terms, his argument was of course perfectly reasonable –
Ed*.]

'I take your point,' I replied calmly. 'But it's still over a hundred times more than the official in question can have earned in his entire career.'

And then I had this wonderful idea. And I added: 'I want you to look into it and find out who it was, okay?'

Checkmate. He realised that there was no way out. Heavily, he sat down again, paused, and then told me that there was something that he thought I ought to know.

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Humphrey, Frank and I hurried down Whitehall past the Cenotaph (how very appropriate that seemed!). There was an icy wind blowing. We went straight to the House. I was to meet the PM behind the Speaker's chair.

[*This does not mean, literally, behind the chair. It is the area of the House where the PM and the Leader of the Opposition, the two Chief Whips, the Leader of the House and others, meet on neutral ground to arrange the business of the House. The PM's office is to be found there too – Ed*.]

We were kept waiting for some minutes outside the PM's room. Then Vic Gould, our Chief Whip, emerged. He came straight over to me.

'You're a real pain in the arse, aren't you?' Vic really does pride himself on his dreadful manners. 'The PM's going up the wall. Hitting the roof. You can't go around making speeches like that.'

'It's Open Government,' said Frank.

'Shut up, Weasel, who asked you?' retorted Vic. Rude bugger. Typical Chief Whip.

'Weisel,' said Frank with dignity.

I sprang to Frank's defence. 'He's right, Vic. It's Open Government. It's in our manifesto. One of our main planks. The PM believes in Open Government too.'

'Open, yes,' said Vic. 'But not gaping.' Very witty, I don't think! 'In politics,' Vic went on relentlessly, 'you've got to learn to say things with tact and finesse – you berk!'

I suppose he's got a point. I felt very sheepish, but partly because I didn't exactly enjoy being ignominiously ticked off in front of Humphrey and Frank.

'How long have you been a Minister?' Vic asked me. Bloody silly question. He knows perfectly well. He was just asking for effect.

'A week and a half,' I told him.

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He interrupted. 'I mean now.'

Now it was my turn to embarrass him a little. 'Okay. Go ahead.' I knew he wouldn't want to talk in front of one of his juniors.

'Upstairs, Minister, in your office if you please.'

'But I'm sure Richard doesn't mind.'

'Upstairs, Minister. I'm sure Dr Cartwright can spare you for a few moments.'

Cartwright missed the heavy sarcasm completely. 'Oh yes,' he said with an obliging smile.

Sir Humphrey opened the door. Having been made to feel like a naughty schoolboy, I marched out of Cartwright's office.

I wonder how he knew I was in that office. I know Bernard wouldn't have told him, so somebody must have seen me and reported it. I might as well be in the Soviet Union. Somehow I've got to get my freedom – but that involves winning the psychological war against Humphrey. And somehow, he always manages to make me feel guilty and unsure of myself.

If only I could find a chink in his armour. If I ever do, he's *had* it!

Anyway, that tense little sparring match in Cartwright's office wasn't the end of the matter. A few minutes later, back in my office after an icy silent journey up in the lift and along the endless corridors, the row came to a head.

He told me that I cannot just go around talking to people in the Department, and expressed the sincere hope that such a thing would not occur again.

I could scarcely believe my ears. I ordered him to explain himself.

'Minister, how can I advise you properly if I don't know who's saying what to whom? I must know what's going on. You simply cannot have completely private meetings. And what if you're told things that aren't true?'

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'If they're not true you can put me right.'

'But they may be true.'

'In *that* case . . .' I began triumphantly. He interrupted me, correcting himself hastily.

'That is, not *entirely* false. But misleading. Open to misinterpretation.'

I faced him with a straight question. 'The fact is, you're just trying to keep things from me, aren't you, Humphrey?'

He was indignant. 'Absolutely not, Minister. Records must be kept. You won't be here forever, nor will we. In years to come it may be vital to know what you were told. If Cartwright were moved tomorrow, how could we check on your information?'

On the face of it, that was a specious argument. 'Cartwright *isn't* being moved tomorrow,' I said.

'Oh, isn't he?' came the insolent response.

Bernard interrupted us. Alex Andrews of *The Mail* wanted to do an interview with me for tomorrow. I agreed of course. I told Bernard to stay with us and minute our conversation. Humphrey had given me *his* views on my private meeting with Cartwright. Now he was going to hear *mine*.

I began by repeating what Cartwright had told me: namely, that in his opinion – and the opinion of everyone who knows anything about local government – the South-West Derbyshire County Council is the most efficient in the country.

'Inefficient, I think he means, Minister.'

'Efficient, Humphrey. Effective. Economical. They're just not particularly interested in sending pieces of blue paper to Whitehall.'

Humphrey then explained something that I hadn't quite grasped yet. Apparently they *have* to return those sodding blue forms, it's a statutory requirement.

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Bernard said: 'We knew there'd be a Minister, Minister.' I told him not to start *that* again.

Sir Humphrey explained, 'Her Majesty likes the business of government to continue, even when there are no politicians around.'

'Isn't that very difficult?' I asked.

'Yes . . . and no,' said Humphrey. I must say, I can't see how it's possible to govern without the politicians. I'm afraid that Humphrey might have delusions of grandeur . . .

My diary was pretty frightening. Cabinet at 10 on Thursday. Nine Cabinet committees this week. A speech to the Law Institute tomorrow night, a deputation from the British Computer Association at 10.30 tomorrow morning, University Vice-Chancellors lunch on Wednesday (another speech), opening the National Conference of Public Employers on Thursday morning (another speech), and so on.

I noticed that everything in the diary is in pencil, so presumably much of it can be and will be changed. I pointed out to Bernard that I have various other commitments.

Bernard looked puzzled. 'Such as?' he asked.

'Well . . . I'm on four policy committees of the party, for a start.'

'I'm sure you won't be wanting to put party before country,' said Sir Humphrey. I had never looked at it in that light. Of course, he's absolutely right.

They were going to give me three more red boxes for tonight, by the way. When I jibbed at this a bit, Sir Humphrey explained that there are a lot of decisions to take and announcements to approve. He then tried something on, by saying: 'But we could, in fact, minimise the work so that you need only take the major policy decisions.'

I saw through that ploy at once. I insisted that *I* would take *all* the decisions and read *all* the relevant documents.

They've given me five boxes for tonight.

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November 17th

A fascinating day.

I raised the matter with Bernard as soon as I got to the office. I told him that my instincts told me that there is a good reason not to discipline South-West Derbyshire.

'Furthermore, Dr Cartwright seemed to be trying to tell me something. I think I'll drop in on him.'

'Oh, I wouldn't do that, Minister,' he said rather too hastily.

'Why not?'

He hesitated. 'Well, it is, er, understood that if Ministers need to know anything it will be brought to their attention. If they go out looking for information, they might, er they might . . .'

'Find it?'

'Yes.' He looked sheepish.

I remarked that it may be 'understood', but it's not understood by me.

Bernard obviously felt he had better explain further. 'Sir Humphrey does not take kindly to the idea of Ministers just dropping in on people. "Going walkabout", he calls it.'

I couldn't see anything wrong with that. I reminded him that the Queen does it.

He disagreed. 'I don't think she drops in on Under-Secretaries. Not in Sir Humphrey's department.'

I took a firm line. I asked Bernard for Dr Cartwright's room number.

He virtually stood to attention. 'I must formally advise you against this, Minister,' he said.

'Advice noted,' I said. 'What's his room number?'

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In other words, my speech didn't go out to the press after all. By an amazing stroke of good luck, it had *only* been sent to the Prime Minister's Private Office. The Duty Office at the DDA had never received instructions to send it out *before* it was cleared with the PM and the FCO. Because of the American reference.

This wonderfully fortunate oversight seems to have saved my bacon. Of course, I didn't let Humphrey see my great sense of relief. In fact, he apologised.

'The fault is entirely mine, Minister,' he said. 'This procedure for holding up press releases dates back to before the era of Open Government. I unaccountably omitted to rescind it. I do hope you will forgive this lapse.'

In the circumstances, I felt that the less said the better. I decided to be magnanimous. 'That's quite all right Humphrey,' I said, 'after all, we all make mistakes.'

'Yes Minister,' said Sir Humphrey.

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I expressed surprise that he hadn't told me. 'We don't have any secrets from each other, do we?' I asked him.

He didn't seem to realise that I had my tongue in my cheek. Nor did he give me an honest answer.

'That's for you to say, Minister.'

'Not entirely,' I replied.

Nonetheless, he was clearly in a state of humble gratitude and genuinely ready to creep. And now that he was so thoroughly softened up, I decided that this was the moment to offer my *quid pro quo*.

'So what do I do about this?' I asked. 'I've promised to let *The Mail* see all the papers. If I go back on my word I'll be roasted.' I looked him straight in the eye. 'On the other hand, I might be able to do something if I didn't have this other problem on my plate.'

He knew only too well what I was saying. He's done this to me often enough.

So, immediately alert, he asked me what the other problem was.

'Being roasted by the press for disciplining the most efficient council in Britain.'

He saw the point at once, and adjusted his position with commendable speed.

After only a momentary hesitation he told me that he'd been thinking about South-West Derbyshire, that obviously we can't change the law as such, but that it might be possible to show a little leniency.

We agreed that a private word to the Chief Executive would suffice for the moment, giving them a chance to mend their ways.

I agreed that this would be the right way to handle the council. But it still left one outstanding problem: how would I explain the missing papers to *The Mail*?

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