



Politeness Maxims Performed by Characters in “The Magician Elephant” Movie

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ABSTRACT: This study is aimed to observe the types of politeness maxim as well as the most dominant types used which are found in the movie transcript entitled “The Magician Elephant”. As a part of pragmatics, Leech’s theory about six types of politeness maxims was applied in this study. The data were collected using a documentation method and supported by a note taking technique which was taken in the form of utterances in the movie transcript. In addition, the data were analyzed by using a qualitative method, and showed descriptively in form of sentences and paragraphs. The formal method was also used due to the analysis applied in written words instead of numbers. The findings showed that there were 42 utterances of tact maxim, 17 utterances of generosity maxim, 31 utterances of approbation maxim, 14 utterances of modesty maxim, 18 utterances of agreement maxim, and 10 utterances of sympathy maxim.

KEYWORDS: Pragmatics, Politeness maxim, Utterances

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a basic need of human nature due to building a harmonious relationship and achieving their goals. As a creature who lives in society, people use language to express their ideas, information, even feelings towards other people during communication. In order to be able to communicate with other people, there are many things that need to be considered, mainly the way of how we produce our ideas in a proper manner. It can be done by showing respect towards our partner within conversation. In other words, the way people convey their ideas reflects how they can treat them and provide a comfortable atmosphere in creating effective conversation. Thus, it is very important to consider the use of language properly through the implementation of politeness.

Since people behave differently, the way people convey their intentions by using language could be performed in divergent ways too. In this case, the use of inappropriate language will easily cause misunderstanding and continue to cause lots of problems. Pertinent to that, it can be seen very clearly that polite expression needs to be learned, due to the many variations of values and culture that apply to each person. Based on Yule (1996:60) politeness is defined as people traits, etiquette and a social behavior in society construction. Thus, it is also known as one of the norms which was created in order to build acceptable actions and being a civilized human. As a part of linguistics, the term politeness is also well known in the pragmatic study namely politeness principles. According to Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015:248) the term pragmatics deals with how the listener can explore and interpret the meaning of utterances that was uttered by the speaker. Apart from the study, Leech (1983:131) stated that the politeness principle is an action of how people (Speaker) build a comfortable and supporting interaction with the recipient (Listener) through increasing benefits and reducing costs. It can be seen that this term deals with servility and pleasant expression from both parties during their conversation.

Further, Levinson (1983) revealed the concept of politeness principles has often been associated with the context of situations which consider some particular aspects that support both parties during the conversation. This theory was also expanded in scope of considering various perspectives, mainly interrelated with self-image. Brown and Levinson (1987) explained that the study of politeness deals with the concept of face which means both parties should be aware of how to show respect and understand their partner’s image in public during interaction. Moreover, Leech (1983) described the criteria of politeness into six features of the type maxims. Those are integrated and bond meaningful aspects that need to be considered to apply this principle. Since the phenomenon of expressing polite manners is often found on a daily basis, it is very interesting to be analyzed in deep discussion.

In order to observe this phenomena, human action and traits during interaction with others have crucial roles that need to be considered. The easiest way can be done in the form of analyzing conversation in the movies, due to many reflections of how people in real life conduct their conversation. The stories contained in the movies are also often inspired based on real life that is constructed in society. Based on the overview above, after considering the importance of these principles, the use of politeness principles in daily



life which is depicted in the movie needs to be explained. Thus, the animated movie entitled “The magician elephant” was chosen, since the story contains real behavior of humans which was reflected in society and provides many implementations of politeness maxims in the conversation. Pertinent to that, the research is aimed to determine the types of politeness maxims and the dominant used in the transcript of “The Magician Elephant” movie.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data was selected and taken in the form of a movie transcript entitled “The magician Elephant” which was downloaded on this link: <https://www.subtitlist.com/subtitle-download/the-magicians-elephant-2023-english-yify-483803>. It was considered as qualitative data since it was found in the form of words, phrases and sentences of utterances in the conversation movie. Further, based on Caulfield (2020) explained that textual data or written text which don't rely on numbers is categorized as qualitative data. This movie depicts the difference of social status among the characters and tells us about the main character's hope during his journey to find his sister. It was chosen since many utterances reflected the implementation of politeness on a daily basis, which is compatible with this study.

Regarding the method used to obtain the primary data in this article were documentation studies and supported by note-taking techniques. According to Creswell (2014:12) a documentation method refers to a strategy of collecting data which focuses in the form of books and texts. Thus, some steps were used in this article. First, downloading the movie and its transcript, then watching and at the same time reading the transcript. Second, taking a note and highlighting the utterances which contain the features of each type maxim. Last, the selected utterances were arranged into personal documents.

The selected data used a qualitative method to analyze each type maxim and supported by triangulation techniques in order to verify the accurate data. The following steps were applied such as, (1) identifying (to recognize and determine features of each type), (2) classifying (the selected data contains the similar features was classified based on its type maxim), (3) description (elaborate description in order to determine the context of situation in conversation), and (4) interpreting (explaining in details related to the meaning of each utterance) (Heale, 2013:98).

In presenting the data analysis, this article used a formal method which conveys description of the data in form of sentences and paragraphs (Sudaryanto, 1993:133). Apart from it, the analyzed data was explained descriptively in order to elaborate the point appropriately and is easy to understand. The data which contains features of type maxims was described and determined the speech situations within the selected conversation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the movie transcript, it was found six types of politeness maxim which was applied by Leech's theory. The data were analyzed based on the research aims such as to find the types and the dominant use of politeness principles that are performed in the movie transcript. Regarding Leech's theory (1983), there were 132 utterances containing all features of each maxim. In detail, there were 42 utterances of tact maxim, 17 utterances of generosity maxim, 31 utterances of approbation maxim, 14 utterances of modesty maxim, 18 utterances of agreement maxim, and 10 utterances of sympathy maxim. Pertinent to the results above, it can be concluded that the most frequent use in the utterances is the tact maxim due to many depictions of characters' actions to increase benefit in form of supporting, sharing, and helping other characters. While the least maxim was the sympathy maxim, because the story reflected the power of hope and faith which tend to show power and full of words of encouragement that made this maxim was rare to find. In more detail, there are also some examples that are found in the movie transcript. It can be seen through the explanation below.

The types of politeness maxims in the movie transcript

A. Tact Maxim

Data 1. (00:52:03 – 00:52:23)

Captain Matienne: Peter, what's wrong?

Peter: I have to fly tomorrow, but I have no idea how to do that. Vilna says that I'm going to die. Like I don't know! Like I don't already know. I have to fly tomorrow. I have to.

Captain Matienne's wife: **Come inside. You need to eat and we'll talk.**



The data above can be classified as tact maxim, since there are several features of this maxim that can be considered in the conversation. First, the character Captain Matienne and Captain Matienne's wife as the speaker or addresser who was offering help towards Peter. The conversation took place at the Sergeant's home. Since Captain Matienne and his wife are Peter's neighbors, they could hear Peter was grumbling at night. Immediately, Captain Matienne and his wife went outside and asked Peter about what had happened towards him at the time.

It can be seen that the utterance above reflected there was an action of increasing benefit and reducing cost towards the addressee which expressed in the utterance "Peter, what's wrong?". This utterance refers to the speakers aware of Peter's condition at the moment. Since they saw Peter was not in a good mood. In addition, they also offered him to come and have dinner together with them. It proved that they care about him and wanted to reduce his problems through the utterance "...and we'll talk" which also depicted that they wanted Peter to share his feelings and didn't burden himself with the sadness.

B. Generosity Maxim

Data 2. (00:30:26 - 00:30:33)

Captain Matienne: Peter, has any of your training included sabers?

Peter: No, sir. Broomsticks a bit.

Captain Matienne: Mm... **Meet me at the store, if you like. I'll try to teach you.**

The implementation of the generosity maxim was reflected in the data above. It can be seen that Captain Matienne as the speaker or addresser was offering his partner (Peter) to meet him and he would like to teach him about how to use a saber. As we were concerned the conversation took place at the palace, due to an event to see an elephant was found by a Magician. At the time, Peter obeyed the fortune teller's advice in order to follow the elephant as a clue to find his missing sister, and was curious about the existence of this elephant. Since Peter wanted to take the elephant out of the palace, the king gave him three challenges. The first challenge was to fight with the greatest soldier. Thus, the king gave Peter his saber as a weapon for self-defense. Therefore, Captain asked Peter whether he was able to use it or not. From the explanation above it was proved that the speaker cares about Peter and he wanted to help Peter voluntarily which is also considered as a generous act. It can be seen through the utterance "... Meet me at the store, if you like. I'll try to teach you" which reflected that the speaker gave beneficial expression towards Peter and tended to burden himself in order to teach Peter.

C. Approbation Maxim

Data 3. (00:32:05 - 00:32:19)

Peter: I'm going to practice on the mannequins.

Captain Matienne: **A good boy.**

Peter: Whoa! Whoa!

Captain Matienne: **Tireless and kind.**

The data above belongs to the approbation maxim, due to some compatible features contained in the utterance. As we shall see, the conversation took place at Captain's home. Since Peter and Captain were neighbors, both have quite close relationships. At the time, Peter was practicing how to fight using a saber with Captain. Since Captain knew the behavior of Peter and his perseverance in achieving his goals to find his sister, Captain was amazed by him and gave Peter some complimentary words. From the explanation above, it can be highlighted that Captain implemented the features of approbation through producing good words as a compliment towards Peter. It can be seen in the utterance "A good boy" and "Tireless and kind." Thus, the speaker has maximized praise towards the listener.

D. Modesty Maxim

Data 4. (01:08:53 - 01:08:55)

Sergeant Lutz: I'm a soldier, Peter. **What do I know about an infant?** We make these decisions in war, in life. We have only a moment. I could have saved you both. I didn't and I lied because I didn't want to cause you any more pain. Oh, I'm so sorry.

Peter: Sir... did you see her dead? My sister?

Sergeant Lutz: No.



The selected data above depicted the implementation of modesty maxim. The conversation above took place at Sergeant's home. As we were concerned, the speaker was Sergeant Lutz who was explaining the reason why he lied to Peter about the existence of his sister. As an orphan, Peter, who was curious about his family, wanted to find his sister. Since the Sergeant knew about what happened in the past, he expressed his feeling and told Peter about his condition honestly through being humble and felt as a common soldier. From the conversation above, it can be highlighted that there were features of the modesty maxim which can be seen as being humble and increasing dispraise towards himself. This feature can be proved by the expression contained in the utterance that said "What do I know about an infant?". In other words, this utterance also implied that the Sergeant knew nothing and had no skill to take care of an infant. Thus, this data belongs to the modesty maxim.

E. Agreement Maxim

Data 5. (01:22:55- 01:23:11)

Adele: Suster, Suster, Please... In my dream, I was meant to follow her.

Suster: I do not believe in dreams.

Adele: yes, you do.

Suster: Yes, I do, in fact, believe in dreams. **Oh, very well.**

Peter: Sir... did you see her dead? My sister?

Sergeant Lutz: No.

From the conversation above, it can be seen that there is reflection of the features agreement maxim found in the movie. Based on the movie, the conversation was in Baltese city. As the speaker or addresser, Adele was asking suster's agreement to go outside with her and see the elephant. At First, Suster was worried about unpleasant things that might happen and she didn't give Adele approval to go outside. But, Suster immediately changed her mind after Adele begged her permission to go outside. It can be seen very clearly in the utterance "Oh, very well." Since both parties maximized agreement between their conversation, it can be categorized as the feature of the agreement maxim.

F. Sympathy Maxim

Data 6. (01:30:00- 01:30:14)

The Magician: **I'm sorry for the harm I've caused you, madam. I beg your forgiveness.**

Madam LaVaughn: Oh, lilies! Thank you, my friend.

The data above belongs to the sympathy maxim, due to its compatibility with the feature of this maxim. The conversation took place in Baltese city, and it was depicted when Magician as the speaker expressed his feeling of guilt towards Madam LaVaughn. Because of his wrong spell in the past, it caused the elephant appeared and crushed her legs with Magician's tricks. Thus, at the time, He showed his sympathy and begged her to forgive him. Since the Magician realized his mistake in the past, he tried to express respect towards Madam's condition and her feelings at the moment. Therefore, this data was considered as a sympathy maxim due to all those features that were compatible with this maxim.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the previous discussion of politeness maxim, there were found all types maxim contained in the movie transcript. Further, the most often appeared was the tact maxim (42 utterances) which indicated that the characters tend to give benefits through offering help, sharing, and supporting each other. In contrast, the fewest maxim occurred was the sympathy maxim (10 utterances) due to the limited expression that performed sympathy in the movie.

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