



## **Maxim of Politeness Used in “The Grand Final of American Got Talent 2021”: A Pragmatics Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

This research entitled Maxim of Politeness Used in “The Grand Final of American Got Talent 2021”: A Pragmatics Analysis. This research focused on Leech’s theory maxim of politeness found in The Grand Final of American Got Talent. The purpose of this research is to identify, classify, analysis the types and the function of politeness in maxim used in the conversation in the event of The Grand Final of American Got Talent. The research method was conducted on qualitative methods. The data source was taken from the event of American Got Talent on youtube. The data are collected by listening method (simak) and note-taking technique (catat). In collecting data, the writer concentrates on the utterance which contains the maxim of politeness produced by the judges and participants of the grand final. Based on the result of the maxim of politeness in The Grand Final of American Got Talent 2021, it was found that six types and functions are maxims of politeness. There are tact maxims, generosity maxims, approbation maxims, modesty maxims, agreement maxims, and sympathy maxims. It is expected that this research will help the students and other readers in learning the pragmatic aspects, especially about the maxim of politeness.

**Keywords:** politeness principle, maxims, pragmatics

### **Introduction**

Language is a bridge of communication for humans as social beings need to interact so that all of us can live together and understand each other. Without language, people cannot do anything. Language as a tool of communication in our life has an important role. It is used for many purposes that are expanding socialization, expressing feelings, giving our minds with arguments, conveying our bit of knowledge, and maintaining a good relationship with each other. Language is a key to building communication and activity which expands socialization. People use language for communicating or making conversation. A term says that where there is communication or a conversation there is a language.

In communication, we must pay attention to the speech partner and the speech situation so that the purpose of communication can be conveyed properly. In daily conversation, being polite is very important to make the communication process between the speaker and hearer can run smoothly. If politeness in speech can be maintained properly, the speech will run as expected. The



speaker's communicative competence deals with pragmatics (Glaser in Manik & Hutagaol, 2015). Pragmatics according to Yule in Hilman et. al., (2019) is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener. Politeness is covered by pragmatics. In addition, Leech in Litsia & Makatita (2018) explained that politeness is related to pragmatics in understanding what speakers meant with their interaction in the utterance community.

Politeness in speech is very important because it can create effective communication between speakers and speech partners. Politeness has a meaning related to everyone's behavior or gestures, words, and attitude. This is in line with Markhamah and Sabardila in Widyaningsih et. al., (2018), that politeness in the language is the way the speaker in communicating so that the speech partner feels comfortable and does not feel pressured. The application of politeness in the language is very important in conversation because politeness can contribute to mutual understanding and create a harmonious relationship between communication participants. This means that politeness in language needs attention in the process of communication in the community.

According to Geoffrey Leech in Widya (2017), the previous study revealed that a communicative interaction requires the politeness principle. This principle of politeness relates to two participants of the conversation self and other. Geoffrey Leech in Olaniyi K (2017), put forward the politeness principle systematically which contained six maxims.

Based on the above, the writer is interested in examining modest speaking, because polite speech will facilitate maintaining the communication process. The writer used Geoffrey Leech's theory because it was complete and the language was also deeper. Geoffrey Leech divides the principle of politeness into 6 maxims namely the Tact Maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim.

The writer wants to research the event of The Grand Final of *American Got Talent* 2021. *American Got Talent* (often abbreviated as AGT) is a televised American talent show competition and is part of the global Got Talent franchise created by Simon Cowell. This event is chosen because it delivers the message of how to be polite in communication with the judges, environment, audience, and other society. The writer also wants to know deeper about the dialogue of the event through the maxim of politeness which could be researched to divide the dialogue into each maxim of politeness. The writer wants to figure out maxims that exist in The Grand Final of *American Got Talent* 2021 based on the Pragmatics of Politeness from the perspective of Geoffrey Leech.

According to Wijaya in E Mulyono (2016), pragmatics is distinct from grammar, which is the study of the internal structure of language. Pragmatics is a study of the use of language in communication. It means pragmatics is not a study of language grammar, but it is the study of language in communication which depends so much on context. It is a study that discusses a relationship between what the speaker said and the comprehension and meaning of the hearer. According to Levinson in Rosyidha et. al., (2019), pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning.



It means that pragmatics involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said. It requires a consideration of how speakers organize what they want to say by following who they are talking to, where, when, and under what circumstances. From the explanation of pragmatics given, pragmatics is the study of language, meaning, and context in communication. Pragmatics is very important because it gives people the skills to behave in society

Politeness is a very important principle in language use and communication. The application of politeness in the language is very important in conversation. When we use the language, both speaker and hearer language, we must obey certain rules so as not to make anyone feel offended, pressured, or even more, fall face Brown and Levinson (1987) in their book. Politeness becomes an aspect of society. It is used to recognize social culture within a community in a region. It means that politeness can also be regarded as some kind of social norm determined by the convention of the community.

According to Brown and Levinson in Jie & Feifei (2016), Politeness is figured as the polite way to give respond, command, offer, and many else in form of communication. It means a concept of polite social behavior in a good social interaction. A very important way to show how the speakers and hearers respect their community especially if know the position of the speaker and hearer was politeness.

To apply politeness in conversation Geoffrey Leech in Litsia & Makatita (2018), proposed the politeness principle as a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges to achieve better relationships in social contexts. Maxims is a principle of formula embodying the role of conduct, maxims are rather than regulation, and the maxim is a principle. So, the polite maxim can be said to be the principle or the role of the language used to be polite (Grice in Limset, 2016).

Saerle and Levinso in I. Arvianti (2012), states that the classifications are representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, and declarations. Representatives are speech acts the utterances that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. The utterances are produced based on the speaker's observation of certain things then followed by stating the fact or opinion based on the observation. Directives are speech acts that a speaker uses to get someone else to do something. These speech acts include requesting, questioning, commanding, orders, and suggesting.

Scollon and Scollon in I. Arvianti (2012), stated that three factors influence the politeness system: power, distance, and weight of the imposition. Power is an important role to emphasize the interpretation of the speaker's meaning in his or her conversation. Distance is the aspect that is relevant to the participant who should not be complicated with the power. The weight of the imposition is how people make the conversation more important on the topic to influence other people.

Leech Geoffrey in Liu (2017), defines the polite form as well as establishing and maintaining friends The politeness principles are divided into six maxims, as follows Tact Maxim, Generosity Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty Maxim, Agreement Maxim, and Sympathy



Maxim. The politeness of Tact Maxim is to minimize the cost to others and maximize the benefit to others. It is used in directives/imposition and commissives. A directive means an utterance that is used to command something directly or indirectly such as requesting, advising, or ordering. While a commissive means an utterance that is used to declare a promise or offer something. Next is the generosity maxim. the function of generosity maxim is to minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self. It is used in directives and commissives like the tact maxim, but it is self-centered.

Approbation Maxim has a function to minimize dispraise to others and maximize praise to others. It is used in expressive and assertive. The expressive is an utterance that is used to express the speaker's psychological attitude toward a situation such as thanking, congratulating, welcoming, apologizing, and praising. The assertive is an utterance commonly used to declare the true proposition that is expressed such as giving opinions, comments, suggestions, and complaints. While modesty maxim is to minimize praise of self and maximize dispraise of self. It is also expressed by expressive and assertive utterances like the approbation maxim.

Agreement Maxim has a function to minimize disagreement between self and others and maximize agreement between self and others. It is expressed in representatives. The hearer should totally or partially show agreement with the speaker. If he shows disagreement, his speech would be impolite. And the last is the sympathy Maxim which has the function to minimize antipathy between self and others and maximize sympathy between self and others. It is also expressed through representatives. For example, if one lost somebody and the hearer felt sorry for that, in this case, he is showing sympathy to the speaker and the utterances would employ the sympathy maxim.

## Methodology

The research method was conducted on qualitative methods. The data source was taken from the event of *American Got Talent* on youtube. The data are collected by listening method (*simak*) and note-taking technique (*catat*). In collecting data, the writer concentrates on the utterance which contains the maxim of politeness produced by the judges and participants of the grand final.

The method of data collection is the most important step in research. The writer is a method that can attempt the analysis of data (Sudaryanto in Lestari & Yuniawan, 2020). In this research, the writer did not directly face the participants while collecting the data, but the writer observed the utterances and the context in the conversation that was used in The Grand Final of *American Got Talent* on YouTube. In collecting the data, the researcher uses Metode Simak from (Mushun in Wulandari et. al., 2018). Metode Simak is a research method that requires close attention to the use of language. Furthermore, to complete the use of Metode Simak researcher uses Teknik Catat as a continuation method, Teknik Catat is lone by taking notes of the required data to conduct research.

After the data is collected, every writer needs the data to solve the problem. According to Mahsun in Kurniadi et. al., (2016), data analysis techniques are efforts made to classify data. This



method is part of the analysis process where the collected data is then processed to produce data conclusions according to the problem in the study.

## Findings and Discussion

In this research, the writer classified the data based on types of politeness maxim. The data found was qualitative data in the form of politeness maxims, then analyzed in the content of the analysis. This research is emphasized pragmatics, the use of language in the context of the speaker. In this research, the data was collected from The Grand Final of *American Got Talent* 2021. The maxims included the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim.

### a. Tact Maxim

Data 1 (00: 35: 50)

Dustin : *We actually have a surprise for you. Can you stand right here?*

Matt : *you're gonna love this.*

Rico : *That is exactly what I wanted.*

In the conversation above which Dustin observes maxim generosity because he maximizes the benefit to the hearer (Rico). In addition, Dustin minimizes the cost to Rico, Dustin uses indirect utterances to be more polite. The utterance is *can you stand right here?*. If the hearer has the potential to get a cost (because he has to do something), the utterance to be more polite. The speech act in which Dustin observed the tact maxim is the question act because the hearer (Rico) makes the choice.

### b. Generosity Maxim

Data 1 (00: 37: 30)

Matt : *Heidi, I'll give this to you.*

Heidi : *Thank you.*

This dialogue is fit into Generosity Maxim. On the stage, when Matt was doing magic Matt gave a teddy bear doll to Heidi. Matt's utterance explains that he minimizes the benefit to himself because he gives a teddy bear doll to Heidi and he maximizes the cost to himself which means Matt doesn't take any advantage of Heidi. The speech act in which Matt observed a generosity maxim is an offering act because the utterance *I'll give this to you* has the illocution that the speaker is offering something to the hearer.

Data 2 (00: 00:11)

Howie : *Whatever you need I am here for you. Okay!*



In the utterance, Howie obeys the tact maxim. Howie's utterance explains that he maximizes cost and minimizes the benefit to himself because he must give her time to help Josh if Josh needs something. The speech act in which Howie observed a generosity maxim is an offering act because the utterance whatever you need I am here for you has the illocution that the speaker is offering something for the hearer.

### c. Approbation Maxim

Data 1 (00: 03: 09)

Sofia : *Incredible that was best your performances, you got here to autumn, I mean you are super creative, you are beautiful and I mean the work that you put into this, and today you came up with a story which made it different and you come so close to us I thought something was going to happen and I didn't see anything, it was great.*

Data 2 (00: 03: 45)

Simon : *Absolutely amazing and I will say this I'm not an expert but in this kind of thing you do the quick change thing I genuinely do believe you are the best in the world.*  
Kyle : *Thank you so much.*

Data 3 (00: 03: 58)

Howie : *The best that I have ever seen is the best in the world. This was your best performance.*

In utterances (data 1, 2, and 3), they obey the approbation maxim, because they love Kyle's performance. Lea Kyle is a French magician who performs quick change. Lea Kyle's final performance on the stage consisted of performing a quick-change magic act. The judge all gave her standing ovations. In Sofia's utterance, it is seen that in utterance (data 1), she appreciates the performance in which Kyle shows the magic of fashion is so great. The utterance was amazing, her performance was the best, she was super creative, and she was beautiful. That was great. (Data 2) In the utterance above, Simon's utterance observed the approbation maxim because he minimizes dispraise of Kyle and maximizes praise of Kyle. He gives a good comment to Kyle after she showed her performance. Simon expresses her as the best quick-change artist in the world. (Data 3) Howie gives the opinion this was your best performance. He expresses his praise to Kyle and gives a good comment too. The speech act in which the judges observed an approbation maxim is expressive because the utterance has the illocution that the speakers are expressing their praise for the hearer.

Data 4 (00: 02: 31)

Terry : *Briggs you are a big success.*



In utterance, Terry gave approbation to Briggs after Briggs and Brooke sang on the stage. Briggs Bishop is an American singer. In the finale, Brooke Simpson reprised her final performance of “White Flag” with Bishop Briggs. After they performed on the stage, first, Terry expressed his praise for Bishop Briggs because she is one of the most successful artists. The utterance is Briggs you are a big success.

#### **d. Modesty Maxim**

Data 1 (00: 52: 09)

Dustin : *I never believed that I could make magic my career.*

In Dustin’s utterance above, he minimizes the expression of praise of himself or maximizes the expression of dispraise of himself. Before he shows his magic on the stage, he told about his life and he thought that he never believed that he can make magic her career because sometimes he was wrong when did her magic. In his utterance, he used the modesty maxim.

#### **e. Agreement Maxim**

Data 1 (00: 01: 30)

Dustin : *Thank you for surprising Sofia.*

Matt : *I think she was surprised*

Dustin : *I think so too.*

The conversation in which Dustin observed maxim agreement. The utterance above is maximizing agreement and minimizing disagreement between self and others. The utterance means that Dustin agreed with Matt’s utterance. The utterance is I think so too. The speech act in which the characters observed the agreement maxim is the assertive act.

#### **f. Sympathy Maxim**

Data 1 (00: 00: 54)

Jane : *I’ve been dealing with cancer*

Howie : *Oh, sorry.*

The utterance above shows that Howie minimizes antipathy and maximizes sympathy between himself and Jane. Howie gives his sympathy to Jane because Jane has cancer and he doesn't know before.

### **Functions of Maxim Politeness**

In this research, the writer found the functions of types of politeness maxims. The maxims included the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim.



## a. Tact Maxim

Data 1 (00: 35: 50)

Dustin : *we actually have a surprise for you. Can you stand right here?*

Matt : *you're gonna love this*

Rico : *That is exactly what I wanted.*

The utterance in which the characters observed the function of tact maxim which minimizes cost to the hearer and maximizes the benefit to the hearer.

## b. Generosity Maxim

Data 1 (00: 37: 30)

Matt : *Heidi, I'll give this to you.*

Heidi : *Thank you.*

In the conversation above, Matt Gave a teddy bear doll to Heidi when they performed. Matt's utterance explained the function of the generosity maxim. On the stage, when Matt was doing magic Matt gave a teddy bear doll to Heidi.

Data 2 (00: 00:11)

Howie : *Whatever you need I am here for you.Okay!*

In the utterances above, the function is to minimize the benefit to self and maximize the cost to self. In his utterance, he minimizes the benefit and maximizes the cost to himself. It means, he will give time to help Josh if he needs something. It is an offering act.

## c. Approbation Maxim

Data 1 (00: 03: 09)

Sofia : *Incredible That was the best performance, you got here to autumn, I mean you are super creative, you are beautiful and I mean the work that you put into this, and today you came up with a story which made it different and you come so close to us I thought something was going to happen and I didn't see anything was great.*

Data 2 (00: 03: 45)

Simon : *Absolutely amazing and I will say this I'm not an expert but in this kind of thing you do the quick change thing I genuinely do believe you are the best in the world.*

Kyle : *Thank you so much*

Data 3 (00: 03: 58)



Howie : *The best that I have ever seen the best in the world. This way you have the best performance.*

The conversation above (data 1, 2, and 3), explained the function of the approbation maxim which they are minimizing dispraise of Kyle Lea as well as maximizing the praise of Kyle. They loved her performance. In their utterances, they expressed their praise to Kyle Lea (data 1) Sofia gave approbation to Kyle Lea because her performance was the best. (Data 2) Simon commented on the performance complimentarily that she was absolutely amazing and he expressed that Kyle was the best in the world. (Data 3) Howie gave his opinion that she was amazing. They are observing the maxim of approbation in the politeness principle.

Data 4 (00: 02: 31)

Terry : *Briggs you are a big success.*

In utterance, Terry gives approbation to Brigger. He liked their performance. He said that she a big success because she is a famous artist. He performs the approbation maxim. Its function is to maximize the praise of others or minimize dispraise of others.

#### **d. Modesty Maxim**

Data 1 (00: 52: 09)

Dustin : *I never believed that I could make magic my career.*

Dustin's utterance above showed the function of the modesty maxim, which is minimizing praise or maximizing dispraise of self. Dustin Travella is a magician shrewd and extraordinaire. Dustin maximizes self-dispraise by saying that he never believes that he can make magic his career. The speech act in which the character observed the function of modesty maxim.

#### **e. Agreement Maxim**

Data 1 (00: 01: 30)

Dustin : *Thank you for surprising Sofia.*

Matt : *I think she was surprised*

Dustin : *I think so too.*

In the conversation above, Dustin's utterance observed the agreement maxim. In his utterance explained that he agreed with what Matt said. The function of this utterance is maximizing agreement and minimizing disagreements between self and others. It is expressed in representatives. Dustin should totally or partially show agreement with Matt.

#### **f. Sympathy Maxim**

Data 1 (00: 00: 54)



Jane : *I've been dealing with cancer*

Howie : *Oh, sorry.*

In the Utterance above, Howie used the sympathy maxim which functions to minimize antipathy between self and others and maximize sympathy between self and others. Howie gives his sympathy to Jane because Jane has cancer and he doesn't know before.

## Conclusion

Based on the result of the politeness principle, the writer found the use politeness principle in the Grand Final of American Got Talent 2021 politeness principles found in the event. There are tact maxims, generosity maxims, approbation maxims, modesty maxims, agreement maxims, and sympathy maxims. Based on the above analysis the writer found functions of maxim politeness in conversation In the Grand Final of American Got Talent 2021 found in this research. There is one utterance in the tact maxim which function for speakers to minimize the cost to others and maximize the benefit to others. One utterance in the generosity maxim function is to minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self. Four utterances in the approbation maxim function to minimize dispraise to others and maximize praise to others. One utterance in the modesty maxim function to minimize praise of self and maximize dispraise of self. One utterance in the agreement maxim function to minimize disagreement between self and other and maximize agreement between self and other and the last four utterances in the sympathy maxim function to minimize antipathy between self and other, and maximize sympathy between self and other.

From the above, analysis it can be concluded that the use of utterances manners in a very important conversation. This is to create a comfortable atmosphere in the conversation so that both the speaker and the hearer no one feel offended or there was a misunderstanding in improved communications.

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