

The Observation of Leech’s Politeness Maxims in Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House”: A Sociopragmatic Analysis

Fouad Rashid Omar

Ph.D. Candidate, English Language Teaching Department, Cyprus International University, Nicosia, Cyprus

fuadharin85@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explain the sorts of Leech’s politeness maxims used by the characters in the play “A Doll’s House” by Henrik Ibsen. A qualitative method is used for analyzing the data whose source is the play “A Doll’s House”. The utterances used by the characters in “A Doll’s House” play are the data of the study. The data are gathered using documentation. After reading the drama certain data related to the observance of the politeness maxims are extracted and then analyzed in terms of Leech’s maxims; tact maxim, generosity maxim, modesty maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy. It is also found that the characters of the play have observed the maxim of approbation more than the others since the theme of the play deals with humans and the characters use it for encouraging the other characters’ actions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is very important in human lives and it is also considered as a societal phenomenon. The key goal of using language is to communicate with people and understand. While an individual speaking, he or she intends a specific purpose and tries to convey a message. Language is used for various purposes such as expressing

feelings, asking for help, apologizing, etc. Indeed, people use language in a variety of ways, for example, informational, directive, aesthetic, expressive, and phatic. Language is a part of society and it differs in terms of social situations, individuals, and their attitudes. To find the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence, two aspects of linguistics namely semantics and pragmatics are generally involved. Semantics involves the study of meaning and it deals with only literal meaning. While, pragmatics studies the hidden meaning of an utterance, and it also studies language in its context with all the ambiguities. Pragmatics encompasses many different subjects such as speech act, deixis, politeness, conversational implicature, etc. The present study mainly focuses on politeness and Leech's politeness principles detected in Ibsen's play "A Doll's House". Specifically, the study examines how Leech's maxims are used in the play.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. What is Pragmatics in linguistics?

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics. It has been given many different definitions by linguists. Compared to phonetics, syntax, semantics, and morphology, pragmatics is relatively a new discipline in the area of linguistics. In the 1960s, pragmatics was not considered as a main field of linguistics and it covered only the issues which were irrelevant to linguistics (Leech, 1983). Before 1970, the concept of language use, functions of language, and context obtained too much interest among linguists such as Wittgenstein (1953), Austin (1962), Searle (1969), and Grice (1968). Thus, pragmatics was recognized as an area of linguistics. Today, pragmatics has become one of the most debated and controversial topics in the realm of linguistics. As mentioned above, pragmatics is defined in a variety of ways, for example, Ariel (2010) argues that the first definition of pragmatics dates back to Morris (1938) who differentiates pragmatics from grammar and semantics. Levinson (1983) denotes two principles of pragmatics; the first principle is that pragmatics is only related to the principles of language use and there is no relation with linguistic structure. The second principle which is proposed by Chomsky (1965), examines that pragmatics is only related to the performance principles of how language is used.

Levinson (1983) states that pragmatics is “the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized, or encoded in the structure of a language”. Levinson’s definition is solely concerned with some elements of pragmatics such as speech acts, deixis, presupposition. It means that pragmatics does not explain the aspects of language use, specifically, conversational implicatures. Furthermore, Leech (1983) defines pragmatics as “the study of the meaning of an utterance in a situation”. It implies that pragmatics describes how it is concerned with the meaning. Gazdar (1979) asserts that “pragmatics has its topics of those aspects of the meaning of utterances which accounted for by straightforward reference to the truth conditions of a sentence uttered. Therefore, pragmatics = Meaning – Truth Condition”. The above definition does not give a clear understanding of pragmatics and it also makes semantics more puzzling. Yule (2017) defines pragmatics as “the study of invisible meaning, or how we recognize what is meant even when it is not actually said or written”. This implies that the hearer should be very smart in order not only to understand the linguistic content of utterance but also to grasp the speaker’s intention and the meaning beyond what is communicated.

2.2. Politeness

Politeness is one of the most important social restrictions of human interaction that regulates the communicative consideration of others’ feelings among participants. It is seen as a sign of human civilization, and it is the most effective policy for restraining interpersonal relationships in human communication. The Principle of Politeness was proposed by S. Levinson and P. Brown, and then it was specified by Geoffrey Leech. The Politeness Principle plays a great role in encouraging the speaker to express himself or herself politely and honestly. The other functions of the politeness principle are to make both sides feel respected and to make a good impression on the other. Generally, the principle of politeness can be established from two respects; to maximize expressing polite beliefs as well as to minimize expressing impolite beliefs. Leech (1983) states that politeness is a “type of behavior that generates and preserves a sense of comity within the social group, which depends on the ability of the participants how to participate in social interaction and harmonize an atmosphere so that the communication works smoothly”.

According to Leech (1983), two participants of the conversation (1) “self” which is considered as the speaker, and (2) “other” which is the hearer or listener, are involved in the standards of politeness. The principles of politeness break down into six main maxims which are “tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim”.

a. Tact maxim

This maxim states: "Minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other." Tact is the first maxim of the principles of politeness. The participants of the conversation need to minimize the “cost” to the hearer and simultaneously maximize the “benefit” to the hearer. This maxim is usually created by “directive and commissive utterances”. For example:

- “Could I have a word with you for a few moments?”
- “Can I wrap up this phone call, please?”

b. Generosity maxim

This maxim states: "Minimize the expression of beliefs that express or imply benefit to self; maximize the expression of beliefs that express or imply cost to self". Unlike the tact maxim that focuses on the hearer, “the generosity maxim focuses on the speaker and it is “self” oriented”. For example:

- “I can lend you my car”.
- “You must come and have dinner with us”.

c. Approbation maxim

This maxim says: "Minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other; maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of other”. The speaker should minimize dispraise to the hearer and maximize praise to the hearer so that the

approbation maxim can be achieved. The speaker should be very careful not to hurt the hearer. For example:

- “You’re such a kind woman”.
- “Your performance was very nice but you can do it better”.

d. Modesty maxim

According to the modesty maxim, the speaker must “Minimize the expression of praise of self; maximize the expression of dispraise of self”. This means that the speaker has to minimize praise of himself and maximize dispraise of himself. For example:

- “Oh my God! How idiot I’m. I forgot to answer the last question in the exam.”
- “A: Thanks a lot for your help!”

“B: I will be at your service every time.”

e. Agreement maxim

This maxim explains that the speaker must “Minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other; maximize the expression of the agreement between self and other”. It implies that the participants of the conversation need to minimize a disagreement and increase an agreement so that this maxim can occur. For example:

“A: I don't want my daughter to do this, I want her to do that.”

“B: Yes, but ma'am, I thought we resolved this already on your last visit.”

f. Sympathy maxim

As for this maxim, the speaker must “minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between the self and other”. For achieving this maxim, the participants should minimize antipathy and maximize sympathy between themselves.

Some speech acts like condolences, commiseration, and congratulation are involved in the sympathy maxim. For example:

- “I’m so sorry to hear about mother.”

2.3. Relevant Studies

Some studies have been conducted on a pragmatic analysis of Leech’s maxim. For instance, Nurdianingsih (2006) carried out a study entitled “An analysis of tact and approbation maxims based on Leech’s politeness principles in the movie *Maid in Manhattan*”. The principles of Leech’s politeness were used as a major means for analyzing the characters’ utterances of the movies. The results of the study revealed that 10 tact maxims and 7 approbation maxims were used by the movie actors. Another study was done by Wijayanto (2009) under the title of “An Analysis on Politeness Principle in the Expressive Act in the Movie of *Pearl Harbor*”. The study aimed at “analyze the kind of expressive utterances, the intention of expressive utterance, and classify the politeness principle of expressive”. The findings of the study revealed that “10 types of the expressive act, 10 intentions of expressive utterance, and 5 politeness pattern were used in the *Pearl Harbor* movie”.

Moreover, Fitri Nur Sholaikah (2011) carried out a study entitled “A Study of Politeness Strategies Used by the Main Characters in Persuasion Movie”. The purpose of the study was to analyze the politeness strategies used by the main characters. The findings showed that all six maxims of Leech’s politeness were observed by the main characters in Persuasion movie. Lestari (2013) also conducted a study entitled “A pragmatic analysis of Leech’s maxim found in *The Princess and The Frog* movie script”. The purpose of the study was to pragmatically analyze the types of Leech’s maxims that were used and flouted by the characters in both “*The Princess and Frog*” movies. The findings found that all six maxims observed by the characters, and three maxims namely; “tact maxim, generosity maxim, and agreement maxim” were flouted by the characters. Maharani (2017) conducted a study on the “Politeness maxim of main characters in *Secret Forgiveness* play”. The main aim of the study was to analyze the maxims of Leech’s Politeness used by the characters in *Secret Foreign* play. The results revealed that the main characters “*Kristen and Kami*” used all kinds of maxims

in their conversation. The approbation maxim and agreement were mostly used by the characters.

3. THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1. Research Question

The present study aims to find out the answer to the following question:

What kind of Leech's politeness principle is used in the conversations of A Doll's House play?

3.2. Methodology

In this study, a descriptive qualitative method is used for analyzing the data. According to Surakhmad (1994), a descriptive study is "a type of research that employs the techniques of searching, collecting, classifying, and then analyzing the data". The data of the study are the utterances of the play "A Doll's House" which is written by Henrik Ibsen in 1879. The researcher used documentation as the main means to gather the data. The purpose of the study is to pragmatically analyze "Leech's maxims of the politeness principle" used in "A Doll's House" play.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Tact Maxim

Data 1:

"Krogstad: Your father died on the 19th of September. But, look here; your father dated his signature on the 2nd of October. It is a discrepancy, isn't it? (Nora is silent.) Can you explain it to me? (Nora is still silent)...."

"Nora: (after a short pause, throws her head up and looks defiantly at him.) No, it was not. It was that wrote Papa's name." (Act 1)

In this utterance, Krogstad uses tact maxim that refers to "minimize the cost to other and maximize the benefit to other". Krogstad tries to be more polite with no intention to force Nora for giving him the explanation. He gives Nora the flexibility to answer the question by using an auxiliary verb (can).

Data 2:

“Helmer (going to into the hall): Who is it?”

“Rank (outside): It is I. May I come in for a moment?” (Act 3)

To be polite, Rank asks Helmer’s permission in order to enter his room by using the modal auxiliary verb (may). Rank gives the interlocutor the flexibility to let him in. Thus, the request is purposed “to minimize the cost to other and maximize the benefit to the hearer” and it can be classified as tact maxim.

4.2. Generosity Maxim

Data 3:

“Nora: Hide the Christmas Tree carefully, Helen. Be sure the children do not see it till this evening, when it is dressed. (to the PORTER, taking out her purse.) How much?”

“Porter: six pence.”

“Nora: There is a shilling. No, keep the change.” (Act 1)

In this utterance, Nora uses the generosity maxim since she minimizes the benefit to herself and maximizes the cost to herself. Nora maximizes the cost of the utterance to herself and maximizes the benefit to the listener, Porter.

Data 4:

“Nora: Now you must read your letters, Torvald.”

“Helmer: No, no; not tonight. I want to be with you, my darling wife.” (Act 3)

Helmer performs the generosity maxim in this utterance. It can be obvious from Helmer’s statement that tells about his willingness to be with his wife all night instead of reading his letters. It means that Helmer maximizes the cost to himself by dedicating himself to his wife and minimizes the benefit to himself by leaving his work for the sake of his wife, Nora.

4.3. Approbation Maxim

Data 5:

“Mrs. Linda: How kind you are, Nora, to be so anxious to help me!” (Act 1)

In this utterance, the approbation maxim is used by Mrs. Linda. She minimizes the dispraise of others and maximizes praise of others. Mrs. Linda tries to praise Nora for helping her with anxiety and what she has been through in hard times.

Data 6:

“Nurse: I am sure there will be no one at the ball so charming as you, ma’am.”

(Act 2)

The statement of Nurse to Nora is classified as the use of approbation maxim because she tries to pay Nora a compliment on her beauty by saying that no one as charming as her. Thus, the Nurse minimizes the dispraise of others and maximizes praise of other.

4.4. Modesty Maxim

Data 7:

“Nora: it was very silly of me to want to do that.” (Act 1)

This utterance is regarded as the modesty maxim as she minimizes praise of herself and maximizes dispraise of herself. Nora maximizes dispraise of herself saying that she is very silly.

Data 8:

“Nora:What a thoughtless creature I am, chattering away like this.” (Act 1)

According to the statement above, Nora tries to take herself down to earth when she describes herself as a thoughtless creature. In this situation, she minimizes praise of herself and maximizes dispraise of herself.

4.5. Agreement Maxim

Data 9:

“Nora:Let us do as you suggest, Torvald, and then I shall have time to think what I am most in want of. That is a very sensible plan, isn't it?”

“Helmer: Indeed it is.”

(Act 1)

In this utterance, Nora agrees with Helmer’s suggestion by stating “Let us do as you suggest”. According to this statement, Nora performs the agreement maxim because she minimizes the disagreement between herself and Helmer, and she also maximizes the agreement between herself and Helmer.

Data 10:

“Nurse: You see, they are so accustomed to have their mamma with them.”

“Nora: Yes, but, Nurse, I shall not be able to be so much with them now as I was before.”

(Act 2)

Nora performs the politeness principle, agreement maxim, because she agrees with Nurses’ statement by saying “the children are so accustomed to have their mamma with them”. Nora also minimizes the expression of disagreement between herself and Nurse by saying “but, Nurse, I shall not be able to be so much with them now as I was before”.

4.6. Sympathy Maxim

Data 11:

“Nora: So you are quite alone. How dreadfully sad that must be.” (Act 1)

In the utterance above, Nora expresses her sympathy for what Mrs. Linda has been through, especially, when she is divorced and alone now. In this context, the expression of “How dreadfully sad that must be” is used to express a condolence expression for misfortune events. It means that Nora minimizes antipathy between herself and Mrs. Linda, and she also maximizes sympathy between herself and Mrs. Linda so her utterance can be classified as the use of sympathy maxim.

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude, all six maxims Leech’s politeness “tact maxim, generosity maxim, modesty maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim” are used by the characters in the play “A Doll’s House”. The maxim of approbation is more frequent than the others as the characters in the play try to avoid the actions of

mockery, disrespect, and arrogance among themselves. Thus, it is related to politeness principles by highlighting praise and dispraise of others. Even though Nora is from high class but she uses this maxim more than all the other characters in the play because she is the protagonist and the politest actor in the play. Because of the limited space, all of the principles of politeness in the play “A Doll’s House” are not covered. Thus, this offers a better opportunity to other researchers concerned with pragmatics particularly the principles of politeness to carry out a study focusing on the same topic.

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چاودئيريكردنى بنه ماكانى به ئه ده بيوون - ليچ له شانوى ئيبسين "خانوى بوكه له": روونكردنه وه كه كومه لايه تى پراگماتيكي

پوخته:

مه بهست له م ليكولينه وه به روونكردنه وهى جووره كانى ليچ له بنه ماكانى ئه ده به كه له لايه ن كاره كته ره كانى ناو شانوى "خانوى بوكه ل" كه له لايه ن هينريك ئيبسين نووسراوه تيبينى ده كرئت . شيوازى جوورى بو كۆكردنه وهى داتاكان كه سه رچاوه كهى شانوى "خانوى بوكه ل" ه به كاره يئاوه . وته ته واوه كانى كارا كته ره كانى شانوى "خانوى بوكه ل" داتاي توؤيئينه وه كه ن. داتا كۆكراوه كان دۆكيومينت كراون. دواي كۆكردنه وهى داتاكان، داتاكان بو شهش به رزترين بنه ماي ئه ده ب پؤلين كراون. ده ره نجامه كانى ليكولينه وه كه ئه وه ده رده خه ن كه هه ر شهش بنه ماكانى به ئه ده بيوون له لايه ن كارا كته ره كانى شانوه كه به كاره يئيراون، واته بنه ماي قسه زانى و بنه ماي به خشنده يى و بنه ماي بي فيزى، و بنه ماي ته بايى و بنه ماي هاوسؤزى به كاره يئيراون. كارا كته ره كانى شانويه كه ماكسيمى ستايشكردن له زياتر هه موويان به كاره يئاوه چونكه بابته تى شانويه كه په يوه سته به مرؤفه كان.

مراقبة قواعد التأديب- لیتش فی المسرحية ابسن "بيت الدمية": تحليل اجتماعي براغماتي

الملخص:

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تحليل اقوال ممثلين مسرحية "بيت الدمية" التي كتبت من قبل (هنريك ابسين) حسب قواعد (ليتش) سنة. استخدمت طريقة نوعية لتحليل البيانات و هي وصف و جمع البيانات باستخدام الوثائق و تصنيفها المأخوذة من مصدرها وهي مسرحية "بيت الدمية" و استطيع القول بانه اقوال و اراء الممثلين هي بالضبط بيانات هذه الدراسة. وفي الختام يتبين نتاج هذه الدراسة بأن جميع قواعد (ليتش) ظهرت في هذه الدراسة و هي: اللباقة القول و السخاء و التواضع و الاستحسان و الاتفاقية و التعاطف المأثورة و الثناء. واكثر هذه القواعد استخداما في هذه المسرحية هي الثناء على الآخرين لتشجيع الآخرين على حسن أفعالهم.