

The Maxim of Politeness in The Squid Game Film Series: A Pragmatic Study

¹Rafif Syauqi Firdaus, ²Ervina CM Simatupang

^{1,2} Universitas Widyatama Bandung, Indonesia

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the form of speech to the realization of speech acts, the maxim of politeness according to Geoffrey Leech contained in the film of the Squid Game. This type of research is descriptive qualitative research. Data in This research is a description that is used as the object of study; every word, and sentences in an interaction between the actors in the film of the committee as a form of maxim of politeness realization. Collection of the data in this research was carried out by recording technique and note-taking technique. The results of the research on the maxim of politeness in the Squid Game film shows that the number of utterances complies with Leech's maxim of politeness. Politeness contained in the film is also accompanied by the scale of politeness to get the matched analysis. This method is carried out in five stages, namely the tapping technique, then continued with the technique of listening to free, engaging in conversation, then continued with the note-taking technique. After getting the next data, the researcher recorded the results of politeness findings contained in the dialogue, and at the last stage the researcher concludes the results of the overall data. The results showed that of the 30 data (scenes) contained in the film Squid Game and those data that adheres to the principle of politeness Leech consist of tact maxim 8 data, maxim of generosity 3 data, approbation maxim is 10 data, modesty maxim is 6 data and maxim of sympathy 3 data.

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Corresponding Email

Ervina CM Simatupang :

ervina.simatupang@widyatama.ac.id

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Introduction

In the term of communication, especially in conversation, when the speakers' purpose is only to convey information, obviously, direct and indirect speech forms will be used. Thus the speech can be well received and understood by the speech partner. However, in reality, communicating is not only meant to convey meaning. The speaker has another goal, to maintain the social relations of the speaker and the speech partner by 'rescuing' or 'guarding' the face by choosing language politeness strategies and avoiding acts of 'threatening' the face or violations of language politeness. The goal is to prevent conflicts or disputes and to create a harmonious relationship. Politeness refers to a norm or rule of behavior that is determined and mutually agreed upon by a certain community which is influenced by the procedures, customs, or habits that apply in society. Politeness is influenced by the context and the role involved in the communication itself. Context relates to the place, time, or atmosphere behind which communication occurs. The role is related to the age, position, or social status of the speaker and speech partner during the communication process.

Politeness leads to an action exists in everyday life, since it is a strategy in communicating. Leech (1983) states that politeness refers to the strategy in avoiding conflict that can be measured based on the degree of effort made to avoid conflict situations. In other words, Simatupang (2019) elaborates that politeness is also related to two aspects in the term of language aspect. The first aspect is the language itself and the second aspect is behavior. In language aspect, people may decide the choice of words, intonation, tone, and sentence structure. In the behavioral aspect, it may be noticed by expressions, attitudes and also gestures. Politeness principle according to Leech purposes to minimize impoliteness in a conversation or dialogue. Leech (1983) suggests that polite language basically has to pay attention to the six maxim of politeness; there are tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy maxim. Based on this perspective, Leech classifies politeness theory into six maxims of politeness, maxim of wisdom, maxim of generosity, maxim of praise, maxim of simplicity, maxim of agreement and maxim of sympathy. In addition, Leech (1983) also suggests that politeness can be measured by several types of politeness scale which are divided into five scales, the cost and benefit scale, the option scale, and the indirectness scale, the authority scale, and the social distance scale.

Conducting research using pragmatic studies in a literary work is an interesting thing to do, including in researching a film. Films present stories by using pictures that are move. Film is a very influential medium compared to other media; because it has audio and visual aspects at the same time so that it makes people feel better the audience is not easily bored and easy to remember. That's what causes films are not only entertaining, but films can also be used as a medium in the learning process. In the film, of course, there are conversations or dialogues carried out by the characters in the film. In understanding the story of a film, audiences must combine the context with the speech in the film. The same with drama scripts, film scripts also use language as an intermediary and has an imaginative nature. This manuscript is then displayed through a series of images, sounds, dialogues and musical illustrations. In the movie, not only there is only direct dialogue, but sometimes there is dialogue indirectly in context, but the speech partner can understand the meaning of the speech. In a film, of course there will be interactions and dialogues and conversations between players. These dialogues and conversations will certainly spark the audience's curiosity about what the players' words mean. This will of course be answered by pragmatic studies. To understand a film script that has an imaginative nature, as viewers we must pay attention to the context and speech that has politeness in language. In this research, the script that is used as learning media and pragmatic teaching media for politeness principles is the *Squid Game* film series. It was written and directed by Hwang Dong-Hyu. This nine-episode film series was set in South Korea and told about several people who were in debt and tempted to take part in a game with a prize of 45.6 billion won. Without thinking a number of these people immediately intended to participate in the game. In fact, the game would kill anyone who made a mistake. In this film series, there are many phenomena of politeness speech acts, especially this film series is set in South Korea which is a country with quite high customs and culture of politeness. Therefore, the author is interested in analyzing the maxims of politeness and politeness scale in the script of Hwang Dong-Hyu's *Squid Game* film series.

Language politeness is a set of rules of behavior and mutually agreed upon by a certain community so that politeness at once is a prerequisite that is agreed upon by social behavior. Through speaking activity, the speaker must be able to maintain his/her attitude and words to build communication that can be maintained properly, without offending one speaker. So, it is very important when communicating to apply language politeness.

a. Pragmatics

There are several definitions of pragmatics; one of them is Leech (1983) in Gunarwan (2004) stated that pragmatics as a field of study in linguistics which has links or relation with semantics. This connection is called *semanticism*, which comprehends pragmatics as part of semantics; seeing semantics as part of pragmatics; and *complementarism*, or see semantics and pragmatics as two complementary fields. According to Levinson (1983) pragmatics referred to the study or relationship between language and context that underlies the explanation of understanding. Thomas (1995) mentioned that two tendencies in pragmatics are divided into two parts; first, by using a social point of view, connecting pragmatics with the meaning of the speaker; and second, by using a cognitive point of view, linking pragmatics with speech interpretation.

Cruse in Cummings (2007) expressed that pragmatics dealt with aspects of generally accepted information in linguistic forms. Its use is natural and depends on the conventionally encoded meaning with the context in which the forms are used. Based on some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that pragmatics is the area of language which studies *discourse*, examines a conversational discourse about the speaker's intent and interpretation by the speaker's opponent. Pragmatics is also as a branch of semiotics, the science of sign. *Semiosis* is something marked by a definite sign. Mediator is a means of sign; the recipient who pays attention to the sign is *interpretant*; the process intermediary is the interpreter; what is noticed is *designate*. It is conveyed by the speaker, and the meaning contained in the speaker's utterance depending on the situation that occurred at the time the speech occurred. Pragmatics is also relates to the study of how to express speech based on closeness of relationship (pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance). In this case the utterance raises a question that make a choice between what is spoken and what is not. To answer it a close relationship is needed between the two (speaker and listener) both in terms of physical, social, concepts and experiences that are shared indirectly; then the assumption is that a speaker determines how much the utterance needs to be uttered based on its proximity to a listener.

b. Politeness Principle

Politeness according to dictionary refers to an action that people must do in everyday life. Politeness is always related to linguistic aspects. Aspects of politeness occur from ethics, social norms, and cultural systems. Politeness is also influenced by the context related to place, time and roles related to age, age and position. Brown and Levinson (2011) suggested that politeness means an attitude of concern for the face or face, both owned by the speaker and the speech partner. In connection with this face arrangement, politeness theory directs that in verbal interaction, speakers always keep the face of the speech partner as well as the speaker's own face. The principle of politeness according to Leech (1983) concerned to the relationship between the participants which involve the speaker and the speech partner. The principle of politeness is a rule in conversation that regulates speakers and speech partners to pay attention to politeness in conversation. Maxims are linguistic rules in lingual interaction, rules governing actions, language use and interpretation of the actions and utterances of the interlocutor. In addition, maxims are also referred to as pragmatic forms based on the principle of cooperation and the principle of politeness. These maxims suggest that people express their beliefs politely and avoid impolite speech. Leech (1983) divides politeness maxims into six; generosity maxim, tact maxim, approbation maxim, sympathy maxim, modesty maxim and agreement maxim.

Maxim of generosity emphasizes respect for others or the interlocutor. This respect results in reducing profits for speaker and maximizing profits for others as stated by Leech (1983), the generosity maxim involves minimizing the benefit and maximizing the cost to self. It is only applicable in *impositives* and *commissives*. The implementation of the maxim of generosity can be seen in the following example of speech.

Andi: "Let me wash your dirty clothes, I don't have a lot of clothes"

Budi: "You don't have to, tomorrow morning I will wash my clothes"

From the dialogue above, it can be analyzed that Andi maximizes profits for others by adding burdens for himself. This was carried out by offering assistance (help) to wash Budi's clothes.

Referring to Wijana (1996), the tact maxim outlines every speaker to minimize losses for others and maximize benefits for others. In this speech, the more indirect the speech, the more polite the speech will be. Leech provides examples such as the following:

(1) Answer the phone.

(2) I want you to answer the phone.

(3) Will you answer the phone?

(4) Can you answer the phone?

(5) Would you mind answering the phone?

Judging from the indirectness of the speech above, it can be seen that successively larger serial numbers have a higher level of politeness.

The maxim of approbation or also the maxim of appreciation assumes that the speaker will be said to be polite if in his speech he tries to give appreciation to others. With this maxim, the speaker is expected to be able to utter a speech that does not mock or demean the other party. The implementation of the maxim can be seen from the following speech examples.

A: "Sir, I have started my first lecture for Business class."

B: "Oh okay, I heard your English very clearly from here."

Indexed Information:

It is spoken by a lecturer to his friend who is also a lecturer in a lecturer's office at a university. In the example conversation, A provides information to B, then B responds well and is also accompanied by praise and appreciation by B.

The maxim of sympathy is used by speakers to maximize sympathy, and minimize the feeling of antipathy to the interlocutor, for example, such as congratulating the interlocutor in happiness and paying attention when the interlocutor has a misfortune. The implementation of the maxim can be seen from the following conversation example.

A: "Congratulations on your marriage"

B: "Thank you"

A: "Sorry I couldn't come yesterday, my father died"

B: "Oh yeah? Please accept my condolences"

The other maxim is modesty; Leech reveals that speech will be more polite if the speaker reduces his praise to himself and adds insults. The implementation of the maxim of simplicity can be seen from the following conversation example.

Mita: "Wow, you are very good at math. Each test always gets a score of 100. I can only get a score of 70, it's very difficult."

Doni: "Ah, not really. I'm not that smart, really."

In the example above, Doni tried to reduce his self-praise by saying "Ah, not really. I'm not that smart, really."

The last maxim is agreement; in the agreement maxim or consensus maxim, the speaker is expected to maintain compatibility or agreement in his speech. If there is an agreement between the speaker and the speech partner, then each of them can be said to be polite. The application of the maxim of agreement can be seen in the following conversation example.

Guest: "Wow, the room is hot huh"

Host: "Yes, yes. Just a moment, I'll turn on the air conditioner."

Guest: "Okay, thank you"

In the conversation above, there is a matching perception between the guest and the host that the room is hot. The two men agreed that the room was hot and then they agreed to turn on the air conditioner of the room.

c. Politeness Scale

The politeness of a person's language can be measured by 5 types of politeness scale. The politeness scale is a rating of politeness, ranging from the most impolite to the most polite. In Leech's politeness model, each maxim can be used to determine the politeness rating of a speech. Leech's (1983) politeness scale is divided into five scales, the cost and benefit scale, the option scale, the indirectness scale, the authority scale, and the social distance scale.

1. The cost benefit scale refers to the intensity or the size of the advantages and disadvantages caused by a speech act in an utterance. The more the speech harms the speaker, the more polite the speech will be. On the other hand, the more the speech benefits the speaker, the more disrespectful the speech will be.
2. The optionality scale refers to the number of choices conveyed by the speaker in his speech, the more choices or options given by the speaker in his/her speech, the more polite the speech will be, because it is considered that the speaker gives flexibility to the speech partner. On the other hand, if the speech does not provide a choice and does not provide flexibility for the speech partner, the speech will be considered impolite.
3. Indirectness scale refers to the direct or indirect rating of the meaning of an utterance. The more direct the speech is, the more disrespectful it will be. Conversely, if the speech is indirect, then the speech will be considered a polite speech.
4. The authority scale relates to the social status between the speaker and the hearer. The farther the distance from the social level, the more polite the speech used will tend to be. Hence, the closer the social status distance between the two, the lower the politeness rating in the speech used.
5. Social distance scale relates to the social relationship between the speaker and his speech partner. This scale tends to assess the distance of social relations between the two. The closer the social relationship between the speaker and the speech partner, the more impolite the speech will be. On the other hand, the farther the social distance, the more polite the speech will be.

Method

This study used descriptive and qualitative method. Subject of research this is the film *Squid Game*. Meanwhile, the objects in this study are: maxim of politeness that contains politeness utterance and analyzes indicators of the maxim of politeness in text (script) and the politeness scale contained in the text of the film. The data collection technique in the study used the referencing method. The listening technique used is listening to the language used by the speaker to research the source, and then use an advanced technique. This method is also equipped with a note-taking method because the researcher must note the fragments of each utterance that are thought to have a level language politeness contained in the animated film *Squid Game*. In this type of qualitative research, the researcher acts as a data collectors and as an active instrument in an effort to collect data. Moleong (2010) and Sugiyono (2017) explain that researchers is a planner, implementer of data collection, analysis, interpretation of data, and in the end the researcher becomes a reporter on the results of his research. The presence of researchers is directly considered as a determinant of success to understand the case under study, so that the researcher's direct involvement with the data source is absolutely necessary. As a research instrument, then researchers must also validate the extent to which qualitative researchers are prepared to study. Validation of researchers includes understanding research methods, mastery of insight into the field under study, the readiness of researchers to enter object of research both academically and logistically.

The research took several examples of conversations in the *Squid Game* film series by Hwang Dong-Hyu (2021) which contained politeness maxims. These data were then analyzed based on the process of conversation and the politeness scale used in the conversation. The research steps carried out are as follows:

1. Determine the field and object of research.
2. Conduct a preliminary study.
3. Formulate and identify problems.
4. Determine the research method.
5. Collect and classify data.
 - a. Watch and identify conversations in the Squid Game film series.
 - b. Determine and classify the required data.
6. Analyze data according to theory and problem formulation.

7. Conclude and provide suggestions on the research results.

Results and Discussion

Data 1

Tact maxim

- Gi-Hun : "And you? You come from around this area as well?"
Oh Il-Nam : "Uh, No. I have a friend who lives nearby. So, there isn't anywhere for this old man to go. I'm just staying there a while"
Gi-Hun : "Uh. Would you like to sit down?"
Oh Il-Nam : "Sure." (Eps. 2, 20:43)

The context in the data 1 above is Gi-Hun who accidentally meets Oh Il-Nam at a convenience store. They were about to chat when Gi-hun asked Oh Il-Nam to sit down. The conversation above has a politeness. The speech used by Gi-Hun contains the principle of politeness. Gi-hun maximizes profits for his speech partners. Maximizing other people's profits in this case can be seen in Gi-Hun's speech, "Would you like to sit down?" In the sentence there is the word "would" which gently and respectfully asks Oh Il-Nam to sit down because then Gi-hun's interlocutor no longer has to stand up when chatting with him. The conversation is included in the maxim of politeness, more specifically the Maxim of Wisdom or *Tact Maxim*.

The politeness scale contained in the conversation is the *cost benefit scale*, the greater the benefit for the listener, the more polite the conversation will be. The speech can be said to be polite because it provides more benefits to the speech partner and is also not burdensome. This is shown by the words of Gi-hun who invited Oh Il-Nam to sit down marked with the polite word *would*.

Data 2

Generosity maxim

- Gi-Hun: "Oh this? It's a huge mosquito bite, that's all. Mosquitos are really mean these days, yeah."
Seong Ga-Yeong : "Dad, you can be in all of the fights that you want. But don't get hurt too bad"
Gi-Hun: "I'm sorry sweetie. I really am. You know I wanted to buy you a nicer dinner, than this."
Seong Ga-Yeong: "it's okay. We went with my stepdad to a steakhouse earlier"
The speech conveyed by Seong Ga-Yeong showed sympathy for his battered father. This can be seen in the speech "Dad, you can be in all of the fights that you want. But don't get hurt too bad".
(Eps. 1, 47:00)

The context in that scene is Gi-Hun who meets his son Seong Ga-Yeong who is having a birthday. But Gi-Hun visits Seong Ga-Yeong in a battered state after being beaten by debt collectors. Seong Ga-Yeong doesn't want his father to be in pain from fighting with other people. So it can be concluded that the utterance is a maxim of sympathy (Sympathy Maxim).

The politeness scale contained in the conversation is the indirectness scale; the speech said by Seong ga-Yeong has an indirect meaning. He didn't say outright that his father should not be involved in any fights, but preferred for his father not to get hurt in an argument. Seong Ga-Yeong's sympathy was conveyed indirectly. In the conversation there is a violation of maxim of quality. This is indicated by Gi-Hun's sentence "Oh this? It's a huge mosquito bite, that's all. Mosquitos are really mean these days, yeah". The decline in the quality of the speech occurs because Gi-hun does not reveal what actually happened or expresses according to the facts. It is a fabricated speech and manipulates facts.

Data 3

Approbation maxim

- Salesman : "I'm sure you've played ddakji before, right?. Play a few rounds of ddakji with me and each time you win I'll pay you a 100,000 won."
Gi-Hun : "Wait, so if I hit your ddakji, and it flip over, I get a 100,000 won?"
Salesman : "And if I can flip yours, you will give me the exact same amount of money. You can also be the first to play"
Gi-Hun: "Hey, Look. I Had a bad day today. You pull a scam or you rip me off, well, then, I'll kill you, huh?" (Eps. 1, 41:50)

The context involved in the conversation is Gi-Hun who is sitting waiting for the train at the station, and then a salesman approaches him and offers him a game with a pretty big prize.

In the conversation there were offers and agreements between Gi-Hun and the salesman regarding the rules of the game and also the prizes for the *dakkji* game. The confirmation of the agreement is contained in the speech made by Gi-Hun "Hey, Look. I Had a bad day today. You pull a scam or you rip me off, well, then, I'll kill you, huh?" The statement confirms that Gi-Hun would have played the game if it wasn't a scam. Then the speech is a maxim of agreement (Agreement Maxim).

The politeness scale in the conversation is the optional scale. In the sentence "You can also be the first to play". So it can be said that it is polite because the Salesman gives Gi-Hun the freedom to get the best and most profitable choice for Gi-Hun.

In the conversation there is a violation of the maxim, namely the maxim of relevance. This is evidenced by the Salesman's words "And if I can flip yours, you will give me the exact same amount of money. You can also be the first to play". The utterance is irrelevant to Gi-Hun's question which asks for the prize of the game. But the salesman prefers to answer indirectly.

Data 4

Maxim of sympathy

The maxim of sympathy is the maxim that teaches the speaker that to maintain a good relationship with the addressee, then say congratulations or condolences is an act of polite and respectful speech. The principles of this maxim are, reduce the taste antipathy towards oneself and others, and increase sympathy between oneself with other people.

In the scene of Gi-hun panicked and was afraid, because his friend was found dead at the field of game. Panic, nervousness and fear made him regret his words to his friend at that time. This utterance is categorized as a maxim of sympathy because the speaker expresses sympathy to the speaker with the word "be calm, ahjusi". (Eps. 3, 45:00).

In the maxim of sympathy, it is expected that the speech participants can maximize the attitude of sympathy between one party with another party. The antipathy towards one of the speech participants will be considered as an act not polite. People, who are antipathetic towards others, let alone to being cynical towards the other party, will be considered as someone who knows manners polite.

Data 5

Modesty maxim

The function of politeness always involves in a conversation about maxims where the maxim of wisdom is in the form of a request for advice, offer, promise something to someone else and that is a good thing in everyday life. Its application can be seen in the following analysis:

Gi-Hun: "Would you please help me from this situation?"

Salesman: "Yes, sure!" (Eps. 1, 43:21)

The context and situation involved in this scene show that Gi-hun asked the salesman to help his financial problem in the middle of his hard situation. The maxim of wisdom is the maxim that functions that every participant is good speaker or listener should adhere to the principle of always reduce profits for themselves and maximize profit the other party in speaking.

The politeness scale contained in the conversation is the *cost benefit scale*, the greater the benefit for the listener, the more polite the conversation will be. The speech can be said to be polite because it provides more benefits to the speech partner and is also not burdensome. This is shown by the words of Gi-hun who asked for help to overcome his problem; it is marked with the polite word *would*.

Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis that has been carried out related to the maxim of politeness and the politeness scale, it can be concluded that the study obtains more of Leech's politeness principles than violation of maxim. In this study, speech that adheres to the principle of Leech's politeness is 30 utterances packed into five data by obeying the maxim of tact maxim, approbation maxim, generosity maxim, and maxim of sympathy. This movie, *Squid Game*, contains the functions of the politeness principle. It is found in the utterances of the characters such as, the maxim of wisdom serves to minimize and maximize beneficial matter for others.

Generosity maxim acts to reduce their own gains and increase their own losses. Maxim sympathy serves to reduce criticism for others and increase praise for other people. The humility maxim serves to reduce self-praise and add to self-criticism. The maxim of sympathy works for reduce sympathy between self and others and increase sympathy between the participants with others. The tact maxim serves to minimize losses for others and maximize benefits for others. From the results of this analysis, it can be concluded that the principles of politeness have a role in meaning in the movie. This is used by people as a strategy to make it interesting to know what the author talks about by involving the characters in the *Squid Game* film.

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