

**A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Principles in Teacher Talks at SMA  
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**Abstract:** The aims of this research are (1) to identify the maxims of politeness principle performed by the English teacher at SMA N 1 Klaten, and (2) to determine the illocutionary function of the politeness principle maxims performed by the English teacher at SMA N 1 Klaten. This study was qualitative. The data were in the form of utterances derived from the transcripts of the talks performed by the English teacher in SMA Negeri 1 Klaten. The main instrument of this research was the researcher himself, supported by the use of the audio recording and data sheets. The researcher employed the observation as the data collection technique. The data were analyzed by performing the maxims of politeness principle proposed by Leech (1983). To achieve the data trustworthiness, the researcher used the investigator triangulation. The results of the research showed five maxims of politeness principle performed by the English teacher at SMA N 1 Klaten. They are the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. The approbation maxim was the most frequently used by the teacher with 50 occurrences or 44.6% of 112 utterances. Meanwhile, the least maxim used was the sympathy maxim with one occurrence or 0.9% of 112 utterances. Next, the illocutionary functions identified in the data are 12 functions. They are agreeing, asking for clarity, complimenting, congratulating, greeting, inviting, questioning, requesting, stating an opinion, suggesting, sympathizing, and thanking. The most frequently used illocutionary function is “requesting” with 39 occurrences or 34.8% of 112 utterances. There are three illocutionary functions that are the least illocutionary function used with one occurrence or 0.9% of 112 utterances. They are congratulating, stating an opinion, and sympathizing. In conclusion, by performing more approbation maxim, the teacher tried to be a good motivator for the student as one of her role as a teacher.

*Keywords: teacher talk, politeness principle, illocutionary function*

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## **Introduction**

In human communication, politeness is an important aspect. It is performed to enhance an interpersonal relationship and communication between addressers and addressees. Enhancing an interpersonal relationship and communication means that the addressers need to reduce the conflict happened in performing the communication. The intention of using politeness is that the communication is

needed to be as peaceful and comfortable as possible to both the addressers and the addressees.

In a specific language environment, a classroom is one of the environments to perform any interactions. The addresser and addressee are performed by the teachers and the students in the classroom. A teacher has an important role in teaching and learning process in the classroom. As one of the language environment, an interaction needs to be facilitated and mediated appropriately. In the performances, there are teachers who still have troubles in delivering any information as what is needed to the students because they do not perceive what the teachers have said.

This research focused on the use of Politeness principles uttered by the teacher in the teaching and learning process. The research focused on analyzing the politeness principles in teaching and learning process performed by the teacher at SMA N 1 Klaten. Leech Politeness principles theory (1983) which introduces six maxims was used in this research. The formulated problems were 1) what are the maxims of politeness principles used by the teacher, and 2) what are the illocutionary functions of the politeness principles used by the teacher in the teaching and learning process in SMA N 1 Klaten.

### **Pragmatics**

According to Yule (1996:1), pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (reader). This type of study necessarily involves the interpretation of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is said. Leech (1983:X) mentioned that pragmatics can be usefully defined as the study of how utterances have meanings in situations. From the definition, it can be seen that pragmatics is a study which is performed to understand the meanings of utterances by looking at the situation when the utterances happen. In building the understandable utterances in a situation, the shared knowledge and understanding is needed.

In developing the shared knowledge, a form of social interaction, a form that mediates between the individual and the social is needed. It is called politeness. The polite or impolite act is performed by an individual whose choices for the instrumentality of such an act are based upon collective norms and whose motivation in performing the act is that of structuring social interaction (Marquez-Reiter, 2000: 3). The idea causes politeness to have close relation to the social construction and social relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Making decision of what is and is not considered polite in any communities involves assessing social relationship along the dimension of social distance or solidarity, and relative power or status (Hymes, 1992: 297).

Geoffrey Leech (1983) has proposed a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges. He proposes the maxims of politeness principles. There are six maxims, namely tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim and sympathy maxim (Leech, 1983).

Tact maxim requires the participants to minimize cost to other and maximize benefit to other. This maxim is implemented in directive/impossitive and commissive utterances. Generosity maxim requires the participants to minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self. This maxim is expressed by the directive/impossitive and commissive utterances. Approbation maxim requires the speaker to minimize dispraise to other and maximize praise to other. This maxim is expressed by the expressive and assertive utterances. Agreement maxim is considered as minimizing disagreement to other and maximizing agreement to other. This maxim applies in representative speech acts. Sympathy maxim requires the speaker to maximize sympathy and minimize antipathy between them. This maxim is applied in the representative speech acts proposed by Searle.

### **Speech Act**

Language that is used to express someone's intention is called as speech act. In the speech act, there is a power that might force people to do an act or a response. It is a fact that speech act has a power instead of the meaning of its words and phrase. According to Akmajian (2001, cited in Akhimien, 2006: 748), a speech act may be defined as an act performed in uttering certain expressions.

Searle (1979:12) in Mey (2001:120) categories illocutionary acts into five types. They are representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, and declarations.

The characteristic of the representative is carried out the values of "True" or "False" and also the state of affair in the world. The examples of the illocutionary functions of representatives are hypothesizing, insisting, claiming, and predicting (Cutting, 2002:17). The important point of directives is that it is the attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. The illocutionary functions of the directive acts are the command, orders, request and suggestions (Yule, 1996:54). Commisives are the speech act performed by the speaker to commit themselves to some future action. The illocutionary functions of this act include the offers, pledges, promises, refusals, and threats (Allan, 2009:921). Expressive are the utterances expressing the speaker's feelings or attitudes. The illocutionary functions of the expressive acts are thanking, apologizing, welcoming, praising, congratulating, deploring, and regretting (Cutting, 2002:17). Declaratives is an utterance that can change someone's state or condition. Cutting (2002:16) states several illocutionary functions illocutionary acts are baptizing, marrying, and firing.

### **The Role of Teachers**

The advent of twenty-first century does not change the role of teachers intrinsically, but it requires the teachers to develop more qualities and traits. Many aspects can be improved by the teachers in performing an appropriate teaching and learning process. The aspects are derived from the teachers themselves. It means that being an accomplished teacher of languages and cultures means being a person who knows, uses, and teaches language and culture in an ethical and reflective way (Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers

Associations, 2005). Understanding intrinsic elements of the language is also the aspect that can improve the teacher's qualities as the important role in classroom.

According to Ramage (1990), giving motivation is the major action that should be performed by teachers to the students. Students need motivation to ensure that they can achieve the competencies in the target language. Giving more motivation is one of various strategies that can be used to show the qualities and traits as the important role in teaching and learning process by the teacher in a classroom. More specifically, the role of teachers is supposed to be a patient motivator, a helpful facilitator and a positive counsellor.

There have been many studies conducted. One of them was the research entitled "A Pragmatic Analysis of Illocutionary Acts in English Teaching-Learning Process at SMA N 1 Wates Kulon Progo" by Destra Wibowo Kusumo (2015). The research was conducted to describe the types of the illocutionary acts used by the teachers of SMA N 1 Wates, Kulon Progo. The research conducted by Destra has similarities with this research. Destra used the illocutionary functions as the objectives of his research. In line with Destra's research, this research was conducted with the same method to obtain the result in the illocutionary functions performed by the teacher.

### **Research Method**

This study was qualitative. The data of this research were in the form of utterances derived from the transcripts of the talks performed by the English teacher in SMA Negeri 1 Klaten. The main instrument of this research was the researcher himself, supported by the use of the audio recording and data sheets. The researcher employed the observation as the data collection technique. The data were analyzed by performing the maxims of politeness principle proposed by Leech (1983). To achieve the data trustworthiness, the researcher used the investigator triangulation.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Based on the research, there were five maxims of politeness principles used by the teacher at SMAN 1 Klaten. Those are the tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. Meanwhile, the modesty maxim was not found in the research. The total number of data gathered by the researcher is 112 data. The approbation maxim is the most frequently used maxim by the teacher with 50 appearances or 44.6% of the total occurrences. The appearances of tact maxim were slightly different with the approbation maxim. The tact maxim appeared 43 times or 38.4% of the total occurrence. The generosity maxim appeared 15 times or 13.4% of total occurrence. The agreement maxim appeared three times or 2.7% of the total occurrence. sympathy maxim was performed by the teacher only once or 0.9% of the total occurrence.

Therefore, there were 12 illocutionary functions performed by the teacher at SMA N 1 Klaten. The determined illocutionary function is derived from the utterance classified as the maxim. Those illocutionary functions were agreeing, asking for clarity, complimenting, congratulating, greeting, inviting, questioning, requesting, stating an opinion, suggesting, sympathizing and thanking. The most frequently performed illocutionary function was the “requesting” function. It appeared 39 times or 34.8% of the total occurrences. Those occurrences of the “requesting” illocutionary function were derived from the tact maxim and the generosity maxim. The “complimenting” function appeared 27 times or 24.1% of the total occurrences. Thanking function appeared 16 times or 14.3% of the total occurrences. The “inviting” function appeared eight times or 7.1% of the total occurrences found in the data. The illocutionary function of “questioning” appeared seven times or 6.3% of the total occurrences. The “greeting” illocutionary function appeared five times or 4.5% of the total occurrences found in the data. The illocutionary function of “agreeing” appeared three times or 2.7% of the total occurrences found in the data. The illocutionary function of “asking for clarity” appeared twice or 1.8% of the total occurrences found in the data. The “suggesting” appeared two times or 1.8% of the total occurrences found in the data. The “congratulating” function appeared only once or 0.9% of the total occurrences. The function of “stating an opinion” appeared only once or 0.9% of the total occurrences. The “sympathizing” illocutionary function appeared only once or 0.9% of the total occurrences.

The complimenting illocutionary function was performed as one of the illocutionary functions of the approbation maxim. Meanwhile, the requesting illocutionary function was performed in two maxims, they are the tact maxim and the generosity maxim. This fact is the reason why the results of the complimenting function were below the requesting function whereas the approbation maxim was found as the most frequent maxims performed by the teacher. Thus, the calculation of the requesting illocutionary is derived from two maxims, those are the tact maxim and generosity maxim. As the result, the requesting illocutionary function had more appearances than the complimenting illocutionary function.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

Based on the findings of the politeness principle maxims above, the approbation maxim is the most frequently performed maxim. It reaches almost a half of the total obtained data. The teacher mostly used the approbation maxim because she needed to encourage and motivate the students in the teaching and learning activities in order to achieve the competences. On the other hand, the sympathy maxim is the least maxim performed by the English teacher in SMA N 1 Klaten with only one occurrence of the total obtained data. It is because the classroom is developed to have comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere. There is no expectation of a calamity or unfortunate events to happen. Therefore, there was little occurrence of the sympathy maxim performed. The modesty maxim is the only

maxim that is not found in the data since the teacher has a prominent role to deliver information to the students. Therefore, the teacher needs to have other-oriented maxims as the main maxims performed.

Based on the findings of the illocutionary functions of politeness principles above, the most frequent illocutionary function classified as the politeness principles maxims is the “requesting” illocutionary function. Eventually, there is “complimenting” illocutionary function that is also frequently performed by the teacher in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The “requesting” functions are related to the tact maxim. As the dominant role of the teaching and learning process in classroom, teacher is needed to initiate the activities in the classroom. In order to do that, teachers need to perform any kind of “requesting” functions. Through the “requesting” functions, the teacher tries to familiarize the students with the use of English in appropriate way. The “complimenting” functions are related to the approbation maxims. One of various ways to improve self-confidence or self-esteem of the students is by applying more encouraging or motivating utterances. Complimenting utterances are one way to imply the encouraging or motivating ways.

In accordance with the conclusions and the implications explained above, the suggestions are presented as follows.

1. To English teachers

The English teachers should improve the awareness of English. By improving the English, the teachers can afterwards transfer the language intrinsically in more appropriate way. The awareness of English can be employed by taking into account the maxims of politeness principles. By having particular illocutionary functions in each utterance classified as the politeness principles maxims, the teacher can be an appropriate role model for the students linguistically and communicatively.

2. To other researchers

The next researchers may widen the subjects of the research into the teachers and the students’ conversation. Moreover, the next researchers can employ other major topics of the study of politeness such as politeness strategies, positive and negative politeness, face wants, and many more in the classroom interaction in English teaching and learning process.

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