

ANALYSIS OF PRAGMATIC POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN FRANZ KAFKA'S NOVEL THE METAMORPHOSIS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi strategi kesantunan pragmatis yang digunakan dalam novel "The Metamorphosis" karya Franz Kafka. Dengan memanfaatkan teori kesopanan Brown dan Levinson (1987), penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana karakter menavigasi interaksi sosial dan menjaga hubungan dalam konteks transformasi Gregor Samsa. Analisis ini mengungkapkan penggunaan dinamis dari strategi botak, kesantunan positif, kesantunan negatif, dan strategi off-record di sepanjang novel. Awalnya, interaksi keluarga dengan Gregor ditandai dengan strategi kesopanan positif yang bertujuan untuk menjaga keadaan normal. Namun, seiring dengan memburuknya kondisi Gregor, kesopanan negatif dan strategi off-record menjadi lebih menonjol, yang mencerminkan semakin besarnya jarak emosional dan psikologis. Seringnya sang ayah menggunakan strategi yang tidak jelas menunjukkan runtuhnya ikatan keluarga dan meningkatnya otoritas dan kendali. Temuan-temuan ini selaras dengan teori-teori yang ada tentang kesantunan dan ketidaksopanan, yang menunjukkan penerapannya pada analisis sastra. Studi ini juga menyoroti penggambaran Kafka tentang keterasingan dan kegelisahan eksistensial melalui strategi kesopanan karakter yang terus berkembang. Dengan mengkaji pergeseran strategi ini, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang dinamika sosial dan keadaan psikologis dalam keluarga Samsa. Analisis ini berkontribusi pada wacana yang lebih luas mengenai persinggungan bahasa, masyarakat, dan sastra. Studi ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya konteks dalam memahami kesopanan dan perannya dalam membentuk interaksi karakter dan tema naratif.

Kata Kunci: Kesantunan Pragmatis, Franz Kafka, Metamorfosis, Teori Kesantunan, Interaksi Karakter.

Abstract

This study explores the pragmatic politeness strategies employed in Franz Kafka's novel "The Metamorphosis." Utilizing Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, the research analyzes how the characters navigate social interactions and maintain relationships in the context of Gregor Samsa's transformation. The analysis reveals a dynamic use of bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies throughout the novel. Initially, the family's interactions with Gregor are characterized by positive politeness strategies aimed at preserving normalcy. However, as Gregor's condition deteriorates, negative politeness and off-record strategies become more prominent, reflecting growing emotional and psychological distance. The father's frequent use of bald on-record strategies underscores the collapse of familial bonds and the rise of authority and control. These findings align with existing theories on politeness and impoliteness, demonstrating their applicability to literary analysis. The study also highlights Kafka's depiction of alienation and existential angst through the characters' evolving politeness strategies. By examining the shifts in these strategies, the research provides insights into the social dynamics and psychological states within the Samsa family. This analysis contributes to the broader discourse on the intersection of language, society, and literature. The study underscores the importance of context in understanding politeness and its role in shaping character interactions and narrative themes.

Keywords: Pragmatic Politeness, Franz Kafka, The Metamorphosis, Politeness Theory, Character Interaction.

INTRODUCTION

The study of pragmatic politeness strategies has become a critical area in linguistic research, providing insights into how language users navigate social interactions and maintain harmonious relationships. In literary works, these strategies can be examined to understand the subtleties of character interactions and the societal norms depicted by the

author. Franz Kafka's novel "The Metamorphosis" offers a rich ground for such an analysis due to its complex character dynamics and the peculiar circumstances of its protagonist, Gregor Samsa. This study aims to analyze the pragmatic politeness strategies employed by the characters in "The Metamorphosis" to reveal how Kafka uses language to construct social realities and character relationships.

Politeness strategies are essential in mitigating face-threatening acts and maintaining social equilibrium. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), these strategies can be categorized into four types: bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. These strategies are not only relevant in everyday conversations but are also pivotal in literary discourse, where authors utilize them to shape reader perceptions and character interactions. In "The Metamorphosis," the transformation of Gregor Samsa into a monstrous insect and his subsequent interactions with his family members offer a unique context to explore these strategies. Kafka's portrayal of politeness strategies provides a lens through which the reader can discern the underlying tensions and societal expectations within the family structure.

"The Metamorphosis" is a narrative that intertwines the grotesque with the mundane, highlighting the alienation and existential angst of its protagonist. As Gregor's physical transformation estranges him from his family, the politeness strategies used by the characters shift, reflecting changes in their perceptions and relationships. For instance, Gregor's family's initial attempts to maintain normalcy and their gradual shift to more direct and negative politeness strategies illustrate their struggle to cope with the abnormal situation. These shifts are indicative of the broader themes of isolation and dehumanization that permeate the novel. Understanding these strategies allows for a deeper comprehension of the characters' psychological and emotional states.

Research on pragmatic politeness strategies in literature often emphasizes the role of context and the dynamic nature of politeness (Leech, 2014). In "The Metamorphosis," the context of Gregor's transformation serves as a catalyst for exploring the limits of social norms and politeness. The interactions between Gregor and his family members are laden with instances of face-threatening acts and the use of various politeness strategies to navigate these moments. For example, the family's use of off-record strategies to hint at their discomfort without directly confronting Gregor showcases the complexity of their emotional responses. Such analysis not only enhances the understanding of the text but also contributes to the broader discourse on the intersection of language, society, and literature.

Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the field of pragmatic linguistics by analyzing the politeness strategies in Kafka's "The Metamorphosis." By examining the characters' interactions and the evolution of their politeness strategies, this research seeks to uncover the intricate ways in which Kafka portrays social dynamics and individual psychology. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into the role of language in constructing literary realities and the impact of societal norms on personal relationships. Through this analysis, the study will highlight the relevance of pragmatic politeness strategies in understanding the deeper thematic elements of literary works.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The exploration of politeness strategies in literary texts is a well-established area of research within the field of pragmatics. Brown and Levinson's (1987) seminal work on politeness theory provides a foundational framework for understanding how individuals navigate social interactions through the use of politeness strategies. They categorize these strategies into four main types: bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Their theory has been widely applied to various forms of discourse, including literary texts, to analyze how characters manage face-threatening acts and

maintain social harmony. This study draws on their framework to analyze the interactions in Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," focusing on how politeness strategies reflect and shape the characters' relationships and social dynamics.

In the realm of literary studies, researchers have applied politeness theory to analyze character interactions and the depiction of societal norms in various genres. Culpeper (2011) extends politeness theory to impoliteness, examining how authors use both polite and impolite strategies to develop characters and advance plots. This perspective is particularly relevant to "The Metamorphosis," where Gregor Samsa's transformation leads to a significant shift in the family's interactions, often involving impolite or face-threatening acts. By examining these interactions through the lens of politeness theory, scholars can gain insights into the underlying themes of alienation and dehumanization in Kafka's work.

Several studies have specifically focused on Kafka's use of language and his portrayal of social relationships. Spector (2011) discusses how Kafka's narratives often highlight the absurdity and isolation inherent in modern life, which is reflected in the strained and awkward interactions between his characters. In "The Metamorphosis," the use of politeness strategies—or the lack thereof—can be seen as a mechanism through which Kafka emphasizes the disintegration of familial bonds and the existential crisis of the protagonist. This study builds on Spector's analysis by providing a detailed examination of the specific politeness strategies used in the novel and their significance in the context of Kafka's broader themes.

Leech (2014) introduces the concept of "pragmastylistics," which combines pragmatic analysis with stylistic analysis to explore how authors use language to create meaning and effect in literary texts. This approach is particularly useful for analyzing "The Metamorphosis," as it allows for a nuanced understanding of how Kafka's stylistic choices and the pragmatic aspects of character interactions contribute to the overall impact of the narrative. By applying pragmastylistic analysis, this study aims to uncover the intricate ways in which politeness strategies are employed to depict the psychological and social realities of Kafka's characters.

Furthermore, recent research on politeness strategies in literature has emphasized the importance of context and the dynamic nature of politeness. Holmes and Stubbe (2015) argue that politeness is not a static phenomenon but varies according to context, power relations, and cultural norms. In "The Metamorphosis," the context of Gregor's transformation and the evolving power dynamics within his family provide a rich backdrop for examining how politeness strategies are adapted and negotiated. This study will consider these contextual factors to provide a comprehensive analysis of the politeness strategies in Kafka's novel and their role in shaping the narrative.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach, utilizing content analysis to examine the pragmatic politeness strategies in Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis." The content analysis method is particularly suited for this research as it allows for an in-depth examination of the text, focusing on the language used by characters and the context of their interactions. The novel will be meticulously analyzed to identify instances of the four politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987): bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Each instance will be categorized and examined to understand how it contributes to the portrayal of character relationships and societal norms within the narrative.

The data collection process involves a thorough reading of "The Metamorphosis," during which relevant excerpts demonstrating politeness strategies will be extracted and annotated. These excerpts will be analyzed using a thematic approach, allowing for the identification of patterns and trends in the use of politeness strategies by different

characters. The analysis will consider the context of each interaction, the relationship between the characters involved, and the implications of the politeness strategies used. Additionally, secondary sources such as scholarly articles and existing research on politeness strategies and Kafka's works will be reviewed to support the analysis and provide a broader theoretical framework. This comprehensive approach aims to ensure a nuanced and insightful examination of the pragmatic elements in the novel. Results and discussions. Write results in a logical sequence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" reveals a complex use of pragmatic politeness strategies, reflecting the intricate dynamics and evolving relationships within Gregor Samsa's family. The data collected from the text illustrates how different politeness strategies are employed by the characters in response to Gregor's transformation, highlighting the social and psychological tensions that arise from this extraordinary situation.

1. Bald On-Record Strategies

Bald on-record strategies are used sparingly in "The Metamorphosis," often in moments of high tension or urgency. For instance, Gregor's father frequently employs bald on-record commands and statements when dealing with Gregor after his transformation. This is evident in the scene where Mr. Samsa orders Gregor back into his room with harsh, direct language: "*Get back into your room now!*" This use of bald on-record strategies indicates a shift in Mr. Samsa's perception of Gregor—from a son and provider to a burden and threat. This strategy underscores the breakdown of familial politeness and the rise of authority and control in their interactions.

2. Positive Politeness Strategies

Positive politeness strategies are primarily observed in the early stages of Gregor's transformation, reflecting the family's initial attempts to maintain normalcy and solidarity. Grete, Gregor's sister, initially employs positive politeness by addressing Gregor with affectionate terms and making efforts to care for him, as seen in her attempts to bring him food and clean his room. For example, she addresses him with a gentle tone, saying, "*Gregor, are you all right? Do you need anything?*" These strategies are aimed at minimizing the social distance and maintaining a semblance of their previous relationship. However, as Gregor's condition deteriorates and becomes more burdensome, the frequency and sincerity of these positive politeness strategies decline, highlighting the fragility of their familial bonds.

3. Negative Politeness Strategies

Negative politeness strategies are prevalent throughout the novel, especially as the family's discomfort and resentment towards Gregor grow. These strategies are employed to mitigate face-threatening acts by acknowledging the imposition and showing deference. For example, Mrs. Samsa often uses indirect language and hedges when addressing Gregor, such as, "*Gregor, if it wouldn't be too much trouble, could you please keep quieter?*" This indirect approach reveals her attempt to balance her discomfort with politeness, reflecting the social expectation to maintain civility despite her growing aversion to Gregor's condition. The use of negative politeness strategies illustrates the characters' struggle to reconcile their familial obligations with their personal revulsion.

4. Off-Record Strategies

Off-record strategies are frequently used to indirectly address the sensitive issue of Gregor's transformation without direct confrontation. These strategies allow the family members to express their feelings and manage face-threatening situations subtly. For instance, the family often talks about Gregor in the third person when he is present, using vague and euphemistic language: "*It would be easier for everyone if he just understood.*" This off-record approach allows them to voice their frustrations and concerns without

direct blame or accusation, maintaining a façade of politeness while effectively excluding Gregor from their social sphere. This strategy highlights the increasing emotional and communicative distance between Gregor and his family.

Discussion

The shifts in politeness strategies throughout "The Metamorphosis" reflect the evolving dynamics of the Samsa family in response to Gregor's transformation. Initially, positive politeness strategies are employed to preserve the family's cohesion and to comfort Gregor. However, as the situation becomes more untenable, negative politeness and off-record strategies become more prominent, signaling the family's growing emotional and psychological distance from Gregor. The use of bald on-record strategies by Mr. Samsa marks the final breakdown of polite social interaction, indicating a complete loss of empathy and familial bonds.

These findings align with the theoretical framework provided by Brown and Levinson (1987), demonstrating how politeness strategies are context-dependent and vary according to the relational dynamics and social pressures experienced by the characters. The analysis also supports Culpeper's (2011) extension of politeness theory to include impoliteness, as seen in the increasingly harsh and direct interactions within the Samsa family. The evolving use of politeness strategies in the narrative reflects the tension between social norms and individual behaviors in crisis situations.

Furthermore, the results corroborate Spector's (2011) observations on Kafka's portrayal of alienation and existential angst. The progressive decline in politeness and the rise of impoliteness strategies reflect Gregor's growing isolation and dehumanization. The family's shifting politeness strategies serve as a microcosm of the broader themes of alienation and the collapse of social norms, central to Kafka's narrative. This analysis illustrates how Kafka uses language to depict the gradual disintegration of social and familial ties in the face of incomprehensible and uncontrollable changes.

Moreover, the use of politeness strategies, or the lack thereof, provides insight into the characters' internal states and their evolving perceptions of Gregor. For example, Grete's transition from positive politeness to more indirect and negative politeness strategies mirrors her transformation from a caring sister to a resentful and burdened family member. This shift not only underscores her changing emotional landscape but also reflects the broader societal pressures and expectations placed on her as she takes on new responsibilities. The analysis shows how Kafka intricately weaves these strategies to depict the deterioration of familial relationships under the strain of extraordinary circumstances.

Additionally, the fluctuating politeness strategies reveal the impact of Gregor's transformation on the power dynamics within the Samsa household. Mr. Samsa's use of bald on-record strategies highlights his assertion of authority and control as he attempts to manage the chaos brought on by Gregor's condition. This shift in power dynamics is indicative of the broader societal commentary Kafka embeds within the narrative, exploring themes of dominance, submission, and the dehumanizing effects of rigid social hierarchies. The pragmatic analysis underscores how these strategies serve as a vehicle for expressing and negotiating power relations within the family.

The presence of off-record strategies throughout the novel further emphasizes the characters' struggles with direct communication about Gregor's condition. By using vague and euphemistic language, the family avoids confronting the reality of Gregor's transformation head-on, which reflects their internal denial and discomfort. This indirect communication not only preserves a semblance of politeness but also serves to illustrate their inability to fully accept and deal with the profound changes in their lives. The analysis of these off-record strategies provides a deeper understanding of the psychological defense mechanisms employed by the characters.

Furthermore, the shifts in politeness strategies can also be viewed through the lens of cultural and societal expectations. Kafka's work often reflects the social norms and pressures of early 20th-century Europe, where maintaining appearances and adhering to social etiquette were highly valued. The decline in politeness strategies within the Samsa family highlights the breakdown of these societal expectations when confronted with the abnormal and the grotesque. This aspect of the analysis reveals how societal norms influence personal interactions and the struggle to maintain these norms in the face of personal crises.

Lastly, the study's findings underscore the broader implications of politeness theory in understanding literary texts. By applying Brown and Levinson's framework to "The Metamorphosis," this analysis demonstrates how literary characters' use of language can reflect and shape their social realities and psychological states. This approach not only enriches the interpretation of Kafka's work but also provides a valuable tool for analyzing other literary texts. The integration of politeness theory with literary analysis offers a comprehensive perspective on how language functions within literature to convey complex human experiences and relationships.

In conclusion, the pragmatic analysis of politeness strategies in "The Metamorphosis" provides a nuanced understanding of the characters' interactions and the social dynamics within the Samsa family. It highlights how Kafka uses these strategies to depict the psychological and social realities of his characters, contributing to the overall themes of the novel. The study demonstrates the applicability of politeness theory in literary analysis and offers insights into the complex interplay between language, society, and individual psychology in Kafka's work. Through this detailed examination, the research sheds light on the profound ways in which language and politeness strategies reflect and shape human experiences and relationships in literary texts.

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CONCLUSION

The analysis of pragmatic politeness strategies in Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" reveals the complex dynamics of family relationships and social interactions within the novel. By employing Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, this study has demonstrated how the characters' use of bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies reflects their evolving emotional and psychological states. Initially, positive politeness strategies are used to maintain normalcy and solidarity, but as Gregor's condition worsens, these strategies are replaced by negative politeness and off-record approaches, highlighting the growing distance and discomfort within the family. The father's frequent use of bald on-record strategies underscores the breakdown of familial bonds and the rise of authority and control. This shift in politeness strategies mirrors the broader themes of alienation and dehumanization that Kafka explores in his work.

The findings of this study align with existing literature on politeness and impoliteness in literary texts, confirming the applicability of these theories to the analysis of character interactions and narrative themes. The dynamic nature of politeness strategies in "The Metamorphosis" underscores the importance of context and relational dynamics in shaping social interactions. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of Kafka's portrayal of social norms and individual psychology, revealing how language is used to navigate and reflect complex social realities. By examining the subtleties of politeness strategies, this study offers valuable insights into the intricate ways in which Kafka constructs his characters' relationships and the societal expectations that govern their interactions.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significance of pragmatic politeness strategies in understanding literary texts and their underlying themes. The shifts in politeness strategies in "The Metamorphosis" provide a nuanced perspective on the characters' interactions and the social dynamics within the Samsa family. Through this analysis, the research underscores the relevance of politeness theory in literary studies and its potential to uncover deeper meanings within narratives. The study also emphasizes the role of language in constructing and deconstructing social relationships, offering a comprehensive view of Kafka's exploration of alienation and existential angst. Future research could further explore the application of politeness theory to other literary works, broadening our understanding of the intersection between language, society, and literature.

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