Maxim of Politeness in Wicked Movie (2024): A Pragmatic Analysis of Character Interaction and Social Dynamics

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Abstract

This study investigates the realization of Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle in the film Wicked (2024), focusing on how dialogue reflects the six maxims of politeness: Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected through documentation and note-taking techniques by repeatedly viewing the film and identifying utterances that exemplify the maxims. Each utterance was analyzed contextually to determine how politeness strategies function within character interactions and contribute to narrative development. The findings reveal that all six maxims occur in the dialogue, though with varying frequencies. The Approbation Maxim dominates with seven instances (35%), followed by the Sympathy Maxim with five instances (25%), indicating that praise and empathy are the most salient strategies used by characters. Generosity (15%), Agreement (10%), and Tact (10%) appear less frequently, while Modesty is the least observed at only 5%. Character-specific patterns also emerge: Elphaba often employs modesty to highlight humility, Glinda frequently uses sympathy and generosity to build solidarity, and Madame Morrible strategically exploits approbation to manipulate others. These patterns suggest that politeness functions not only as a means of maintaining social harmony but also as a device for asserting power, fostering empathy, and shaping interpersonal relationships. Theoretically, the study extends pragmatic analysis by demonstrating how politeness maxims operate in cinematic discourse as tools for identity construction and ideological representation. Practically, it highlights the pedagogical potential of film dialogue as an accessible medium for teaching pragmatics, intercultural communication, and critical literacy.

Keywords: Politeness maxims; Pragmatic analysis; Film dialogue; Character interaction

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics has long been recognized as one of the most dynamic subfields of linguistics because it focuses not merely on the structural aspects of language, but on its use in situated contexts. Unlike syntax and semantics, which prioritize formal rules and conventional meaning, pragmatics directs attention to how speakers and hearers negotiate meaning within real-life interactions. Yule's (2010) definition of pragmatics as the study of "invisible meaning" captures its essential concern with what lies beyond literal interpretation: the assumptions, shared knowledge, and social cues that allow interlocutors to make sense of each other. Griffiths (2006) similarly highlights utterance meaning, stressing that the same words may generate different interpretations depending on context. These definitions emphasize the fundamental insight that communication is a cooperative act shaped by intentions, assumptions, and the ability to read between the lines. In this

sense, pragmatics provides the tools to understand how language functions as a form of social action rather than as a static code.

Central to pragmatic theory is Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP), which posits that communication relies on mutual cooperation between speakers and hearers. Grice's maxims—quantity, quality, relation, and manner—offer a framework for analyzing how people construct meaning by balancing informativeness, truthfulness, relevance, and clarity. Yet, while Grice's model is useful, it is limited in accounting for the subtleties of politeness, indirectness, or face-saving strategies that are pervasive in everyday interactions. Leech (1983) expanded this view by introducing the Politeness Principle (PP), which incorporates maxims such as tact, approbation, generosity, modesty, and agreement. These maxims shift the focus from truthfulness and efficiency toward social harmony, suggesting that language use is guided as much by relational concerns as by informational goals. This conceptual shift underscores that politeness is not an optional courtesy layered onto communication, but an intrinsic component of how people maintain cooperation and avoid conflict in discourse.

The importance of politeness extends beyond casual encounters. Lakoff (1990) and more recently Ali (2023) argue that politeness serves as a strategy for minimizing social distance and negotiating power asymmetries. Politeness becomes a communicative tool for constructing solidarity, managing impressions, and reducing the likelihood of face-threatening acts. In cross-cultural communication, these strategies are even more crucial, as highlighted by Mambetniyazova et al. (2024), who note that misunderstandings often arise when interlocutors operate with different politeness norms. Roita et al. (2022) reinforce this point by describing politeness as a marker of communicative effectiveness manifested through hedging, gratitude, apologies, or honorifics. These strategies operate across modalities, not only in spoken exchanges but also in written genres such as novels, plays, and scripts (Wartika et al., 2024). By weaving politeness into both oral and literary forms, speakers and writers alike reflect broader cultural expectations of interactional propriety.

Film dialogue emerges as a particularly rich site for pragmatic analysis because it encapsulates how characters manage relationships, power, and identity through language. Unlike spontaneous conversation, film dialogue is deliberately crafted, yet it often mimics authentic speech and is designed to resonate with audience expectations of social interaction. Xiaowen (2022) argues that films function as both mirrors and molders of ideology, representing societal values while simultaneously shaping them. In this sense, cinematic dialogue offers insight not only into linguistic choices but also into the cultural and ideological landscapes from which films emerge. Sentana et al. (2022) highlight the pedagogical dimension of films, noting that their narratives can instruct, persuade, or socialize audiences into particular norms of behavior. The intersection of aesthetics, ideology, and pedagogy makes film dialogue an invaluable resource for pragmatic study, particularly for examining how politeness strategies are mobilized to portray characters and sustain narrative coherence.

The musical film *Wicked* provides a compelling case study for investigating politeness strategies. Its central characters—Elphaba, the misunderstood "Wicked Witch," and Galinda (later Glinda), the popular and ambitious counterpart—embody contrasting personalities and social trajectories. Their interactions reflect shifting power dynamics, evolving friendships, and moral dilemmas, all of which are mediated through language. In academic, political, and personal contexts within the film, the characters employ politeness strategies that illustrate how Leech's maxims operate in practice. Dewi and Amir (2023) stress that politeness is vital for sustaining long-term social relationships, a dynamic that is particularly salient in the fraught yet enduring bond between Elphaba and Galinda. Rafif and Ervina (2022) further emphasize the role of politeness in preserving

social harmony, while Ogundeji (2024) underscores the deliberate selection of words as a means of maintaining rapport. The relevance of these observations to *Wicked* lies in how characters navigate the competing demands of personal ambition, moral responsibility, and social acceptance through language that both reveals and conceals intentions.

At the same time, it must be recognized that politeness is not universally applied or uniformly successful. Murni et al. (2024) link politeness to broader cultural norms and values, suggesting that deviations from expected patterns may reflect resistance or marginality. Riris et al. (2022) note that not all speakers possess the awareness or skills to consistently apply politeness strategies, leading to misunderstandings or conflict. This perspective is crucial when analyzing film dialogue, since characters may intentionally flout politeness norms to assert power, resist authority, or dramatize conflict. Such moments of non-politeness are not communicative failures but serve as narrative devices that heighten tension and reveal character motivations. Thus, studying politeness in *Wicked* entails attending not only to cooperative and harmonious exchanges but also to deliberate violations of politeness principles that propel the story forward.

Research on politeness has flourished across multiple domains, underscoring its interdisciplinary significance. Sugianto and Tawali (2024) investigate language levels in social interactions, while Supriatna et al. (2022) analyze politeness in the context of face-threatening acts (FTAs). Mudhar et al. (2024) explore ethics in discourse, linking politeness to broader moral frameworks. Workplace communication studies, such as Aporbo (2022), demonstrate the role of politeness in managing hierarchy and collaboration, while Harianja et al. (2024) extend this inquiry to digital spaces like podcasts. Nahdi (2024) focuses on education, illustrating how politeness contributes to classroom interaction and learning. Collectively, these studies affirm that politeness is not confined to casual conversation but is integral to professional, academic, and mediated communication.

Film-based studies provide further evidence of the analytical value of politeness frameworks. Fitri (2022) examines politeness in *Mulan*, highlighting how cultural values are embedded in heroic narratives. Salasabila and Rahayu (2023) analyze *Stranger Things*, showing how politeness strategies reflect generational and cultural differences. Widiasari (2023) applies politeness theory to other textual data, emphasizing its adaptability across genres. Many of these works employ frameworks from Leech (1983) or Brown and Levinson (1987), underscoring the enduring relevance of these theories for pragmatic inquiry. However, despite the richness of this body of research, relatively little attention has been given to *Wicked*, particularly as a recent film adaptation with a distinct cultural resonance. This gap presents an opportunity to explore how politeness strategies contribute to character development, thematic exploration, and cultural representation in a globally popular narrative.

This study therefore seeks to examine how Leech's politeness maxims are employed in the dialogue of *Wicked*. By analyzing interactions through the lenses of tact, approbation, generosity, and agreement, the research aims to uncover how linguistic strategies shape character portrayal and maintain social equilibrium within the film's narrative. Moreover, the study situates *Wicked* within broader discussions of cinematic discourse, where politeness functions as both a reflection of social norms and a narrative mechanism for exploring power, identity, and morality. The significance of this inquiry lies not only in enriching the understanding of politeness theory in practice but also in demonstrating how films contribute to the ongoing negotiation of cultural values through language. In doing so, the research underscores the importance of pragmatics in bridging linguistic analysis with cultural interpretation, highlighting the relevance of politeness as a universal yet context-sensitive dimension of human communication.

METHOD
Research Design
    This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to analyze the politeness maxims in the movie Wicked (2024). A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of utterances in their natural context, focusing on how characters' dialogues reflect Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle. As suggested by Khoirunisa et al. (2022), qualitative research emphasizes systematic data collection, classification, and interpretation to uncover linguistic patterns within authentic discourse.

Research Object
    The object of this research is the dialogue in Wicked (2024), a film directed by Jon M. Chu and adapted from the 2003 Broadway musical by Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman. The film provides rich conversational data, particularly through the interactions of its main characters, Elphaba, Galinda, and Madam Morible which exhibit diverse politeness strategies across academic, social, and political settings. The analysis focuses specifically on identifying and classifying utterances that illustrate politeness maxims according to Leech's (1983) framework.

Data Collection
    Documentation method was applied within this study in collecting the data. Moreover, note-taking technique was applied to support the data collection. There are several steps was conducted, including: watching the movie 'Wicked (2024)', and sorting the utterances those are regarded as maxim of politeness by note-taking technique. After the referred data are sorted based on the theory, the data were analyzed by providing particular explanation and classified based on the category. The data were identified and classified into the following types, maxim of politeness based on Leech (1983).
    After collection, the data were classified into categories of politeness maxims—tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy—as proposed by Leech (1983). Each utterance was analyzed by providing explanations of its context and function in the dialogue. The results were then interpreted to reveal patterns in how the characters' speech reflects the use of politeness strategies in the film.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Research Findings
    The Researcher do note taking technique by watching the movie several times analyzing the utterances, marking the important utterances, after analyzing and identifying the instances the researcher categorized them into 6 maxims based on Leech (1983) theory.Such as Generosity, Tact, Agreement, Approbation, Sympathy, Modesty Maxim. The total of the data can be seen on the table below.

Table 1.Frequency of Politeness

No	Types of Maxim	Occurrence	Percentage
1.	Generosity maxim	3	15%
2.	Tact maxim	2	10%
3.	Approbation maxim	7	35%
4.	Agreement maxim	2	10%
5.	Sympathy maxim	5	25%
6.	Modesty maxim	1	5%
Total		20	100%

    Table 1 illustrates a nuanced distribution of politeness maxims, highlighting how characters in the data prioritize certain strategies over others. The Approbation Maxim

emerges as the most dominant with seven instances (35%), reflecting a strong tendency to value praise, compliments, and positive reinforcement as means of fostering rapport. Closely following is the Sympathy Maxim (25%), which demonstrates the importance of showing concern and empathy, suggesting that emotional alignment plays a central role in sustaining interpersonal bonds. In contrast, Generosity (15%), Agreement (10%), and Tact (10%) appear less frequently, indicating that while characters occasionally minimize their own benefit, seek consensus, or avoid imposing on others, these strategies are less central to the dialogue. The Modesty Maxim, with only one instance (5%), is the least observed, pointing to a limited emphasis on self-effacement. Collectively, these patterns reveal a preference for positive face–oriented strategies over those that require self-deprecation or restraint.

Table 2.Frequency of Politeness in each character

No	Character	Types of Maxim	Occurence	Percentage
1.	**Elphaba**	Agreement	1	5%
		Modesty	1	5%
		Sympathy	1	5%
2	**Glinda**	Agreement	1	5%
		Approbation	1	5%
		Generosity	2	10%
		Sympathy	3	15%
		Tact	1	5%
3	**Morrible**	Approbation	6	30%
		Generosity	1	5%
		Sympathy	1	5%
		Tact	1	5%
Total			20	100%

Elphaba, as protagonist, often applies the Modesty Maxim (e.g., "I've been practicing for years"), which highlights her humility and reinforces her image as a misunderstood but sympathetic figure. Glinda, as foil, tends to use Sympathy and Generosity Maxims, showing her supportive role and eventual moral growth. In contrast, Madame Morrible, the antagonist, relies heavily on the Approbation Maxim, using exaggerated praise to manipulate and control. Thus, protagonists employ maxims to build solidarity, while the antagonist exploits them for domination

Politeness maxims function pragmatically as strategies for managing face and social relations. In Wicked, Elphaba uses Modesty to express humility, Glinda applies Sympathy and Generosity to build solidarity, and Morrible exploits Approbation to manipulate. These pragmatic choices reveal how politeness reflects power, empathy, and control in character interactions.

Generosity Maxim

According to (Leech 1983) theory Generosity maxim is to minimize benefits to self and maximize cost to self. This maxim aims to encourage individuals to place the others interest first over their own.

(1)   *Madam Morrible   : Elphaba. You can room with Miss Galinda*
       Elphaba   : What?I…What?
       Madam Morrible   : Now, go. All of you, go. Go. And you. Come with me.
       Galinda   : Of course.
       *Madam Morrible   :Not you. You **I would like to teach you privately and take no other students***
       Elphaba   : Uh, thank you so much

(Wicked, 2024: 24)

The line can be interpreted as aligning with the generosity maxim, which encourages speakers to minimize benefit to themselves and maximize benefit to others. By choosing to teach only Elphaba and refusing all other students, Madam Morrible appears to be forgoing broader recognition or influence in favor of dedicating her time and effort exclusively to one student. This suggests a form of personal sacrifice, fulfilling the condition of "cost to self."

Approbation Maxim

Approbation maxim is where the speakers minimize dispraise to others; maximize praise of others, which means the speakers must using polite language and maintain harmony.

(2)   *Glinda*   : *Well, that was… unexpected.*
       Student   : *Did you see that?!*
       Elphaba   : *I didn't mean to— it just happens sometimes.*
       Glinda   : *Don't be silly, it was rather thrilling!*
       Madame Morrible   : *Miss Elphaba…*
       Madame Morrible   : ***How long have you had this… talent?***
       Elphaba   : *Talent? No. Something just—comes over me, sometimes. Something I can't control… And when it does… bad things happens*

(Wicked, 2024: 26)

By designating Elphaba's unstable magical ability as a "talent," Madame Morrible strategically recontextualizes a stigmatized attribute into one that is ostensibly positive and socially valued. From a pragmatic perspective, this utterance constitutes an application of the Approbation Maxim, as it amplifies the hearer's positive qualities and thereby affirms Elphaba's worth within the interactional frame. Crucially, however, the compliment operates on two levels: while ostensibly enacting positive politeness by legitimizing Elphaba's power, it simultaneously functions as a manipulative device intended to secure her compliance and facilitate future influence. In this sense, Morrible's use of approbation illustrates how politeness strategies can be appropriated for strategic ends, aligning with her discursive role as an antagonist whose benevolence masks coercive intent.

Modesty Maxim

According to the Leech (1983) theory of Politeness strategy, The principle in modesty maxim is to be aware of minimize praise of self; maximize dispraise of self. This maxim expresses that individuals should minimize self-praise and express their achievements in a humble manner during communication.

(3)   *Glinda*   : *Well, that was… unexpected.*
       Student   : *Did you see that?!*
       Elphaba   : *I didn't mean to— it just happens sometimes.*
       Glinda   : *Don't be silly, it was rather thrilling!*
       Madame Morrible   : *Miss Elphaba…*
       Madame Morrible   : *How long have you had this… talent?*
       Elphaba   : ***Talent? No. Something just—comes over me, sometimes.*** *Something I can't control… And when it does… bad things happens*

This utterance exemplifies Leech's Modesty Maxim, which urges speakers to minimize praise of self and maximize self-deprecation. By explicitly rejecting Morrible's framing of

her ability as a "talent," Elphaba distances herself from any positive evaluation and reframes her power as a liability. The choice of phrases such as "something I can't control" and "bad things happen" reinforces a negative self-presentation, emphasizing danger and deficiency rather than skill.

Agreement Maxim

Agreement maxim defined as minimizing agreement to self and other; maximizing agreement between self and other based on the Leech (1983). Same as the other maxim principle, in this maxim the speaker aim to align with other's view when appropriate and articulate disagreement in a tactful and subtle way.

(4)   *Galinda*   : *Dearest darlingest Momsie and Popsical... Guess what?*
       Elphaba   : *My dear Father... Thank you for agreeing to let me stay.*
       Galinda & Elphaba   : *There's been some confusion over rooming here at Shiz.*
       Galinda: : *Unusually and exceedingly peculiar, and altogether quite impossible to describe...*
       Elphaba   : *Blonde.*
       Galinda & Elphaba   : *Yes! Loathing! Unadulterated loathing!*

(Wicked, 2024: 30–31)

By jointly proclaiming "Yes! Loathing! Unadulterated loathing!" Galinda and Elphaba strategically align their stances in what begins as a private act of letter-writing and escalates into a shared declaration. From a pragmatic perspective, this moment exemplifies the Agreement Maxim, as both speakers minimize potential disagreement and instead amplify mutual concurrence, even if the object of agreement is their dislike for one another. The repetition and emphatic parallelism of "loathing" underscores the performative nature of their consensus, transforming antagonism into a harmonized interactional frame.

Crucially, however, this agreement is ironic: rather than fostering solidarity through positive content, the characters construct relational alignment through shared negativity. In this sense, the Agreement Maxim is not simply about endorsing harmonious opinions but about displaying a cooperative orientation at the discourse level. Their synchronized utterances mitigate direct conflict by channeling hostility into a jointly constructed, almost playful rivalry. Thus, the scene illustrates how agreement can serve both interpersonal bonding and face-saving purposes, even in contexts of antagonism.

Sympathy Maxim

According to the Leech (1983) framework, the sympathy maxim focusing in minimizing expressions of interpersonal conflict and maximizing sympathetic engagement between speaker and hearer.

(5)   *Madam Morrible*   :*Dearie, this is the Wizard of Oz. If he's gonna grant your heart's desire*
       Elphaba   :*But prove myself how? I….I'm not ready. It's too soon.*
       Madam Morrible   :*Don't be so pessi-mystical. I, too, had to prove my powers when I met the Wizard.* ***You'll find a way. I have faith in you.***

(the Wicked, 2024: 84)

Madame Morrible's final turn, "Don't be so pessi-mystical. I, too, had to prove my powers when I met the Wizard. You'll find a way. I have faith in you.", serves as a salient realization of the Sympathy Maxim. By aligning her own past experience with Elphaba's present uncertainty, Morrible demonstrates empathy and reduces the interpersonal gap between teacher and student. The expression "I have faith in you" maximizes support for Elphaba's emotional state, countering her expressed anxiety.

In Leech's terms, the Sympathy Maxim urges speakers to maximize concord and minimize antipathy. Morrible does this by reframing Elphaba's hesitation not as weakness but as a natural stage that she herself once faced. This creates solidarity and provides comfort, mitigating Elphaba's negative self-assessment. Although Morrible's sympathy is strategically motivated, its linguistic form is one of reassurance, fostering positive face needs and encouraging Elphaba to continue.

Tact Maxim

The purpose of tact maxim is to minimize cost to others; maximize benefits to others. On the other word this maxim shown 'other centered', meaning that reduce any potential burden on others while enhancing their advantage or gain.

(6)   *Elphaba*   : *I'm just shutting the door!*
        Galinda   : *Oh, do you mind leaving it open? I so enjoy… air!*
        Galinda   : *I saved you some space, by the way.*

(the Wicked, 2024: 29)

Galinda's utterance, "Oh, do you mind leaving it open? I so enjoy… air!" provides a clear instantiation of Leech's Tact Maxim, as it reframes what could have been a direct command ("Leave it open") into a polite request. By employing the interrogative structure ("do you mind"), Galinda minimizes the imposition on Elphaba and simultaneously presents the action as a matter of personal preference rather than obligation. This mitigates the potential face-threatening act of restricting Elphaba's behavior and shifts the burden of choice back to her, thus preserving Elphaba's negative face.

Her subsequent follow-up, "I saved you some space, by the way," further reinforces the politeness strategy. Although framed as a generous act, the statement subtly implies Galinda's authority over the shared environment, positioning herself as the one who decides how the room is organized. The phrasing performs a dual function: on the surface, it maximizes benefit to the other (Elphaba receives space), but implicitly it reminds Elphaba of Galinda's control.

In Leech's terms, this exchange highlights how the Tact Maxim operates not merely as a means of softening requests, but also as a strategy of power negotiation. Galinda manages to impose her own preferences—keeping the door open and establishing territorial dominance in the room—while couching these moves in a discourse of consideration and benefit. Thus, tact serves as a veil for self-interest, enabling Galinda to exert subtle influence without overtly threatening the social harmony of the interaction.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a complex interplay of politeness maxims in *Wicked* (2024), where Approbation (35%) and Sympathy (25%) dominate, while Modesty (5%) is least frequent. This distribution highlights a marked preference for positive face–oriented strategies, suggesting that characters in the film rely more on praise and empathy than on self-effacement. Situating these results within prior scholarship helps to illuminate how cinematic discourse both reflects and reshapes cultural understandings of politeness, while also offering insights into the pragmatic functions of language in character portrayal and narrative development.

Earlier pragmatic studies on politeness in film and media have consistently emphasized the prominence of positive strategies. Fitri's (2022) analysis of *Mulan* found that characters relied heavily on approbation to emphasize respect and admiration, reinforcing cultural values of honor and heroism. Similarly, Firdaus and Simatupang (2022), in their study of *Squid Game*, observed that even in high-conflict settings, approbation and sympathy emerged as strategies for sustaining temporary alliances. The present findings resonate with these observations: the dominance of approbation and

sympathy in *Wicked* confirms that positive strategies remain central to how characters maintain relationships and negotiate social harmony. However, the findings also underscore a manipulative dimension, particularly in Madame Morrible's use of approbation, which extends the discussion beyond politeness as courtesy to politeness as an instrument of control.

The prominence of approbation in *Wicked* also aligns with studies of politeness in educational and institutional contexts. Dewi, Amin, and Qalbi (2023) found that teachers in classroom interactions frequently employed approbation to encourage students and maintain a supportive environment. Likewise, Wartika et al. (2024) demonstrated that approbation in classroom discourse fosters motivation and reduces conflict. In *Wicked*, Morrible's exaggerated praise of Elphaba's "talent" mirrors these patterns, though with a darker twist: rather than genuine encouragement, her compliments mask manipulation. This dual function of approbation, simultaneously affirming and controlling, suggests that film discourse may exaggerate the strategic uses of politeness to dramatize power relations.

The second most frequent maxim, sympathy, highlights the emotional dimension of politeness strategies. Sympathy maximizes expressions of care and minimizes expressions of antipathy, often functioning to bridge emotional gaps. This finding aligns with Salasabila and Rahayu's (2023) study of *Stranger Things*, where sympathy emerged as a key strategy among teenage characters navigating friendship and conflict. Similarly, Handayani et al. (2022) found that in online discussions, expressions of sympathy helped mitigate misunderstandings and foster solidarity. In *Wicked*, Glinda's repeated use of sympathy reinforces her role as a supportive foil to Elphaba, signaling her gradual moral growth. Meanwhile, Morrible's occasional sympathy, as when she reassures Elphaba about meeting the Wizard, reflects how empathy can also be used strategically to persuade.

By contrast, the low frequency of modesty reflects a different cultural and pragmatic orientation. While Leech (1983) emphasized modesty as a central politeness strategy, many contemporary studies have shown that self-effacement is less frequently emphasized in Western media. Isabella et al. (2022) found that in film-based classroom materials, modesty appeared less often compared to approbation and agreement, reflecting cultural shifts toward assertiveness and self-promotion. The single modesty instance in *Wicked*—Elphaba downplaying her ability by labeling it "something I can't control"—underscores her marginalized status rather than a dominant cultural value. This contrasts with Sugianto and Tawali's (2024) study of Sasak language politeness, where modesty was central to avoiding rudeness with elders, reflecting local cultural priorities.

Generosity and tact, though less frequent, reveal significant nuances in how characters negotiate power and solidarity. Leech's definition of generosity—minimizing benefit to self and maximizing cost to self—emerges in Morrible's apparent sacrifice of teaching time for Elphaba, though the interaction reveals hidden motives. Similarly, tact, which involves minimizing imposition, appears in Glinda's polite request to keep the door open. These instances echo Harianja et al. (2024), who found that tact and generosity were common in podcast discourse, where speakers sought to avoid imposing on audiences while presenting themselves as considerate. In *Wicked*, however, tact and generosity function less as genuine other-centered strategies and more as subtle mechanisms for influence. This dual role suggests that politeness maxims in film can serve as narrative devices for exposing characters' intentions, whether altruistic or self-serving.

Agreement, appearing in only two instances, nonetheless illustrates the pragmatic importance of alignment in discourse. The shared refrain of "Loathing! Unadulterated loathing!" between Elphaba and Glinda exemplifies ironic agreement: while the content is antagonistic, the cooperative performance of the utterance transforms rivalry into playful rapport. This aligns with Supriatna et al. (2023), who noted that agreement, even when built on negative content, functions to sustain interactional flow and reduce direct

confrontation. The example from *Wicked* extends this argument by showing that agreement can also dramatize antagonism while maintaining narrative cohesion.

Theoretically, these findings contribute to the ongoing debate about the scope and function of Leech's Politeness Principle. While earlier studies (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987) emphasized universality in politeness strategies, more recent research underscores cultural and contextual variation. The current study shows that in cinematic discourse, politeness maxims are not only relational tools but also aesthetic devices for shaping character identities and advancing plots. Morrible's manipulative approbation, Elphaba's modesty, and Glinda's sympathy illustrate how politeness can encode power, empathy, and conflict simultaneously. This suggests that pragmatic theories must account for the layered functions of politeness in mediated discourse, where strategies are deliberately constructed for dramatic effect.

Practically, the findings hold implications for both pedagogy and intercultural communication. As Sentana et al. (2022) noted, films can serve as pedagogical tools for teaching pragmatics, allowing learners to observe politeness strategies in action. The nuanced use of maxims in *Wicked* provides rich material for illustrating how linguistic choices encode social meanings. For educators, these findings emphasize the need to highlight both the positive and strategic dimensions of politeness, enabling students to understand how politeness can sustain harmony but also mask manipulation. In intercultural contexts, the study reinforces the importance of recognizing variability in politeness strategies: while Western cinematic texts foreground approbation and sympathy, other cultural settings may prioritize modesty or tact.

The findings also resonate with broader discussions about ideology in media. Xiaowen (2022) argued that films both reflect and shape ideology, and the portrayal of politeness in *Wicked* supports this claim. By foregrounding praise and empathy, the film reinforces cultural values of affirmation and emotional connection, while downplaying humility. At the same time, the manipulative uses of politeness reveal a critical awareness of how language can be weaponized, reflecting contemporary concerns about authenticity and trust in social interactions. Thus, politeness in *Wicked* functions not only as a linguistic resource but as a commentary on the dynamics of power, identity, and morality.

The distribution of politeness maxims in *Wicked* reflects broader patterns identified in previous studies while also extending them in significant ways. The dominance of approbation and sympathy aligns with earlier findings that positive strategies are central to sustaining relationships in both real and fictional contexts. The rarity of modesty contrasts with studies in culturally different settings, highlighting the importance of contextual specificity. The manipulative uses of approbation and sympathy expand the discussion of politeness beyond courtesy, showing how these strategies can encode power and control. Collectively, the findings enrich both theoretical understandings of politeness and practical applications in pedagogy and intercultural communication, affirming the continued relevance of pragmatic analysis in the study of cinematic discourse.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that all six of Leech's politeness maxims—Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy—are reflected in the dialogue of Wicked (2024). The predominance of approbation and sympathy highlights the characters' reliance on praise and empathy as primary strategies for maintaining rapport and navigating social interactions, while the minimal presence of modesty underscores the limited role of self-effacement in this context. These results reveal that politeness in cinematic discourse is not only a matter of linguistic etiquette but also a pragmatic tool that encodes character identity, emotional alignment, and social positioning. The pragmatic choices made by Elphaba, Glinda, and Madame Morrible

illustrate how politeness strategies both sustain relationships and expose underlying power dynamics, emphasizing the dual role of politeness as harmony-building and manipulation.

This study contributes to the broader understanding of pragmatics by situating politeness within the layered context of film dialogue, where language is carefully crafted to dramatize character development and social themes. Theoretically, the findings extend Leech's framework by showing how maxims may be appropriated for strategic and even antagonistic purposes, reflecting the interplay between language and ideology. Practically, the analysis affirms the pedagogical value of film as a resource for teaching pragmatics, intercultural communication, and critical literacy, offering learners concrete examples of how politeness strategies function in both authentic and dramatized contexts. Ultimately, the study underscores the enduring relevance of politeness theory for analyzing mediated discourse and highlights the importance of considering cultural and narrative contexts in shaping the functions of politeness in communication.

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