

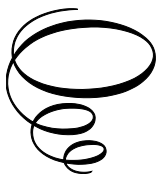
Analysing the
Pragmatics of Speech
Acts in Sitcom and
Drama Audiovisual
Genres

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By

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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-5541-0

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-5541-9

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I received a great deal of support in the completion of this book. First and foremost, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the supervisor of this research project, Dr Alicia Martínez-Flor, for her encouragement, guidance and help during all stages of my work. This study would not have been possible without her assistance, constant support and patience.

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INTRODUCTION

The field of pragmatics has already been recognised as an area within linguistics which has emphasised the communicative perspective of language (Levinson, 1983; Leech, 1983; Crystal, 1985; Thomas, 1995; Kasper, 1997; LoCastro, 2003; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010a). This change from previous theoretical frameworks has contributed to the development of a new perspective towards language in which not only formal features but also interactional and contextual factors are considered (McCarthy 1991; Thomas, 1995; Clark, 1996; Yule, 1996; Crystal, 1997; Verschueren 1999; Bublitz, 2001; Mey, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2001; LoCastro, 2003; Schauer, 2009; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010a). Regarding its communicative perspective, aspects such as speech acts, politeness, context and interactional patterns are studied since there is a need to understand the processes of everyday interactions in order to generate new input sources in which such aspects could be seen and studied.

Then, the nature of pragmatics, as fostering a more communicative perspective of the language (Taguchi, 2019), needs research on aspects influencing interactions. As related to that perspective, speech act theory, politeness, context and interactional patterns have been considered as basic aspects to take into account in order to shed light on such a communicative perspective. First, speech act theory is necessary in order to determine the pragmalinguistic nature of the language produced (Austin, 1962, 1976; Searle, 1969; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1988; Boxer, 1993, 1996, 2010; Trosborg, 1995; Murphy & Neu, 1996; DeCapua, 1998; Martínez-Flor, 2005; Salazar, Safont & Codina, 2009; Chang, 2010; Kondo, 2010). Second, politeness theory based on the notion of face helps in understanding speakers' linguistic production (Goffman, 1955, 1971; Grice, 1975; Lakoff, 1973, 1977, 1989; Leech, 1983, 2003, 2005; Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987; Fraser, 1990). Third, context consists of participants, the place and time any interaction takes place, and also includes the specific linguistic behaviour in particular social settings and institutions (Malinowski, 1923; Ochs, 1979; Cicourel, 1980; Yule, 1996; Verschueren, 1999; Cutting, 2002; LoCastro, 2003; Huang, 2007; d'Hondt et al., 2009). Finally, interactional patterns are referred to as those recurrent linguistic and non-linguistic realisations in conversations (i.e.

turn-taking, sequences and adjacency pairs) (Hymes, 1972; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1978; Levinson 1979, 1983; Thomas, 1995; Yule, 1996; LoCastro, 2003).

Thus, the aim is to examine all the previously mentioned aspects in the audiovisual media as previous research has already suggested this data source is appropriate due to the presence of almost authentic conversations (i.e. pragmalinguistics), as well as politeness, context and conversational aspects (i.e. sociopragmatics) influencing them (Balatova, 1994; Herron, Hanley & Cole, 1995; Rose, 1997, 2001; Ryan, 1998; Arthur, 1999; Canning-Wilson, 2000; Grant & Starks, 2001; Washburn, 2001; Alcón, 2005; Kite & Tatsuki, 2005; Martínez-Flor, 2008; Fernández-Guerra, 2008; Martínez-Fernández & Fernández-Fontecha, 2008). However, considering the audiovisual media as an adequate input source, there is a need to include more audiovisual genres just than that of film. Therefore, this research has investigated sitcom and drama audiovisual TV genres since their definitions and main features seem to indicate that they can be appropriate input sources regarding the aspects previously pointed out (Baker, 2003; Gatfield & Millwood Hargrave, 2003).

The aspects of pragmatics, namely (1) the focus on speech acts production; (2) the aspects of politeness, context and interactional patterns influencing linguistic behaviour; and (3) the potential of audiovisual genres as a valuable source of pragmatic input, have motivated this study. In particular, the aim is to examine the presence of the above-mentioned pragmatic aspects within speech act production in the audiovisual genres of sitcom and drama. The study is divided into two parts. Part 1 of the study includes a review of the theoretical grounds upon which the present research was built, and Part 2 reports the study conducted.

Part 1 consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on pragmatics. Sections 1.1 and 1.2 introduce the concept of pragmatics from its origins as a reaction to Chomsky's (1965) paradigm which mainly focused on competence, to a more performative one which centres on performance as the capability to produce messages throughout interaction (Levinson, 1983; Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995; Kasper 1997; LoCastro, 2003; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010a). Second is a description of its components, and those of pragmalinguistics (Leech, 1983) and sociopragmatics (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995; LoCastro, 2003). The former describes the linguistic resources in a language to convey meaning, while the second describes the use of those linguistic resources in a given context taking into account social variables such as status, social distance, power, rights and obligations, and the degree of imposition implicit in message production. Thus, in section 1.3 is a description of three concepts which also influence

message production and are related to both the pragmalinguistic and the sociopragmatic components: subsection 1.3.1 briefly describes speech act theory (i.e. pragmalinguistics) since Chapter 2 is entirely devoted to speech acts; subsections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 describe politeness theory and the concept of context respectively (i.e. sociopragmatics). The relevance of politeness theory is related to the way we convey messages since people consciously or unconsciously apply the sociopragmatic variables of distance, power, and ranking of impositions (Brown & Levinson, 1987) before uttering a sentence. In relation to context, it is also thought to influence the way speakers convey messages. Within context the following notions are considered:

- participants, mainly adapted from Ochs (1979), Cicourel (1980) and Verschueren, (1999);
- microcontext, following Ochs (1979), Yule (1996) and Verschueren (1999);
- macrocontext, based on the previous definitions provided by Ochs (1979), Verschueren (1999) and Cutting (2002).

Since this study focuses on the realisation of the speech acts of apologies, complaints, refusals, requests and suggestions, Chapter 2 involves

- an overview of the speech act theory;
- the introduction and description of concepts related to speech acts production in interaction;
- a detailed description of the speech acts researched on this project.

Thus, section 2.2 of this chapter is devoted to provide an introduction of the speech act theory from its origins, as well as describing some problems and consequent innovations. The original classifications (Austin, 1962, 1975; Searle, 1969) are described in subsection 2.2.1. Then, the descriptions of some problems with those original taxonomies are also provided (Geis, 1995; Thomas, 1995; Trosborg, 1995; LoCastro, 2003). The problems suggested are those of the differentiation between direct and indirect speech act realisation (Yule, 1996; Huang, 2007) and also the proposal of a more recent and complete speech act theory (Geis, 1995) known as the dynamic speech act theory (DSAT) in subsection 2.2.3. Section 2.3 focuses more specifically on interaction and it provides the description of the concepts and approaches related to speech acts in interaction. The first distinction described is the one related to conversation/interaction (Yule, 1996; Cutting, 2002) concluding that

conversation is an interaction process in which interactants' linguistic and paralinguistic resources, time, context and co-text coexist and should be taken into account. On the other hand, interaction is described as speakers' linguistic way of addressing each other by following politeness conventions (subsection 2.3.2). The second concept is that of turn-taking, following the proposal by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1978) who described turn-taking processes as a social action device in conversations. The third concept includes sequences and adjacency pairs (subsection 2.3.3) since they are devices to start, maintain and end conversations (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996). Finally, there is a description of speech events (Hymes, 1972; Thomas, 1995; Yule, 1996; LoCastro, 2003) and activity types (Levinson 1979, Thomas, 1995) as approaches to analyse the dynamics of interaction and the negotiation of meaning between participants in a conversation (subsections 2.3.3 and 2.3.4). Subsection 2.4 presents the speech acts analysed, those of

- apologies (Chang, 2010; Kondo, 2010; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983);
- complaints (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1988; Boxer, 1993, 1996, 2010; Trosborg, 1995; Murphy & Neu, 1996; DeCapua, 1998);
- refusals (Salazar, Safont & Codina, 2009);
- requests (Trosborg, 1995: 205);
- suggestions (Martínez-Flor, 2005).

Every speech act presentation includes a short introduction in which its definition is provided, as well as its face nature (i.e. saving or threatening), and preference structure (i.e. first or second pair part). Then, a taxonomy is provided in which its realisation type (i.e. direct or indirect), the strategies used to convey such speech act as well as examples of each strategy are included.

Regarding the fact that this study focuses on the realisation of speech acts (i.e. pragmalinguistics) and how the variables of politeness and context (i.e. sociopragmatics) influence the linguistic production, the main source of data in which both the pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic components are researched is that of the audiovisual media. Then, in section 3.2 the necessary conditions for pragmatic learning are described (i.e. input, output and feedback). After the revision of those conditions, the focus turns to pragmatic input by first revising the criticism generated towards materials, specifically that of course books, since these have been recognised as not providing learners with

- the exposure to appropriate input;
- opportunities to collaborative practice;
- metapragmatic reflection (Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010b).

Additionally, a considerable amount of research has been carried out supporting that criticism (Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Meier, 1997; Mandala, 1999; Grant & Starks, 2001; Salazar & Usó-Juan, 2001, 2002; Washburn, 2001; Boxer, 2003; LoCastro, 2003; Vellenga, 2004; Kakiuchi, 2005; Salazar, 2007; Usó-Juan, 2007). Thus, as a reaction towards course books, some studies are presented that appraise audiovisual materials as an appropriate source of pragmatic input (Balatova, 1994; Herron, Hanley & Cole, 1995; Ryan, 1998; Arthur, 1999; Canning-Wilson, 2000). On the one hand, research conducted on the use of films in relation to speech acts realisation is described (Rose, 1997, 2001; Kite & Tatsuki, 2005; Martínez-Flor, 2008, among others). On the other hand, research on TV serials as an audiovisual resource has also been carried out with positive outcomes (Grant & Starks, 2001; Washburn, 2001; Alcón, 2005). Consequently, it seems that sitcom and drama can also be an adequate source of pragmatic input since the pragmalinguistic and the sociopragmatic component of the language can be found. Thus, in subsection 3.3.2, the focus is on sitcom and drama by providing their definitions (Baker, 2003; Gatfield & Millwood Hargrave, 2003) and presenting research previously conducted dealing with both sitcoms and serials (Fernández-Guerra, 2008; Martínez-Fernández & Fernández-Fontecha, 2008).

Part 2 of the research involves the description of the study carried out in order to provide answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Do the speech acts found in conversations from both sitcom and drama follow the direct and indirect realisations as previously proposed by researchers' taxonomies (i.e. pragmalinguistics)?
- 2) Are the pragmalinguistic realisations for each speech act, examined in both sitcom and drama, influenced by the aspects of politeness (i.e. distance, power and imposition) and context (i.e. participants, microcontext and macrocontext) as they happen in everyday conversations (i.e. sociopragmatics)?
- 3) Are the interactional patterns of turn-taking, sequences and adjacency pairs found in fully-contextualised conversations from both the sitcom and drama?

The research questions attempt to analyse

- the direct and indirect realisations suggested in the speech act classifications (i.e. pragmalinguistics);
- the effects of the aspects of politeness and context in the linguistic behaviour of participants (sociopragmatics);
- the presence of the interactional patterns of turn-taking, sequences and adjacency pairs in both the sitcom and drama.

Apart from stating the purpose of the study and presenting the research questions, Chapter 3 also addresses the methodology adopted in this research. Thus, in section 4.2 is the definition of

- the data analysed in the research (subsection 4.2.1);
- the procedure employed in the process of data development (subsection 4.2.2);
- the data analysis itself (subsection 4.2.3).

In section 4.3 the results are presented, and their description taking into account aspects of pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic and interactional patterns. Section 4.5 is devoted to the discussion regarding the results presented in the previous subsections. Finally, a general conclusion of the present research is provided along with the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

PART 1:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 1

PRAGMATICS

1.1 Introduction

In its initial stages, the study of language focused mainly on the capability for understanding how language works (Chomsky, 1965). However, since the 1980s, research has indicated that there was a need to change that language competence focus to a more practical perspective on the use of language. Throughout this chapter, a review of this change of perspective is provided by focusing on pragmatics as the language discipline that has fostered this change. Several researchers have contributed to help build up this new focus on language competence based on usage and performance (Levinson, 1983; Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995; Kasper 1997; LoCastro, 2003, etc.). Pragmatics is concerned with the study of language from a particular point of view in which interactants are the main source of meaning. This meaning is communicated throughout interaction and this interaction involves a dynamic negotiation process between speakers. Any interaction takes place in a context (immediate physical setting) but it is also indirectly linked to, and dependent on, social and cultural factors. Moreover, there should be a differentiation between the two main components within this new approach to language: i) the pragmalinguistic component, which specifically depicts the linguistic resources available for the speaker to choose when interacting (e.g. directness, indirectness, pragmatic routines, modification devices) and ii) the sociopragmatic component, which involves cultural and social factors (e.g. social status, social distance, power, rights and obligations, and the degree of imposition) influencing linguistic choices.

After introducing the field of pragmatics and providing a complete and understanding of the definition of its components, this chapter moves to define some specific concepts directly related to this discipline, due to their communicative nature. Such concepts are those of speech acts (Austin, 1976; Searle, 1969), politeness (Grice, 1975; Leech, 1983; Lakoff, 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987, etc.) and context (Malinowski, 1923; Cicourel, 1980; Verschueren, 1999; Cutting, 2002; Huang, 2007, etc.).

These concepts are described by following their evolution and different interpretations, since numerous researchers have studied them in detail. First, speech act theory is related to pragmatics since it describes and classifies linguistic action patterns used by speakers in a given interaction. Second, politeness theory influences those linguistic choices based mainly on the variables of distance, power and imposition that affects interactants' linguistic behaviour. Finally, the concept of context is seen as delimiting both politeness theory and speech act resources since, as a wide concept, it mainly involves the ongoing setting but most importantly social and cultural factors constraining interaction.

1.1.1 Origins and components

There have been crucial changes since the early 1980s related to the study of language from a pragmatic point of view. The main point to be made was the change of perspective from a focus on competence, whose main exponent has been Chomsky (1965) in his theory of mental faculty towards performance. It was noted that this faculty was essential to convey meaning in language use and interaction. Thus, this relatively new paradigm which gives greater importance to language performance rather than language competence has been termed *pragmatics*. A great number of scholars have presented their own definitions for this new paradigm (Alcón & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Bublitz, 2001; Crystal, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2001; LoCastro, 2003; Schauer, 2009) among many others. Crystal's (1985) definition of pragmatics has been considered as the one better reflecting the nature of pragmatics in its origins since users' linguistic choices, the constraints they face and the effects of their production when using language are studied. In addition to that, some other researchers (McCarthy, 1991; Thomas, 1995; Clark, 1996) contributed to the definition and expansion of the concept of pragmatics in the early 1990s, considering pragmatics as the study of

- meaning in context;
- meaning in interaction;
- the necessity of focusing on non-linguistic elements such as utterances and signs.

Thomas (1995) placed emphasis on the role of pragmatics as the study of meaning in interaction as a negotiation process in which “physical, social and linguistic” context (Thomas, 1995: 22) may have an important role.

The twenty-first century has been the most representative in terms of the evolution of pragmatics, due to the impact of previous theories in the 1980s and 1990s and their effect on research conducted afterwards. For the purposes of this book, research carried out by Bublitz (2001), LoCastro (2003), Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010a), and Schauer (2009) has been considered as reflecting a step forward in the description of pragmatics under a more contemporaneous and elaborated point of view. Thus, Bublitz's (2001) contribution resides in the understanding of the intended meaning since the use of linguistic forms and communication strategies can be described by pragmatics. First, LoCastro (2003: 11) defined pragmatics as "an inherently functional perspective on language". That functionality is reflected in the linguistic and non-linguistic means by which the speaker produces their intended meaning. In addition to that, the author placed emphasis on both speaker and hearer as meaning-creation entities while interacting, since linguistic choices and constraints when using language are important. Apart from interactants, importance was given to the distinction between linguistic (co-text) and non-linguistic aspects as entities included in the term context. Thus, it can be inferred from this definition that speaker and hearer are the main sources of meaning when uttering sentences. As seen in the characteristics proposed above, LoCastro (2003) thought it was necessary to include and describe participants, the different contexts in which interaction can take place, the limitations when using a language and the effects of language use in any interaction between participants.

Schauer (2009) went a step further in the definition of pragmatics with the purpose of not only spreading but also delimiting the scope of pragmatics by emphasising the coding and decoding system of utterances, principles of rational and effective communication and the role of society (Bublitz, 2001; Mey, 2001). Some of the inclusions provided with that aim were speech act theory, the cooperative principle, politeness theory and conversational implicature. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2010a) proposed pragmatics principles and features based on previous research (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1995; Verschueren, 1999; Yule, 1996). First, meaning creation, negotiation and interpretation between speaker and hearer within any interaction; second, the particular context in which interaction takes place which may include the physical, social and linguistic context; third, meaning creation as a dynamic concept negotiated throughout the process of communication in a specific context. Furthermore, they suggested some defining characteristics of pragmatics:

- language use with communicative purposes;
- language function importance over language form;
- communicative purposes' study;
- context importance;
- authentic language use;
- applicability to different disciplines.

Having provided the different definitions and characteristics of pragmatics through time, it is also necessary to describe its two main components, which are pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The pragmalinguistic component was defined as “the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” (Leech, 1983: 11). On the other hand, the term sociopragmatics was originally described as “the sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech, 1983: 10). Several studies have been carried out with the aim of describing both components in more detail (Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Barron, 2003; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2010a). Having examined this bulk of research, it was agreed that pragmalinguistic competence includes the linguistic forms and resources that are available to communicate and understand intended meaning. These resources include pragmatic strategies such as directness and indirectness when conveying meaning, as well as the use of pragmatic routines (Bardovi-Harlig & Mossman, 2017). The usefulness of these resources resides in interactants' ability to boost or diminish the illocutionary force in any conversation. Sociopragmatic competence is related to the social and non-linguistic aspects constraining interaction, for instance social status and sociological variables (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Thus, taking into consideration all the definitions of pragmatics and its main components previously described, the definition of pragmatics to be adopted in this particular research needs to take into account meaning in interaction, linguistic and non-linguistic notions of context, interactants' linguistic choices and the constraints they encounter within the communication process itself. Then, some of the main characteristics considered essential for the study and applicability of pragmatics are presented below:

- The main sources when conveying meaning are speakers and hearers, since both are involved in creation and interpretation of meaning.
- As a dynamic concept, meaning is negotiated by interactants.

- Paralinguistic resources such as body language should receive attention since these help in meaning creation and understanding.
- As context may affect interaction in different ways, two different interpretations of this term should be provided. On the one hand, the physical context which has been traditionally referred as setting and involves not only the immediate context where any interaction can take place, but also factors that may influence interaction – for instance, social and cultural factors. On the other hand, co-text is defined as the linguistic context and it reflects the sociopragmatic variables' effect on the linguistic choices, interactional patterns and communication strategies chosen by speakers and hearers.

Summing up, the term pragmatics has been introduced by providing its definitions, components and aspects related to it. As it is a relatively new language paradigm, it necessary to develop a more expanded description of the concepts implicit in the achievement of communicative actions. The next subsection is devoted to

- an introduction to speech act theory as it is related to the pragmalinguistic component in pragmatics;
- politeness theory as constraining linguistic production and connected to sociopragmatics;
- the concept of context as the physical and spatial setting in addition to the linguistic creation of meaning from an already existing linguistic background.

1.2 Concepts related to pragmatics

This section presents speech act theory, context and politeness since these are directly related to pragmatics. First, is a brief description of speech act theory from its founders (Austin, 1976; Searle, 1969) to more recent theories, for example the dynamic speech act theory (DSAT) proposed by Geis (1995) although more detailed information is given in Chapter 2. Second, politeness theory is reviewed as it influences interaction and must be necessarily understood in order to describe pragmalinguistic choices. The last part in this subsection is devoted to the description of context theory to determine its importance and influence in conversation.

1.2.1 Speech act theory

What follows is a brief outline of speech act theory, which is widely developed in Chapter 2. The most representative figures regarding speech act theory are considered to be Austin (1976) and Searle (1969), since both established their own theories on speech acts. Austin (1976) based his theory on performative verbs, which imply the performance of actions when speaking. Thus, he differentiated between three different types of main acts produced:

- locutionary, which is the oral production itself;
- the illocutionary act, which represents the intention and force of the locutionary act;
- the perlocutionary act, which is the effect of the speaker's words on the hearer.

His proposal was a classification of illocutionary acts based on performative verbs. In addition, he proposed what he coined as felicity conditions on performatives, which represent conversational postulates to be understood and produced as such. Austin's work influenced his PhD student John Searle who published *Speech Acts* some years later in 1969. In his work, Searle (1969) differentiated between illocutionary acts and illocutionary verbs, affirming that it is not necessary to use a performative verb to achieve an illocutionary act. His classification of speech acts, which also include indirect speech acts, was based on the illocutionary point, direction of fit and sincerity conditions.

Both theories have received criticism as context and politeness factors were not considered and are thought to influence speech act production. As a reaction, some new theories presenting innovations have been developed for example Geis's (1995) DSAT theory, which puts emphasis on speech acts' production and understanding as goal-recognition and goal-achievement process carried out by interactants fostering their abilities in differing specific contexts.

1.2.2 Politeness theory

Although the very concept of politeness involves "... proper social conduct and tactful consideration of others" (Kasper, 1994, pp. 3206), its study under a pragmatic scope has become a complete and meaningful paradigm due to researchers' manifold contributions (Brown and Levinson, 1978, 1987; Fraser, 1990; Grice, 1975; Lakoff, 1973, 1977, 1989; Leech,

1983, 2003, 2005). Kasper (2009) differentiated between two main politeness theory approaches. First, politeness is seen as a set of rules or maxims to be achieved to accomplish interactions (Grice, 1975; Lakoff, 1977; Leech, 1983). The second approach was seen as a system of rules governing social interaction (Fraser, 1990) or the social functions of language in interaction carried out by Brown and Levinson (1987), which was derived from the notion of face (Goffman, 1955). A short summary of these theories is presented below from the earlier to more recent ones.

Grice's cooperative principle was defined as "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice, 1975: 45). Thus, it is speakers' rationality and goal-achievement purpose that may lead interaction to fulfil conversational needs. In order to achieve these needs, the author proposed four different maxims, i.e. quantity, quality, relation and manner, which should be taken into consideration when accomplishing the cooperative principle.

- *Quantity*: Give as much information as required (specific communicative exchange demands) and avoid information overload.
- *Quality*: The information given must be truthful and concordant with facts. Avoid deceitful statements and those which miss authentic evidences.
- *Relation*: Provide pertinent and significant information.
- *Manner*: Be clear and easily understood when communicating meaning. Try not to be inconclusive or ambiguous. Achieve communicative purposes precisely, following the logical order, and be concise.

As conversation is considered to be a dynamic process, if speakers achieve these maxims the result will be a predetermined type of conversation in which question-answer patterns and pauses will be recurrent. Providing that all speakers know these conversational patterns of interaction, interactions will result in non-spontaneity. However, as interactants convey meaning in diverse ways, Grice accounted for the possibility of not adhering to his super maxims (SMs), and a maxims system that could be violated or flouted. If a maxim is flouted, the hearer needs to inference its meaning in order to understand the speakers' words, which entail the speaker sharing contextual knowledge with the hearer on many occasions. When a maxim is flouted, it does not mean that the cooperative principle has been flouted, but the provision of more information than what was linguistically conveyed, which leads to

conversational implicature. The violation of a maxim implies the clash of one maxim with another.

One of the main drawbacks in Grice's SM and the maxims' system is that the speaker receives all the attention, releasing the hearer to a secondary position which is only seen as important in the communication process when a maxim is flouted and there is a need to infer the conversational implicature produced by the speaker. Leech (1983) proposed a more balanced position between speaker and hearer, not only seen as necessarily inferencing when a maxim is violated or flouted, but also as an essential part of conversation. Leech's politeness principle (1983, 2003, 2005) is on the one hand to be considered as a continuum from Grice's cooperative principle because of the similarities present in the model of politeness in conversation. On the other hand, the innovations proposed by this author are related to the inclusion of the hearer as an essential part in the interactional view of conversation and the explanation of the use of indirectness when trying to communicate meaning. Leech's (1983)¹ politeness principle contains six maxims:

- *Tact* refers to sensitiveness and implies the speaker's reduction of effort to the hearer by increasing the hearer's aid.
- *Generosity* is related to benevolence and entails benefit minimisation and cost maximisation to the speaker.
- *Approbation* can be described as reducing criticism and disapproval to others while increasing approval and recognition of others.
- *Modesty* is related to decency and humility. This maxim can be described as increasing the speaker's disapproval and lessening the speaker's recognition.
- *Agreement* is a maxim that implies compliance and understanding between speaker and hearer. Both are assumed to reduce disagreement and maximise agreement.
- *Sympathy* as a maxim is related to mutual affection and support. Interactants must boost sympathy and lessen aversion.

In addition to these maxims, he proposed some independent variables that work as filters when accomplishing the maxims. These variables are

- *social distance*, which represents interactants' social relationship with each other and can be described as closeness e.g. family members or close friends, and distance e.g. unknown people;

¹ See G. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, London: Longman, 1983, p. 132

- *authority* which includes interactants' social status, age and also gender;
- *costs and benefits* which imply the effects of the act on the hearer e.g. the use of indirectness to achieve politeness and deference.

Conversely to the previous authors, Lakoff (1973, 1977, 1989) explicitly described the notion of context and its possible effects in interactions. The politeness model presented by this author includes a set of politeness rules coined as *formality*, *hesitancy* and *equality of camaraderie* (Lakoff, 1977: 88).

- *Formality*: This can be achieved by remaining distant to the addressee. Thus, the increase or decrease of distance directly affects the degree of formality and/or informality speakers want to achieve.
- *Hesitancy*: Permit the addressee to decide by not forcing them into a decision and give options if possible, even when these options do constrain the addressee's volition.
- *Equality of camaraderie*: This rule might imply modification of distance to achieve equal status with the addressee, also described as a "rule of informality" (Lakoff, 1977: 14).

In addition to these maxims, the politeness proposal also included two main principles by which any linguistic and non-linguistic interaction should be governed: 'make yourself clear' and 'be polite' (Lakoff, 1977: 86). Lakoff highlighted that contextual conditions may influence the choice of politeness rules when communicating. His interest resides in the critical factors to produce polite or impolite utterances. These factors are "status differences between interlocutors, degree of familiarity between speaker and hearer, and the culture in which the utterance is made" (Schauer, 2009: 10).

Following the description of the three politeness theories based on the accomplishment of maxims and the inclusion of hearer and context as also affecting the achievement of politeness in any interaction, is the description of the last two theories of politeness. These are not conceived as a system of maxims but as a set of linguistic strategies to attain politeness. These theories were proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Fraser (1990). Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory has become one of the most influential theories of politeness. Their proposal of linguistic strategies was based on the notion of face proposed by Goffman as the "positive social value of a person effectively claims for himself by the line

others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman, 1955: 5). In order to improve and adapt the notion of face to the necessities of their politeness theory, Brown and Levinson reformulated the notion of face as any individual claim for a universal self-image which is directly related to two aspects, termed positive and negative face. As individuals, our positive face implies the approval and recognition of personality traits and character aspects by other individuals. On the other hand, negative face entails “freedom of action and from imposition” (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 61) which any individual can expect from others. In other words, any individual wants that their actions will not be blocked by any other individual. Thus, the interdependence of the terms of face and interaction was expressed as awareness of interactants’ face (Yule, 1996).

When dealing with face as the main point of departure, it should be noted that it can be maintained, lost or enhanced. It depends on interactants’ choice of performing a *face-threatening act* (FTA), which is defined as “acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker” (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 65), or a *face-saving act* (FSA) which is described as reducing the impact of the utterance and is achieved by the use of positive or negative politeness strategies. Positive ones are characterised by preserving the positive face of the addressee and are aimed at showing “closeness and solidarity, appealing to friendship, making other people feel good and emphasising that both speakers have a common goal” (Cutting, 2002: 48). The notion of solidarity within positive politeness strategies refers to the use of linguistic forms with the objective of reducing distance and increasing closeness. Some of these linguistic forms were pointed out as the use of “... personal information, use of nicknames, abusive terms (males), and shared dialect or slang expressions” (Yule, 1996: 65). On the other hand, negative politeness strategies try to minimise the imposition of an FTA by showing distance, avoiding imposition and giving options to the addressee (Cutting, 2002). As a way to convey negative politeness, the use of deference (Yule, 1996) such as negative politeness linguistic forms helps the speaker and hearer to demonstrate distance. The result of distance is respecting the hearer’s face and it is mainly communicated linguistically with the use of impersonal strategies or socially with social behaviour.

Brown and Levinson (1987) centred their attention on FTA and proposed five super-strategies which speakers can choose from to perform an FTA, since face can be lost in any interaction. The first decision that any speaker has to make is whether to do the FTA or not. If he decides to do it, there are two options – doing it on-record or off-record. Off-record implies communicating the message in a non-clear way by the use of

indirect linguistic forms in order for the hearer to completely or partially interpret the utterance. Thus, this strategy choice means flouting any of the Gricean maxims (Grice, 1975) and leads to conversational implicature in which the hearer and context play an important role in the interpretation of the message uttered. Conversely, when the speaker chooses an on-record strategy, two further options are available. The first option implies *non-redressive* action and means following the Gricean maxims of efficient communication by uttering direct messages. Within this option, the speaker can decide between non-minimising the face threat and using the bald-on-record strategy. Non-minimisation may take place in cases of urgency, warning or channel noise while the second option can be used in welcoming, farewells and offers. The second on-record strategy available means *redressive* action and can be achieved by using positive and negative politeness strategies, since the main purpose is giving face to the hearer. It has been defined as an “action ... that attempts to counteract the potential damage of the FTA ... with such modifications or additions, that indicate clearly that no such face threat is intended or desired, and that S in general recognises H’s face wants and himself to be achieved” (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 69-70).

As a relevant factor in Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory, the choice of the different strategies pointed out above is related to the evaluation of sociological variables described as follows:

- *Distance* (D) is described as “a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purposes of this act” (Brown & Levinson, 1994: 76). Thus, this sociological variable is related to two main aspects; the first one is the social relationship between individuals, which is determined by the number of encounters and their degree of formality. The second aspect is associated with the material and non-material aspects negotiated. As face can also be negotiated, it was suggested that closeness between interactants is the result of low distance which is achieved by reciprocal acceptance of the individuals’ face.
- *Power* (P) is defined as “an asymmetric social dimension of relative power” (Brown & Levinson, 1994: 77). The authors differentiated between two sources of power: material, and metaphysical control over others. The first one includes economic and physical power while the second means the regulation and restriction of the others’ actions, for example, obedience and compliance reflect great power over individuals.

- *Ranking of impositions* (R) “is culturally and situationally defined by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent’s ... negative and positive-face wants” (Brown & Levinson, 1994: 77). Two identifiable ranks for negative-face FTA were suggested, those implying the expenditure of services which include the provision of time, and others related to goods which include, for instance, non-material goods such as information.

Finally, Fraser’s (1990) conversational contract (CC) is the last politeness theory reviewed in this subsection, which is not built up as a construct of maxims but norms that govern any social interaction. These rules were termed rights and obligations that are influenced by the notion of context and social parameters that may change at any time during interaction. The definition of context includes the specificity of a situation and the effects of previous interactions on the current one. As social parameters Fraser understands the influence of status, power and speakers’ role on interactants’ rights and obligations. Consequently, participants are supposed to behave appropriately and cooperate in meaning negotiation assuming both their way of addressing each other and the content of conversation, in other words, turn-taking, sequences, silence and their intended action when speaking. Fraser affirmed that the central focus of his CC was negotiation since it works as a balance instrument: “During the course of time, or because of a change in the context, there is always the possibility for a renegotiation of the CC: the two parties may readjust what rights and obligations they hold towards each other” (Fraser, 1990: 232). Regarding politeness and differing from the previous models described, it is considered as a dynamic entity which at first is brought into conversation by interactants, i.e. rights and obligations, but can also develop throughout the interaction as an element to be negotiated and renegotiated, which at the same time is context-influenced.

To sum up, politeness in pragmatics can be defined as and concerned with the “... ways in which the relational function in linguistic action is expressed” (Kasper, 1994: 3206). The context in which interaction is taking place must be necessarily taken into consideration since it influences linguistic action. For the purposes of this research, the models which seem to be more appropriate are those outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987), and Fraser (1990). The main reasons for adopting those models for the analysis of speech acts in audiovisual material from a pragmatic point of view are the following:

- the numerous strategies and linguistic resources to express meaning;
- the focus on interactants' intentionality when selecting on-record or off-record strategies;
- the influence of the sociopragmatic variables of distance, power and imposition;
- the role of interactants adhering to rights and obligations in conversation;
- the dynamics of interaction as a negotiation process in which politeness and rights and obligations can also be renegotiated;
- the effect of linguistic context, i.e. a previous interaction, on the current one;
- the notion of context itself where interaction takes place as also influencing interaction.

1.2.3 Context

One of the earlier definitions of context was proposed by Malinowski (1923) who defined context of situation pointing out that "... a word without linguistic context is a mere fragment and stands for nothing by itself, so, in the reality of a spoken living tongue, the utterance has no meaning except in the context of situation" (Malinowski, 1923: 37). From this definition, the differentiation between the linguistic context (i.e. words uttered) and the context of situation as not comprising linguistic units can be observed. Although they were considered as separated entities, the author explicitly describes a relationship of interdependence between them. This original distinction has been used by linguists when trying to define the term context. Nevertheless, more elaborated theories of this concept have been developed (Cicourel, 1980; Cutting, 2002; d'Hondt et al. 2009; Huang, 2007; LoCastro, 2003; Ochs, 1979; Verschueren, 1999; Yule, 1996). A brief summary of the theories dealing with context are presented below in chronological order.

Between the 1970s and the 1980s, Ochs (1979) and Cicourel (1980) presented their theories of context departing from Malinowski's (1923) context of situation by offering a more detailed description, evolution and specificity of concepts. First, Ochs (1979, as cited in Duanti and Goodwin, 1992) outlined a theory of context considering *setting, behavioural environment, language as context and extrasituational context*. By so doing, the author included in the definition of context the social and physical framework in which interactions take place, participants' body language and behaviour, language as a contextual resource for producing