

LANGUAGE POLITENESS: APPLYING MADURESE CULTURE ROLE PLAY TO HABITUATE STUDENTS' LANGUAGE MODESTY

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Abstract

This study aims to discover and explain how politeness maxims are employed in the Madurese theme role-playing. The study employs qualitative design of the research. It also employs observation technique and depth interview to obtain the data. In analyzing the data, it applies interactive model: data reduction, display, and/claim. This study finds ten politeness maxims in the using of Madurese theme role- playing.

Keywords: *language politeness, Madurese culture, role-playing*

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of language politeness in Pragmatics remains interesting to deeply review and discuss. It pointedly relates to the way the society communicates in their social life, yet communicating is not simply just to convey a message or intention to the interlocutor. In their communication, people are demanded to consider and understand the language ethics, modesty, and procedures. In this case, the language ethics should meet the cultural rules or values running in the society. It is believed that speakers who can communicate politely will be more likely acceptable in the society rather than those who cannot. In other words, speakers who use socially accepted language (i.e., ethical and modest language) appear to be more comfortable in terms of communication than speakers who harshly and arrogantly use the language. Moreover, it is also believed that using ethical and modest

language in communication can save and avoid speakers from social conflicts that are caused by unjustified language used by the speakers in the communication process.

Using polite language in communication is a tangible form of proper language manners, and politeness in language usage is a real demand for all language users. Nevertheless, how is polite language being relatively indistinct because using language politely for a speaker in a certain culture is not same as another culture. Language politeness and culture are two things that cannot be separated, yet as stated by Leech (2014) that the values considered as norms are different from one culture to another culture. In addition, Watts (2003) shows that polite language is as an expression or language which shows honor towards other. In other words, in order to be considered as someone who speaks politely, the speaker should keep away from using lineal language.

For example, in some culture there is a need to use language containing respectful forms such as *please*, *thank you*, or *sorry* in order to be considered as polite speaker in communication.

Language politeness is usually discussed in Pragmatics subject. It is often associated with how the speakers show honor for others' *face* (public self-image) in conversation (Brown and Levinson, 1987); reinforce interpersonal relationships; and follow the rules for appropriate behaviors considered by the society (Leech, 2014). In addition, he stated that public self-image (self-esteem) includes the feeling and desires of the interlocutors. Kadar and Haugh (2013) has another term for mentioning self-esteem, it is *face-wants*. After Brown and Levinson (1987), in the case of strategy of showing politeness to interlocutors, Leech (2014) mentioned *positive face goal* which deals with the need of avoiding loss of face and *negative face goal* which deals with the need of gaining or enhancing face. Avoiding loss of face means that speakers should minimize the potency of humiliating interlocutors' self-image in communication. Furthermore, raising face means that speakers should increase the interlocutors' self-image.

Language politeness often happens in our daily interaction. The phenomenon can be both in direct communication (face-to face) and indirect communication (for example a communication through Whatsapp

application). The following is the example of personal chat via WhatsApp application.

S : "Mam, mau tanya, besok berarti kita ga ada kelas ya?"
(Ma'am, so, we will not have a class tomorrow, will we?)

The instance above is personal WhatsApp chat between a lecturer and a student in one of colleges in Madura. According to the norms in Madurese society, such the way seems *impolite* because the expression used is too direct and informal. It can lower the self-image of the lecturer. The expected situation is that the student uses indirect language that can raise the lecturer's self-image. In other words, the student is hoped to employ *Negative Politeness* strategy (Leech, 2014).

Related to the situation above, based on the social norms in Madura, the social relation between lecturer and student is what Leech (2014) called *vertical social distance*. In this case, the student is on the position of lower status and power. Otherwise, the lecturer is on the position of higher status and power. So, it is hoped that the student can heighten the lecturer's face (maintain her self-image) using expression which is not too direct and informal.

The student might use to add polite words like *mohon maaf* (excuse me), *mohon ijin* (if you don't mind), etc. Therefore, in order to be more socially appropriate, such

expressions used by the student t might be modified as follow:

“Mohon maaf, Ibu. Mohon ijin untuk bertanya. Saya mendapatkan informasi bahwa untuk sementara perkuliahan besok akan ditiadakan. Apakah informasi tersebut benar adanya?”

(Excuse me, Madam. Please allow me to ask. I got information that the course will be temporarily off tomorrow. Is it true?)

The instance above is a language phenomenon of socially inapposite language used by student college. This crucial issue must be overcome urgently. Furthermore, it is being lecturer's matter to be solved. It becomes moral responsibilities for the lecturer as an educator to negotiate the issue by educating the students how to use good and polite language in their daily communication. Moreover, she/he has to teach and habituate the students to use socially suitable language in their daily communication. As stated by Watts (2003) that politeness is something we have to acquire, not something we are born with.

Learning and socializing into polite language and behavior in communicative interaction is not as easy as what is fairly thought. It needs habituation, and habituation can be held through teaching activity. However, teaching and habituating polite and modest language towards student needs tricky ways to make it naturally fun and interesting.

By having such fun and interesting teaching activity, it is expected that the students can heartedly remember and apply the modest language in their daily communicative interaction. It means that fun teaching activity of language politeness might enable students to apply the language appropriately in their daily life.

In relation to that case, role playing is believed to be one of the effective, interesting, and creative ways to teach and habituate students' language modesty. By its definition as *situations in which learners take on the role profiles of specific characters or representatives of organizations in a contrived setting* (Wills *et al*, 2011), role playing gives the students opportunity *to have direct experience of the unpredictable nature of language in use* (Ladousse, 1987). Role playing enables them to naturally learn and be socialized into the use of polite or modest language. It potentially stimulates and predisposes them to understand how to be a good communicator in communicative interaction that enables them use polite or modest language which is socially acceptable in the society.

Basically, there are several other main reasons why role play needs to be applied in teaching and habituating students to use polite language. Adopting what Ladousse (1987) mentioned, role-playing is needed in this context because: (1) students' experiences can be combined with learning activities, and they can be trained to use polite language in several situations through

experience (role-playing). (2) Students are able to adapt in any situations in which they are needed to use and develop any forms of language which indeed face the running social norms in society. Role-playing has a benefit to build up their social skill. (3) Role-playing can be as a rehearsal for real life. Students are able to learn how interaction might take place in various situations through role-playing activity. (4) Role-playing is helpful for students to change their poor personality to preferable one. For example, it helps the shy students to be more confident and expressive, helps the abusive students to be more polite and friendly, etc. Similarly, Binder (2013) pointed out that one of the benefits of applying role play in learning is that role play is a fun activity and it can train students with the expected skills accurately.

This study substantially focuses on Madurese culture that is implemented in language politeness. Therefore, the use of language use cannot be separated from the speaker's culture (Nurjamily in Nurdiyanto & Resticka, 2021). The language uttered in the conversation of Madurese theme role play will be analyzed by using a socio-realistic approach. It is a combination of Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics. Sociopragmatics is a study concerns on the use of language in a cultural society in certain social situations. Sociopragmatics describes the strategy of communicating language users in an attempt to preserve social relations in society. It explains how the utterances used in the

Madurese theme role play indicate differences in speech as a way to employ the manners' principles (Tobing in Nurdiyanto & Resticka, 2021). Pragmatics competence is applied in the Sociolinguistic competence which is the capability to use language in relation to the social cultural rules that underlie the use of language or the rules underlying the acceptance of speech use related to the communication parts. In some distinct cultures, a speech action will have a dissimilar value either in terms of politeness or the way it is interrupted by the speaker's culture (Nurdiyanto & Resticka, 2021).

Furthermore, in this study, MOTHER (Madurese Theme Role Play) was specifically proposed to habituate polite or modest language towards students of a state university in Madura. It is a kind of role play in which Madurese theme (i.e., Madurese culture) is carried out. The Madurese theme is raised in this study because of the need to introduce Madurese local wisdom and the need to teach and habituate students at the university how to use communicatively polite or modest language in accordance with the prevailing social norms in Madura. The main reason why it is necessary to bring the values of Madurese local wisdom in familiarizing and habituating students with polite language is because they, while studying at the state university in Madura, will interact and communicate with teachers, friends, and other people who in fact adhere to the norms prevailing in the Madurese social community.

Therefore, it is expected that by raising the Madurese theme, students can better understand the cultural values that exist in Madura, especially in terms of communicating with other people, so that they can use the language properly, in accordance with the context of the ongoing situation without hurting other's self-esteem.

Based on those explanations, this study attempts to explicate the implementation of maxims of GSP (General Strategy of Politeness) in MOTHER (Madurese Theme Role Play) which deals, in this case, with Madurese culture. The issue is discussed collaboratively in results and discussion section.

METHODS

The research design of this study is qualitative design. Brink in Mohajan (2018) said that qualitative research focuses on people's belief, experience, and meaning systems from people's view. Statistical analysis and empirical calculation are not the domain of qualitative research. Furthermore, the aim of qualitative research is to provide a itemized fathom into behavior, emotion, attitudes, and experiences of human being

(Tong et al. in Mohajan, 2018). It is in line with this study's aim: to explain the phenomenon of language politeness of students in Universitas Trunojoyo Madura. The data of this research are taken from students' dialogues in Madurese theme role play. The scope of the data is focused on the students' utterances in Madurese theme role play that contain language politeness.

Moreover, in order to collect the data, this study employs observation, depth interview, and field-notes. In order to analyze the data, this study applies interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and data verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ten maxims of GSP (General Strategy of Politeness) found in some utterances of Madurese culture role play's scripts. 83 data found are categorized on the theory of GSP stated by Leech (2014), they are maxim of generosity, tact, approbation, modesty, obligation (of S to O), Obligation (of O to S), agreement, opinion reticence, sympathy, and feeling reticence. The findings are indicated in the following.

Table 1. Maxims of GSP

MOTHER (Madurese Theme Role Play)	General Strategy of Politeness (Leech, 2014)									
	GM	TM	ApM	MM	OSOM	OOSM	AgM	ORM	SM	FRM
Role-Playing 1	14	3	5	2	2	0	10	6	2	3
Role-Playing 2	8	3	5	0	4	3	10	0	3	0
Total	22	6	10	2	6	3	20	6	5	3

GM : Generosity Maxim
 TM : Tact Maxim
 ApM : Approbation Maxim
 MM : Modesty Maxim
 OSOM: Obligation (of S to O) Maxim

OOSM: obligation (of O to S) Maxim
 AgM : Agreement Maxim
 ORM : Opinion Reticence Maxim
 SM : Sympathy Maxim
 FRM : Feeling Reticence Maxim

Based on the table above, it indicates that all parts of GSP are implemented in the scripts of Madurese theme role play. Generosity maxim is the most frequent maxim of GSP from all data. It has twenty-two data. The upcoming position is agreement maxim, it has twenty data. Then, approbation maxim has ten data of the total data. Tact maxim, obligation (of S to O) maxim, and opinion reticence maxim have the same amount of data, each of them has six data. Sympathy maxim becomes the next position, it has five data of the total data found. There are their data for each obligation (of O to S) maxim. Also, feeling reticence maxim has the same total of data as obligation (of O to S) maxim. The weakest total maxim is modesty maxim, it has two data of the total data found.

Generosity Maxim

Generosity maxim means to provide an elevated value to other's wants. This maxim can be lineal or even enforcing, i.e. offers, invitations, and promises (Leech, 2014). In the script of role-playing 1, it is found twenty-two generosity maxims analyzed. Extract 1 below will be the example of generosity maxim.

Extract 1

Siti : *Assalamualaikum, Mar!
 (jeda) Assalamualaikum!*

Marlena : *(dari dalam rumah Marlena menjawab) Waalaikumsalam!
 Tunggu sebentar!*

(Marlena membuka pintu) oh kamu ternyata Sit. Aku kira siapa. Ayo masuk! Kita ngobrol di teras belakang aja ya?

Siti : *Baiklah.*

Marlena's utterance needs a response of giving high value to others' wants. Marlena offers Siti to have a talk in the back porch of her house. Siti agrees with Marlena's offer, it means that Siti tries to provide high values to Marlena's want. Therefore, those utterances are categorized as generosity maxim.

Marlena and Siti's utterances above uttered politely since they contain favorable value to others. The word *ya* and *baiklah* becomes dauntless lineal feature to indicate that speaker really redounds what others' offer It can be a good example for the college students how to interpret meaning by preventing offense in their daily communication. To motivate others is a part of general strategy of politeness. It is something that is also said in

Quran. Allah SWT says in Quran Surah Al Imran: 139.

مُؤْمِنِينَ كُنْتُمْ إِنَّ الْأَعْلُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا

So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.

QS. Ali Imran 139

Agreement maxim

The concept of agreement maxim is to give value to others' ideas. In replying the opinion to others' ideas, being agree is the form of preferred answer and being disagree is dispreferred answer. The extract below is the representative of agreement maxim.

Extract 2

Siti : *(terkejut dan tak percaya)*
aku gk salah denger, Mar?
kamu bilang begitu?

Marlena : *Iya, Siti. Kamu gak salah denger kok. Aku mengurungkan niatku untuk melanjutkan Pendidikan ku.*

It can be seen from the extract 2 above that Marlena shows her agreement response through her utterance. Marlena agrees with Siti's utterance. She says *Iya Siti, Kamu ga salah denger kok* means that she agrees about Siti's question about Marlena who will not continue her study. She utters preferred answer to respond Siti's idea, so this is included in the maxim of agreement.

Approbation Maxim

This maxim is in relation to quality. If the speaker provides an upper value to others' qualities, she will meet approbation maxim. Approbation maxim is to lessen other's disapproval and to increase the other's honor (Watt, 2003).

Moreover, the speaker inclines to provide honors to listeners or others. They incline to evade uttering dreadful things about the others. In the two role play scripts, there are ten data of approbation maxim found in both of two role-playing above. The extract of the maxim will be described below.

Extract 3

Siti : *Nah itu kamu bisa berfikir gitu.*

Dimana Marlena, anak paling pintar dan cerdas di sekolah yang selalu berprestasi dan bersemangat dalam belajar? Ini bukan kamu, Mar. Aku tau banget kamu kayak apa orangnya. Jadi, jangan kamu tutupi, Mar.

Siti's utterances above points that she maximizes a praise to Marlena's characters: smart and impassioned. She tries to bring Marlena's confidence up by raising a praise for her. Siti does not want Marlena dropout from her study, so she uses approbation maxim by mentioning high value of Marlena.

Tact Maxim

Speaker's utterance contains tact maxim

if it gives a low value to speaker's wants (Leech, 2014). This is such a familiar aspect of politeness that can be seen in extract 2 below.

Extract 4

Laura : *Tidak, aku memutuskan untuk menyewa apartemen di Surabaya saja, karena menurutku lebih dekat untuk mengunjungimu.*

Mia : ***Kamu sudah menghubungi pihak dari apartemenmu***

Extract 4 is taken from the second role play script *Jumpa Kawan*. The utterance uttered by Mia above sounds directive even though expressed in the form of question. Mia actually wants to suggest Laura to contact apartment official before she comes to Surabaya, but Mia says her wants indirectly. Her utterance above gives an opportunity to refuse. It means that she gives a low value to her wants. It is suitable with the concept of agreement maxim.

Mia's utterance above shows that she does not force others to do what she wants. In other words, she gives a low value of her wants as a speaker. In her utterance, she only directs Laura to find any information about the apartment, so it may be accepted or rejected by the interlocutor /Laura. This utterance can be an example how is the way how to advise/direct others in a polite way. It supports the concept of GSP in which the speaker expresses or implies a meaning that has a favorable value for others and avoids offenses.

Obligation (of S to O) Maxim

The concept of obligation (of S to O) maxim is to give a high value to speaker's obligation to hearer. The example of this maxim is apologies for some offenses by speaker to hearer. Another example of this maxim is expression of gratitude for some favor which the hearer has done to the speaker. This maxim has six data of the total eighty-three data found. The representative of the data will be explained in the following discussion.

Extract 5

Sholeh : *Buat apa anak cewek sekolah tinggi-tinggi. Ujung-ujungnya gak guna juga. Anak perempuan itu hidupnya Cuma di dapur. Lulus SMA aja itu sudah sangat hebat dan ijazahnya gak bakal kepaek juga, kan?*

Siti : ***Maaf paman.*** *Setau saya Marlina anak yang pintar dan cerdas. Sayang sekali jika dia tidak melanjutkan sekolahnya. Kalau paman khawatir akan biaya sekolahnya, dia bisa sekolah dengan gratis dengan kepintarannya itu. Pasti dia bisa dapat biasiswa penuh. Jadi paman tidak perlu khawatir.*

Siti expresses an apology because she feels doing an offense to Mr. Sholeh. She denies his argument about education for female. She finds that it is an offense to other, so she says an apology to Mr. Sholeh.

Another example of this maxim is an expression of gratitude that will be shown in extract 6 below.

Extract 6

Sholeh : *Baiklah, kalau kamu seyakin itu pada anak kita itu. Aku ijinan dia untuk melanjutkan sekolahnya tapi inget dia harus dapat biasiswanya terlebih dahulu, baru aku perbolehkan dia menjutkan.*

Julaihah : *Alhamdulillah. **Terimakasih pak.** Marlana pasti senang sekali.*

Mrs. Julaihah shows her gratitude for her husband's favor because he finally permits their daughter (Marlena) to continue her study. Both these gratitude expression and apology expression above are categorized as obligation (of S to O) maxim.

Opinion Reticence Maxim

Leech (2014) wrote that opinion reticence maxim is to give a low value to speaker's opinion. People frequently soften the force of their own opinions by using propositional hedges such as I think, I guess, it might be that, etc. In other case, the speaker consults the hearer's opinion. Speaker defers to hearer's supposed greater understanding, wisdom, or experience. There are six data of opinion reticence maxim found, and it is

found only in the script of *Marlena*. Here is the extract containing opinion reticence maxim.

Extract 7

Siti : *Loh, kenapa? Karena biaya? Kamu kan pintar! Kamu bisa dapat biasiswa dan kamu bisa sekolah dengan gratis.*

Marlena : *Tak semua hal yang kita inginkan bisa kita dapatkan, Sit. **Mungkin** memang seperti ini jalan hidup ku.*

Siti : *Jalan hidup seseorang itu bisa di ubah dan **tergantung pada pilihanmu sendiri.***

From the extract above, both Marlena and Siti's utterances contain opinion reticence maxim. Actually, they do not agree with others' opinion, but they soften the force of their opinion. Marlena uses the word *mungkin* to soften her disagreement. While, Siti utters *tergantung pada pilihanmu sendiri* to show that she does not force her opinion to Marlena. Therefore, these utterances are classified into opinion reticence maxim.

Sympathy Maxim

The examples of sympathy maxim are congratulations, condolences, and good wishes. It is polite to show others that speaker share their feelings both sad and joyful. The speaker gives a high value on the hearer's feelings (Leech, 2014). Sympathy maxim has five data found in both *Marlena* and *Jumpa kawan* scripts. Here is one of the representatives.

Extract 8

- Laura : *Sudah, kok. Kebetulan aku mempunyai teman disana jadi temanku merekomendasikan salah satu apartemen. Yasudah ya, aku tutup telponnya. Pesawat mau take off sebentar lagi, aku sudah berada didalam saat ini.*
- Mia : *Iya, hati-hati. Semoga sampai dengan selamat.*
- Laura : *Terimakasih, sampai jumpa, Mia.*
- Mia : *Iya, sampai jumpa juga, Laura.*

Mia utters good wishes when she knows that a plane ridden by Laura will take off. She says *Hati-hati, semoga sampai dengan selamat* is a form of sympathy from Mia to Laura. This utterance is intrinsically polite and it should be uttered clearly to the hearer, need no mitigation.

Obligation (of O to S) Maxim

The definition of obligation (of O to S) maxim is to give a low value to hearer's obligation to speaker (Leech, 2014). Responses to thanks often minimize the debt, for instance: that's all right, you're welcome, no problem, it was a pleasure, etc. Meanwhile, responses to apologies often minimize the fault, for example: it is okay, don't worry, it was nothing, etc. There are three data of this maxim found in *Jumpa Kawan* script only. Here is the example.

Extract 9

- Laura : *Tentu saja! (nada senang), aku merasakan sesuatu yang belum pernah aku coba, Mia. Terimakasih sudah mengajakku ke tempat-tempat luar biasa hari ini.*
- Mia : *Sama-sama, aku senang mendengarnya. Besok aku akan mengajakmu makan sate khas Madura, kemudian pergi ke toko tempat oleh-oleh khas Madura. Kamu bisa membawanya nanti saat pulang ke Canada untuk orang tuamu. Bagaimana?*

From extract 9 above, it can be seen that Mia gives a response to Laura's thanks. She says *sama-sama, aku senang mendengarnya*. This is such a familiar response when speaker says thanks to others.

Another example of this maxim can be seen in the following extract.

Extract 10

- Mia : *Oh, iya (tertawa) ada apa, Laura? Tumben kamu menelponku?*
- Laura : *Memangnya tidak boleh?*
- Mia : *(nada panik) maaf, bukan begitu maksudku,*
- Laura : *(tertawa) santai saja, Mia. Aku menelponmu karena ingin mengabarimu kalau aku akan berlibur ke Indonesia selama beberapa hari. Aku ingin mengunjungimu, bisakah kamu memberikan lokasi tempat tinggalmu?*

Extract 10 is the example of response to apology. Mia apologizes to Laura because she feels that her utterance offends Laura. However, Laura laughs and says *santai saja*, it means that she tells Mia that she does not have any fault of her utterance.

Feeling Reticence Maxim

Feeling reticence maxim means to give a low value to speaker's feelings. Brown and Levinson (1978) say that it appears that in English, one shouldn't admit that one is feeling too bad (Leech, 2014, p.98). It means that speaker tries to suppress his/her feeling even though it is bad/sad feeling. Feeling reticence maxim has three data found only in the script of *Marlena*. Here is the discussion of one of the data.

Extract 11

Siti : *Jalan hidup seseorang itu bisa di ubah dan tergantung pada pilihanmu sendiri. Sebelumnya kamu sangat semangat untuk melanjutkan sekolah mu sampai setinggi-tingginya. Bahkan kamu yang memotifasi aku untuk terus sekolah. Sekarang kok malah kamu yang mundur? Ada apa sih? Mungkin aku bisa bantu.*

Marlena : ***Bukan apa-apa, Sit. Aku harus membantu orang tua ku. Kamu tau kan kalau aku anak satu-satunya di keluargaku.***

Marlena suppresses her sad feeling. She feels sad because she cannot continue her

study at university. Her father does not permit her to study at university. She says *bukan apa-apa, Sit* to convince Siti that her feeling is okay although she feels sad truly. Marlena gives a low value to her feeling through her utterance. Therefore, it is categorized into feeling reticence maxim.

Modesty Maxim

Leech (2014) defines modesty maxim is to give a low value to speaker's qualities. One of the ways is by using self-deprecation (if sincere, even if exaggerated). There are some ways to keep modesty: to *deflect* the compliment by making an evasive reply, to *deflect* a compliment by reducing its power but making a remark that downgrades the attribution value to oneself, and to attribute the success to luck. This representative from two data found only in the script of *Marlena* is discussed below.

Extract 12

Marlena : ***Yaa enggak lah, Sit! Akan aku sekolahkan anak-anak ku nanti sampek dia jadi orang berhasil biar gak kayak aku.***

Marlena utterance sounds self-deprecation. She gives a low value to her quality. she feels that she is not successful person, although it is not the fact. She still has a chance to be a successful person. This utterance is included in the maxim of modesty.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study has indicated that the GSP (General Strategy of Politeness) model has emerged in the application of MOTHER (Madurese Theme Role Play) which aims to attune college students in using polite language.

Ten parts of GSP: generosity maxim, tact maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, obligation (of S to O) maxim, Obligation (of O to S) maxim, agreement maxim, opinion reticence maxim, sympathy maxim, and feeling reticence maxim, are employed through MOTHER. In addition, for the matter of cultural diversity affecting the polite language use by one speaker and another, it is hoped that the approaching study will explain and discuss more about how cultural values influence the implementation of the maxims in indicating honor of others' public self-esteem. In this matter, Sociopragmatics scales, such as social values instantiation gender, age, and social classes (Ibrahim & Bakir, 2021), can be specifically used as an approach to consider the results or phenomenon in relation to linguistic politeness. These weights potentially have an impact on showing politeness factors of sociocultural. As someone wants to be generous by issuing an invitation, or offering something, which is considered in the tact maxim in politeness sociopragmatically non-linguistic channels are more significant rather than uttering actual words, impressively (Leech, 2014).

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