

ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS MAXIMS IN RAYMOND CARVER'S *WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT LOVE*

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of Geoffrey Leech's politeness maxims in Raymond Carver's short story *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* through a qualitative descriptive approach. The study aims to identify the types of politeness maxims employed by the characters in their interactions. The data consist of utterances produced by the main characters—Mel, Terri, Nick, and Laura. The findings reveal that, among Leech's six politeness maxims, only three are present in the story: Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy, with a total of seven occurrences. The analysis demonstrates that the characters primarily employ strategies of self-effacement, conflict minimization, and emotional alignment, which are central to discussions of love, trauma, and personal experience. The Sympathy Maxim appears most frequently, reflecting the emotional intensity surrounding narratives of past relationships and individual definitions of love. Mel predominantly uses the Modesty Maxim to soften assertive expressions, while the Agreement Maxim maintains conversational harmony by respecting differing viewpoints. These findings suggest that politeness in Carver's dialogue is highly context-dependent and closely tied to the characters' emotional openness and sensitivity. This study addresses a gap in previous research, which has largely focused on gendered or sociolinguistic aspects of the text without examining the underlying politeness strategies. By demonstrating that politeness maxims function not only as social conventions but also as emotional devices within literary dialogue, this research contributes to the field of pragmatic literary analysis.

Keywords: *Geoffrey Leech; literary conversation; politeness maxims; pragmatics; Raymond Carver*

INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely a means of communication but a complex system through which individuals negotiate social relations, express emotions, and maintain interpersonal balance (Fritzman & Crawford, 2018). Pragmatics concerns the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader) within a particular context (Yule, 1996, p. 3). One of the central concepts in pragmatics is politeness, which refers to the strategies employed to demonstrate awareness of another person's social face (Yule, 1996, p. 60). Because politeness plays a significant role in everyday interaction, literary works that imitate natural speech provide a valuable source for examining how politeness principles operate in discourse. Literary texts portray the complexity of human emotions and relationships, in which characters continually make interactional choices that lead to either mutual understanding or conflict. Therefore, analyzing language use through the lens of politeness offers important insight into interpersonal relations in fiction.

Short stories are particularly suitable for pragmatic analysis due to their brevity, intensive use of dialogue, and focus on character interaction. Among American writers of the same period, Raymond Carver is widely recognized for his minimalist narrative style, emotional intensity, and heavy reliance on dialogue. His short story *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* is especially appropriate for linguistic analysis because the narrative unfolds almost entirely through conversation rather than descriptive exposition (Carver, 2015, p. 137). Carver's writing captures everyday speech in a way that reveals the hidden conflicts, desires, and emotional uncertainties of the characters. The story revolves around four individuals—Mel, Terri, Nick, and Laura—who gather to discuss their personal experiences and interpretations of love. As conversation progresses, dialogue becomes the primary vehicle for expressing emotions, revealing relationships,

and exposing subtle tensions. Consequently, attention to how the characters speak, express agreement or disagreement, show compassion, and position themselves in interaction is crucial for understanding the story's meaning.

The decision to analyze Geoffrey Leech's politeness maxims in Carver's short story is justified by the narrative's emotional and thematic complexity. Conversations about love often involve sensitive and personal experiences, including trauma, failed relationships, and unresolved emotional issues. In such interactions, speakers must carefully manage their utterances to express personal viewpoints while maintaining relational harmony. Politeness strategies thus function not only as social conventions but also as emotional tools that help prevent conflict and sustain interpersonal bonds. Carver's minimalist style further amplifies the pragmatic significance of each utterance, as seemingly simple lines carry substantial emotional and interactional weight. The story, with four friends sitting together, drinking and recounting past experiences, provides a natural context for the emergence of pragmatic patterns that closely reflect real-life conversational behavior.

This study is grounded in Geoffrey Leech's Politeness Principle, which proposes six maxims aimed at promoting socially harmonious interaction: Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy (Leech, 2016). While all six maxims contribute to polite communication, the present study focuses on the three most salient in the narrative: Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy. The Modesty Maxim encourages speakers to minimize self-praise and maximize self-dispraise, reflecting humility and social awareness. The Agreement Maxim emphasizes minimizing disagreement and highlighting common ground, which is particularly important when characters express differing views on love. The Sympathy Maxim involves expressing empathy, concern, and emotional support, which are central to a narrative that addresses love, loss, and vulnerability. Through these maxims, the analysis reveals not only surface-level meanings but also the interpersonal strategies that guide the characters' interactions.

The primary data source for this study is Raymond Carver's *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, accessed in its published version, which contains the dialogue of the four main characters (Carver, 2015, p. 137). The story is characterized by continuous conversational exchange, allowing readers to access the characters' inner perspectives through their spoken interactions. Such dialogue-driven narration makes the text particularly suitable for pragmatic analysis. Given the emotionally charged nature of love, the characters' language choices often reflect politeness strategies aimed at managing feelings, avoiding confrontation, and strengthening social bonds.

Previous studies on the short story have primarily focused on sociolinguistic and gender-based aspects of the characters' interactions. For instance, Galisteo (2011) examines gender-specific language patterns in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, but does not address politeness maxims or apply Leech's theoretical framework. As a result, broader pragmatic mechanisms governing agreement, empathy, and interpersonal sensitivity remain underexplored. This limitation highlights a significant research gap concerning the role of politeness strategies in the narrative.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the politeness maxims employed by the characters in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, using Geoffrey Leech's framework. By examining how politeness operates within emotionally sensitive conversations, this research demonstrates that politeness maxims function not only as social norms but also as narrative devices that shape character relationships and thematic meaning.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs a descriptive qualitative method as its primary approach to describe, interpret, and explain the presence of politeness maxims in the exchanges in Raymond Carver's *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. In pragmatics, meaning is closely associated with context, the speaker's intention, and interpersonal relations (Kortmann, 2020). The qualitative approach henceforth becomes the logical choice because it permits the researchers to examine the language in its natural state within the imaginary dialogue. This method did not deal with numbers but with interpretation; therefore, it tries to see how the characters are being polite, conflict-avoiding, or showing sympathy. This

method was especially beneficial for the study of characters' relations in literature, where tone, nuance, and emotion are the very essence of communication.

The narrative is recognized as an excellent option in qualitative studies because of its strong reliance on dialogue, which enables the attentive examination of the distinct linguistic styles characters use for social interaction. Minimalist fiction presents the reader with the challenge of interpreting what is said and what is left unsaid; thus, the analysis of pragmatic dimensions becomes very necessary. The communication of all verbal exchanges reveals not only the characters' thoughts but also the dynamics of their relationship, how they perceive each other, and the emotional balance they try to maintain during close conversation. (Hu, 2014). By focusing on specific dialogue sections in the text, the researchers could identify instances of Leech's politeness maxims and assess their significance for the story's emotional and interpersonal development.

Data collection is thorough and systematic. Initially, the researchers not only read the story once but also several times to perceive the flow of the dialogue and the emotional changes within it. At this point, the researchers observed the characters' responses to one another, their handling of delicate issues, and the rise or fall of their politeness. The next step was to identify the utterances that could be considered as polite hints according to Leech's politeness theory. Even though Leech lists six maxims, this research reveals that only three are present in the short story: the Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy maxims. These categories served as the basis for the organization's data, as they were found to be highly active in the dialogue and essential to the interaction's development.

Through the descriptive qualitative method, the researchers were able to show not only what characters say but also how they say it. This is vital because Carver's writing method is understated and minimalistic, usually depending on suggested meaning rather than direct exposition. The emotional power of the dialogue, which ranges from laughter and anger to tears, is evident in the meticulous examination of politeness maxims.

One additional advantage of using the descriptive qualitative methodology is that it helps us understand the social and emotional aspects of politeness in a fictitious context. Even though the dialogues are fictitious, they still illustrate everyday life, with people talking to each other. Thus, the results are not only significant for the study of literature but also provide more detailed insights into the pragmatic behavior of the people involved. The approach also recognized that interpretation was a pivotal issue and that different readers might offer varying interpretations of certain utterances depending on their cultural backgrounds or personal experiences. The research, which applies this methodology, illustrates how the strategy of politeness helps the characters manage emotional tension, maintain group harmony, and express their feelings during love talk.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis of the utterances of the four characters in Carver's "What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" shows that out of Geoffrey Leech's six politeness maxims, only three are present. In total, 7 data points are assigned to the three maxims: Modesty Maxim (2), Agreement Maxim (2), and Sympathy Maxim (3). On the other hand, the maxims Tact, Generosity, and Approbation are absent from the conversation data (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency types of politeness maxims

Types of politeness maxims	Frequency
Tact	0 datum
Modesty	2 data
Approbation	0 datum
Generosity	0 datum
Agreement	2 data
Sympathy	3 data
Total 6 maxims	7 data

The occurrence of the three maxims in Table I illustrates how politeness is context-driven, thereby supporting Leech's argument that politeness is not universal but rather a matter of situational requirements. The short story characters employ politeness techniques that not only reduce self-assertion but also facilitate interpersonal connections and, to some extent, even create intimacy. The data distribution indicates that the Sympathy Maxim is the most common. It is not surprising that the characters' conversations are full of emotion and contemplation, as they grapple with past traumas, love affairs, and, to a certain extent, the very nature of love. The characters often understand each other's stories, particularly in recounting each other's pain. This emotional aspect indeed causes the selection of words that highlight sympathy and emotional involvement.

Table I also highlights the absence of the Tact, Generosity, and Approbation Maxims. This uneven distribution provides insight into the interactional dynamics and social forces shaping the characters' conversational behavior. The absence of these maxims suggests that the characters are not engaged in interactions involving power negotiation, benefit exchange, or explicit praise. Instead, their communication primarily focuses on sharing personal experiences and emotional reflections rather than managing obligations, social distance, or interpersonal hierarchy. Consequently, the frequency table not only illustrates the linguistic patterns present in the dialogue but also reflects the situational context and interactional goals that motivate the conversation.

Discussion

The analysis indicates that seven data points exemplify the use of Geoffrey Leech's politeness maxims, which are discussed in the following section:

Modesty Maxims

(Minimize praise of self; maximize dispraise of self)

- a. Mel: "I am not educated; I learned my stuff, I am a heart surgeon, but I am just a mechanic." (p. 8)
(Maximize dispraise of self; minimize praise of self)

Mel and Terri, Nick and Laura, are engaged in a discussion at Mel's and Terri's kitchen table. Initially, they went from small talk to a serious discussion about love. The mood is slowly shifting from carefree to the strong, emotional intensity of love. Mel's comment is directed at everyone in the room, but in fact, he is speaking to Nick and Laura, who are both very interested in Mel's clear expression of his views on love.

Mel's utterance indicates Geoffrey Leech's Modesty Maxim, which demands that speakers minimize praise of the self and maximize self-dispraise to avoid being heard as self-promoting. "I am not educated," the quotation shows that Mel's statement is an overt act of maximising dispraise of self, as he gives a negative assessment of his own intellectual background. He is a cardiologist, a highly educated and respected profession, yet he presents himself as someone without formal education. On the other hand, his statement, "I learned my stuff, I am a heart surgeon, but I am just a mechanic," is a clear datum of minimizing praise of oneself. Mel, though being a heart surgeon, still devalues his expertise by comparing it to that of a mechanic, implying not only that he possesses it but that it is "simple" rather than "elite" skill.

Mel's self-deprecating attitude shows that he wants to maintain equal footing among the participants in the heated, emotionally charged conversation about love. In effect, he is not asserting his superiority or power over the group by diminishing his achievements. The way he presents himself as humble is a major factor in others' rejection of his perceived boastfulness, mostly because the topic is very intimate and open to interpretation. Therefore, Mel's speech is consistent with Leech's Modesty Maxim, as it maintains a social setting that is easy-going, non-threatening, and humble. Mel's modesty, in a way, is a politeness maxim that allows him to keep the peace and become friends rather than drive them away.

- b. Mel: "I don't know anything; and I'm the first one to admit it." (p.2)
(Maximize dispraise of self; minimize praise of self)

Dialogue occurs at a crucial moment in the story: when the characters are deeply embroiled in various fights over what love is. Mel speaker's direct way is through everybody sitting around the table, Terri, Nick, and Laura, because they all can be part of the discussion. The dialogue gets more serious and passionate, and Mel utters these words when he feels that love's definition is tricky and the conversation is already tense.

Mel very clearly takes on a self-deprecating stance, which is the maximization of self-dispraise. "I don't know anything" suggests that Mel casts himself in a less authoritative role by reducing his knowledge and experience. Ironically, this is the case because Mel is a renowned, highly educated cardiologist, a field that often demands great intellectual respect. He is deliberately denying his knowledge to lower his social standing relative to his opponents. However, his primary reason is not the fact that he truly thinks himself to be ignorant, but rather that the subject of conversation-love-is very abstract, subjective, and immensely emotionally charged. His overstated claim of being unknowledgeable is meant to convey humility and to imply that he does not regard himself as a moral or experiential superior to the others in such a discussion.

Mel's follow-up statement, "And I'm the first one to admit it," is a means of minimizing praise of self. He does not claim to be a very courageous or very liberal-minded person (which would be indirect self-praise), but rather presents his lack of knowledge as a truthful and immediate confession. This action enhances his humility even more since he does not put himself in the position of someone who is sure or can teach others about love. One might take this as very quiet self-praise for being truthful, but Mel manages to express it in a way that puts himself forward by being honest about his flaws rather than drawing attention to his good side. These data show how Mel's utterances confirm Leech's Modesty Maxim. By downplaying his own merits and exaggerating faults, Mel shapes a modest speaking character that fits the heated subject of love. His use of language reveals an intention to maintain harmony in the group and to eliminate potential interpersonal disputes, all of which align with Leech's politeness maxims.

Agreement Maxims

(Minimise disagreement between self and other; maximize agreement between self and other)

- a. Mel: "Terri's right; But seriously, they were in some shape, those oldsters." (p. 7)

(Maximise agreement between self and others; minimize disagreement between self and others)

The conversation comes up during Mel's narration of the short story about the two older adults he could only save after a road crash. Mel uses the story of the old couple to express his views on love, yet he maintains decency and politeness throughout the conversation. Mel mostly addresses Terri, but Nick and Laura are also at the table, listening.

Mel's reply illustrates very clearly how concord can come before conflict to keep politeness. The quotation "Terri's right" is a datum of total agreement, as Mel very clearly backs Terri's previous opinion before giving his own. This first agreement acts as a politeness cushion, preventing the next comment from being heard as an attack.

Mel's follow-up clause, "But seriously, they were in some shape, those oldsters." The quotation appears to be minimizing disagreement through redirection, not denial. Mel does not dismiss Terri's argument but instead offers more information to expand the debate. By presenting his minimal disagreement as a new angle rather than a contradiction, he adheres to Leech's maxim that communicators should lessen conflict to keep social unity. Mel's tactic of prior agreement strengthens the dialogue and upholds courteous communication.

- b. Mel: "Maybe we'll just go eat. How does that sound?"

Nick: "Sounds fine to me; eat or not eat. Or keep drinking. I could head right on out into the sunset." (p.10)

(Maximize agreement between self and other; minimize disagreement between self and other)

This conversation comes up toward the end of the story when the group appears confused on what to do-be it dinner or drinking. The atmosphere is subdued and dull after the lengthy discussion on love, so Nick just goes along with it and wants to keep the mood peaceful. Nick is talking to Mel, who proposes a break and a meal for all, but Terri and Laura are also paying attention at the table.

Nick's reaction emphasizes his readiness to collaborate and observe the Agreement Maxim. His initial statement, "Sounds fine to me," unequivocally indicates that he is maximizing his agreement and suggesting that he will not oppose Mell's recommendations. This concurrence reduces tension in the conversation and indicates that he will be accommodating others.

Nick's subsequent statements, "Eat or not eat. Or keep drinking. I could head right on out into the sunset," are indicative of minimising conflict, since he gives several options without pushing for any of them. Nick's neutrality dims the conflict by not imposing and embracing everyone's wishes. His showing of flexibility and non-contentiousness aligns with Leech's proposition that maximizing agreement lowers the social cost of interaction and fortifies the group. Nick's diction positions him as a narrator easy to agree with and a part of the restoration of the social setting's interpersonal cordiality.

Sympathy Maxim

(Minimise antipathy between self and others; Maximise sympathy between self and other)

a. Terri: "He shot himself in the mouth."

Laura: "It sounds like a nightmare; But what exactly happened after he shot himself?" (p. 3)

(Maximise sympathy between self and other; minimize antipathy between self and other)

The protagonist, Terri, in a narrative way openly shares her most intimate feelings through a discourse with the man whom she calls "a really abusive ex-husband" by telling her story with him. Laura's comment not only sympathizes with Terri but also makes the conversation gentle and calming as they address the delicate issue. Laura speaks to Terri directly, responding to the hard story of Terri about Ed's violence and his later attempted suicide.

Laura's remark is a powerful utterance of the Sympathy Maxim. "It sounds like a nightmare." The quotation serves as the greatest expression of sympathy since the speaker not only recognizes the trauma but also accepts the emotional suffering felt by Terri. By such a sympathetic statement, the speaker openly expresses emotional closeness and anxiety regarding Terri's health.

The question "But what exactly happened after he shot himself?" is a datum of minimizing antipathy under the curious tone that invites Terri to keep on talking. Laura's questioning is not a symptom of annoyance, disbelief, or moral evaluation, but, on the contrary, an expression of her supportive company. The way she conveys it illustrates her recognition of Terri's fragile emotions, and, concurrently, her linguistic choices prevent any undermining or contradictory assertions regarding Terri's feelings.

Laura's interaction, according to Leech's Sympathy Maxim, not only brings the group closer emotionally but also deepens that closeness through understanding and attention. The empathy she presents creates a bond and, at the same time, lessens the emotional distance during the talk about past abuse and trauma that was hard for the speakers.

b. Terri: "Poor Ed; I was in the room with him when he died. He did not have anyone else." (p.2, p. 3)

(Maximise sympathy between self and other; minimise antipathy between self and other)

Initially, the conversation indicates the point at which she reveals to the others the truth about her previous marriage to Ed, who was violent. Terri's talk aligns with the narration of Ed's brutality and his sorrowful demise, thereby setting a gloomy atmosphere for the conversation. Terri primarily addresses Nick, Laura, and Mel, as they are the only ones listening at the kitchen table.

Terri's statements regarding Ed, her abusive ex-husband, clearly illustrate a complicated but strong application of the Sympathy Maxim. The speaker's "Poor Ed" indicates her pity and emotional compassion for the abuser, a situation where she excessively sympathizes, as even a highly painful man like Ed still gets her pity and empathy. This shows that Terri is a very compassionate person who can even put herself in the position of the worst people.

Terri's subsequent remark, "I was in the room with him when he died. He did not have anyone else," shows that the portrayal of Ed is not as a cruel person but as a lonely and sad one. Terri regards his brutality as an expression of

emotional need, not evil. By choosing to be with him at the end of his life, she expresses her deeply compassionate, human-like concern.

Terri's sympathetic language aligns with Leech's maxim because it prioritizes emotional support over resentment. Her compassion makes Ed's picture less harsh and enables the group to view him no longer just as a source of trauma but rather as a person. The case shows that sympathy can still occur in morally difficult relationships and can determine the tone of interpersonal communication. (Halpern, 2018).

- c. Mel: "Can you imagine?: The man's heart was breaking because he couldn't turn his goddamn head and see his goddamn wife." (p.9)
(Minimise antipathy between self and others; maximise sympathy between self and others)

The conversation takes place in the story's midpoint, where Mel narrates the elderly couple, he treats after a major automobile accident. Mel's story about the old couple becomes a metaphor for deep emotional loyalty among couples, shaping the group's discussion of love. Mel is addressing the entire table, which consists of Terri, Nick, and Laura, all of whom are ears for his story.

Mel's utterance indicates that he is deeply emotionally empathetic with the old couple he assisted. His rhetorical question, "Can you imagine?" is an invitation for the audience to feel rather than be apathetic towards the narrative, thereby indicating a reduction of opposition. This question invites the audience to engage in emotional meditation and opens the door to empathy.

"The man's heart was breaking because he could not turn his goddamn head and see his goddamn wife." The quotation from him illustrates complete sympathy, as Mel indicates the emotional pain rather than purely the physical damage. By stating that the husband could not bear to look at his wife, as the most painful, Mel underlines the strength of their emotional connection and the misfortune of their circumstance.

This maxim encourages the group to empathize with one another and reveals Mel's sensitivity, which usually complements his persona. His narrative flows in perfect harmony with Leech's third principle of politeness, the Sympathy Maxim, which means it creates more understanding and less emotional barrier. Besides, the mention of the couple's commitment to one another is not only a textual reference but also a contrast to the characters' attempts to express love in its essence.

By applying Leech's Politeness Maxims, this study offers a different yet complementary perspective on the previous research, "What Men and Women Do When They Talk About Love: A Sociolinguistic Analysis". In contrast to the former investigation dealing with communication patterns between genders, considering men's and women's differences in the aspects of dominance, emotionality, and dialogue, the current one has emerged through the analysis of politeness maxims applied to the dialogues, revealing the characters' management of the emotional tension and the relationships of the characters through the conversation.

Earlier research showed that story-related exchanges depended most on emotional experience and personal interpretation, a fact reflected in the observation that the Sympathy Maxim is the most used in the current study. The two studies suggest that the characters use emotionally charged methods in their discussions of love. Previous research suggested this was due to gender differences (e.g., women being more likely to empathize), whereas the current research shows that Sympathy Maxim is a powerful politeness strategy regardless of gender, as the topic requires emotional validation and mutual understanding.

The earlier research characterized Mel as an overall speaker, characterized by mostly interruptions and sluggish storytelling, while the present study shows that Mel is, at the same time, using the Modesty Maxim, through which he diminishes his importance and comes across as unpretentious. This further supports the argument against the former interpretation that male narrators are merely authoritative. Realistically, the assessment presents a different viewpoint: that power and politeness can coexist and that even the most outspoken individuals may still use humility to moderate their assertions, particularly on philosophical or emotionally charged subjects.

Past studies in sociolinguistics did not consider politeness maxims as influencing the emotional part of the conversation. The present study shows that Agreement and Sympathy Maxims significantly contribute to the general harmony of the group while discussing topics like trauma, abusive relationships, and personal definitions of love. Therefore, the study offers a new pragmatic perspective: the politeness maxims in the narrative do not only serve as social manners but also as emotional modulation devices that guide the interlocutors through the intricacies and sensitivities involved in expressing love.

Identifying seven data points across three politeness maxims, this research has broadened the theoretical perception of politeness in literary dialogues. It closes the gap left by earlier studies, which focused mainly on sociolinguistics and gender. The current research points out that, in Carver's story, politeness is highly context-dependent, depending on the degree of emotion, narrative style, and the closeness of the characters. This provokes a new pragmatic perspective in the existing literature, demonstrating that literary dialogue can be a fertile ground for analyzing the selection, adaptation, and even omission of politeness maxims depending on the relationship and emotions involved.

CONCLUSION

The present study aims to conduct a thorough investigation of the application of Geoffrey Leech's politeness maxims in Raymond Carver's *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* and to reveal how the characters use politeness to navigate emotionally charged conversations about love. The results indicate that, out of Leech's six maxims, only the three, namely Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy, are present in the dialogues, with the Sympathy Maxim being the most prevalent. This indicates that politeness in Carver's storyline is not scattered randomly but is very much in tune with the emotional context of the interaction. Since the characters' talk is about intimate experiences, painful memories, and differing views on love, the politeness maxims that appear are those that help to keep emotional comfort, reduce conflict, and encourage empathy. This research establishes that linguistic politeness in literary dialogue works not just as a social tool, but also as an emotional and interpersonal strategy (Llopis et al., 2016). Furthermore, the research offers a significant input to the field of pragmatics in literary texts. Notably, earlier work, such as that investigating gendered language patterns, has scrutinized the communication of males and females in Carver's narrative but did not examine the pragmatic factors involved in such interactions. By utilizing Leech's politeness maxims, this study shows that politeness is a critical factor in determining the emotional and interactional aspects of the characters (Gretenkort & Tylén, 2021). Such pragmatic results not only support but also broaden the scope of previous sociolinguistic interpretations, thereby providing a new perspective on the role of politeness in the narrative as a contributor to harmony, tension regulation, and relational intertwining.

The main impact of the research on subsequent studies is the demonstration that literary dialogue can be highly illuminating for the researcher of pragmatic principles. The selective occurrence of politeness maxims in Carver's work makes it clear that the fictional talks may even resemble the real ones, particularly so when the topics are sensitive. Future scholars might continue this inquiry by analyzing politeness maxims across various writers, genres, and cultural settings to see how narrative context shapes pragmatic choices. The scholars may not only raise but also explain in detail the interaction between politeness and other pragmatic aspects, such as implicature, context, and speech acts, thereby arriving at a broader understanding of literary communication. In this manner, the current research opens the way for future interdisciplinary collaborations between pragmatics and literary studies, thereby demonstrating that politeness maxims are not merely theoretical constructs but also practical tools that reveal the complexity of human relations in literature.

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