

The Maintenance and Violation of the Politeness Principle in Ice Blue by Emma Jameson

by Chery Narasyah Chiora Ulfa

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The Maintenance and Violation of the Politeness Principle in *Ice Blue* by Emma Jameson

⁴ Chery Narasyah Chiora Ulfa
Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia
cherynarasya@gmail.com

Bramantya Pradipta
Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, Indonesia
bramantya@untag-sby.ac.id

Abstract: This study aims to analyse how politeness maxims are either maintained or violated in the utterances of Hetheridge and Kate in the novel *Ice Blue*. The study applies Leech's (2014) Seven Maxims of Politeness Principle and employs a descriptive qualitative method. The findings reveal that Hetheridge maintains approximately 54 politeness maxims and violates around 55 politeness maxims, while Kate maintains about 73 politeness maxims and violates around 52 politeness maxims. Both main characters apply all seven maxims; however, Hetheridge does not employ the sub-maxim *Opinion (Reticence)*, and Kate does not employ both the *Opinion (Reticence)* and *Obligation (Hearer to Speaker)* maxims. Beyond identifying the types and frequencies of maxims maintained and violated by the main characters, this study also found that not all violations reflect rudeness or impoliteness. In many cases, violations occur to fulfil professional duties or to foster interpersonal relationships, showing that politeness strategies are often adapted based on context and communicative goals.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Politeness, Maxim, Maintain, Violate

INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a crucial role in human life, not only as a tool for conveying information (Khaqqi & Pradipta, 2024) but also as a foundation for creating and maintaining social relationships (Pearce, 1989). Through communication, individuals are able to share ideas, express emotions, and respond meaningfully to their social environment. In daily life, communication serves as a link that connects individuals and enables mutual understanding and cooperation. However, effective communication is not always easy to achieve.

In reality, communication often encounters obstacles. Misunderstandings frequently arise from inappropriate word choices, unsuitable speaking styles, or poorly delivered messages. Words used out of context, overly direct language, or expressions that sound harsh may lead to confusion and even conflict in social relationships. This indicates that speaking is not merely about delivering messages; it also requires sensitivity to the situation, the interlocutor, and prevailing social norms (Kapur, 2018). Therefore, a speaker must adopt appropriate communication strategies that align with the context to ensure that communication is not only functionally effective but also comfortable. These strategies contribute to creating a conducive communicative space, preserving social harmony, and strengthening interpersonal bonds (Yule, 1996). To understand how such

communicative strategies work in maintaining harmony, it is essential to apply an approach that emphasises contextual language use. This is the primary concern of Pragmatics, a branch of linguistics that explores how utterances are shaped and interpreted within specific social and situational contexts.

According to Yule (1996), Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of utterances as interpreted by the listener or reader, based on the speaker's or writer's intended meaning. The focus of pragmatics goes beyond the literal meanings of words; it concerns the meaning constructed through the use of language in context. One of the studies in pragmatics is the politeness.

From Leech's perspective (2014), politeness consists of a set of principles aimed at maintaining harmony in communication and avoiding potential conflict. In simple terms, politeness can be understood as a linguistic strategy employed by speakers to ensure respectful and harmonious interaction. People naturally strive to engage in polite conversations, demonstrate respect for their interlocutors, and avoid offensive or face-threatening remarks (Zhao & Lai, 2023). In various communicative contexts, politeness strategies function as a means to adapt to social norms, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and express empathy and mutual respect (Zelika, 2025). This understanding of politeness provides a useful foundation in the analysis of communication, not only in reality but in various forms of discourse, including narratives in literature.

Literary works, such as a novel, depict communication between individuals, often revealing internal thoughts, emotions, and social interactions in more explicit ways than real-life observation allows (Hasan, 2024). For instance, in the novel *Ice Blue*, the two main characters, Hetheridge and Kate, frequently engage in social interactions with other people around them, where politeness is either maintained or violated.

Therefore, the politeness principle becomes an essential element in effective and ethical language use. However, in today's communication, there is a growing tendency to prioritise efficiency and directness in communication. This shift often leads to the neglect of politeness, resulting in communication that feels uncomfortable or even confrontational. Many individuals fail to understand which politeness strategies are appropriate for specific situations, which ultimately leads to violations of politeness conventions. In his book *The Pragmatics of Politeness* (2014), Leech introduces seven maxims along with their corresponding sub-maxims, offering a detailed explanation of how each maxim can be maintained or violated. This represents a refinement and expansion of his earlier framework from 1983, deepening the theoretical understanding of how politeness operates in real-life communication.

Given these issues, further research is needed to demonstrate how politeness can be both maintained and violated, as a way to better understand how to communicate effectively and promote social harmony. This study refers to three previous works. The first is by Karina and Arifin (2023), who examine types of politeness based on Brown and Levinson's theory, using the novel *Pride and Prejudice* as the data source. The second is by Angginie (2019), who explores politeness strategies in the film *Barbie*, also using Brown and Levinson's framework. Lastly, Jewad (2023) investigates the use of politeness in three Surahs of the Qur'an, applying Leech's earlier theory of politeness from 1983.

All three studies share a common focus on politeness; however, the first two rely on Brown and Levinson's more widely used model. Jewad, while drawing from Leech's framework, only utilises the earlier version of his theory. So far, no research has specifically applied Leech's recent 2014 theory, which introduces seven maxims and elaborates on how each can be maintained or violated in actual communication.

Therefore, this present study aims to fill that gap by examining the application of politeness, both its maintenance and violation, in the novel *Ice Blue*, focusing specifically on the utterances of the two main characters, Hetheridge and Kate, using Leech's most recent 2014 politeness framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Pragmatics

In his book *Pragmatics* (1996), Yule states that pragmatics is a field of study that focuses on the meaning intended by the speaker and how that meaning is interpreted by the listener. Thus, pragmatic analysis places greater emphasis on the interpretation of speaker intention rather than the literal meaning of words or phrases. Pragmatics can be described as the study of the speaker's meaning within the context of communication. Yule also adds that pragmatics involves the process of achieving communicative goals through an understanding of conversational context. In his view, pragmatics requires the speaker's ability to adjust their words according to the situation, which includes factors such as the interlocutor, the setting of the conversation, and the timing of the interaction. He emphasises that language choices are not random but are consciously considered. This approach enables speakers to select appropriate utterances, ensuring that the hearer accurately understands their intended meaning.

2. Politeness Principle

In 1983, in his book *The Principles of Pragmatics*, Geoffrey Leech introduced his own concept of politeness, which he calls the Politeness Principle. This principle comprises a set of guidelines designed to maintain social harmony in communication. Leech develops this concept as an extension of Grice's Cooperative Principle, which focuses primarily on communicative efficiency. However, Leech argues that Grice's principle does not fully reflect how communication occurs in everyday life. According to Leech, people often rely on indirect or implicit communication to maintain social relationships, prioritising politeness over clarity or informativeness. Based on this observation, Leech proposes six original maxims of politeness, Tact, Generosity, Modesty, Approbation, Agreement, and Sympathy. Later, in his more recent work *The Pragmatics of Politeness* (2014), Leech expands his theory by introducing a revised set of seven politeness maxims, along with detailed sub-maxims and a framework for how each maxim can be either maintained or violated. The seven maxims are Tact, Generosity, Modesty, Approbation, Opinion (agreement and reticence), Feeling (sympathy and reticence), and Obligation (Speaker to Hearer and Hearer to Speaker). A more detailed explanation of these seven maxims is as follows:

A) Tact Maxim

This maxim is applied when the speaker gives an order, command, or request to the interlocutor. To maintain this maxim, the speaker needs to use mitigating language such as "could," "can," "please," or "would" to soften the request and avoid sounding too direct or forceful. If the speaker delivers the request in a direct and unmitigated manner, it is considered a violation of the Tact Maxim.

B) Generosity Maxim

This maxim is applied when the speaker offers a benefit that favours the interlocutor more than themselves. To maintain this maxim, the speaker provides greater

benefits to the interlocutor through promises, offers, or even invitations. If the speaker fails to offer any benefit to the interlocutor or instead benefits themselves more or delivers a threat, it is considered a violation of the Generosity Maxim.

C) Modesty Maxim

This maxim is applied when the speaker chooses to lower themselves or acknowledge their own shortcomings in front of the interlocutor. To maintain this maxim, the speaker needs to show humility and recognise their limitations. If the speaker chooses instead to elevate themselves or disregard their own shortcomings, it is considered a violation of the Modesty Maxim.

D) Approbation Maxim

This maxim is applied when the speaker gives praise to the interlocutor. To maintain this maxim, the speaker uses compliments or positive, appreciative language. If the speaker instead uses insults, harsh words, accusations, or even negative assumptions, it is considered a violation of the Approbation Maxim.

E) Opinion Maxim

This maxim is divided into two sub-maxims, agreement and reticence. The Opinion (agreement) maxim is applied when the speaker agrees with the interlocutor. If the speaker expresses disagreement harshly or directly, it is considered a violation of the Opinion (agreement) maxim. Meanwhile, the Opinion (reticence) maxim is used when the speaker holds a different opinion but still tries to show respect toward the interlocutor. To maintain this maxim, the speaker uses mitigating expressions such as *"I think"* or *"It might be"* to soften the disagreement. If the speaker forcefully asserts that their opinion is superior to the interlocutor's, it is considered a violation of the Opinion (reticence) maxim.

F) Feeling Maxim

This maxim is divided into two sub-maxims, sympathy and reticence. The Feeling (sympathy) maxim is applied when the speaker shows care and concern for the interlocutor. To maintain this maxim, the speaker expresses supportive sentiments, congratulations, or care when the interlocutor experiences happiness or misfortune. If the speaker responds with apathy or indifference, it is considered a violation of the Feeling (sympathy) maxim. The Feeling (reticence) maxim, on the other hand, requires the speaker to control their emotional expression, particularly when discussing their own misfortunes with the interlocutor. To uphold this maxim, the speaker should avoid excessive self-pity and instead downplay their hardship, often by using restrained responses like *"I'm fine."* If the speaker exaggerates their suffering in front of the interlocutor, it is considered a violation of the Feeling (reticence) maxim.

G) Obligation Maxim

This maxim is divided into two sub-maxims, obligation (Speaker to Hearer) and obligation (Hearer to Speaker). The Obligation (Speaker to Hearer) maxim applies when the speaker expresses gratitude for a favour received or apologises for a mistake committed toward the interlocutor. If the speaker fails to say thank you when the interlocutor performs a kind act, or does not apologise after causing harm, it is considered a violation of the Obligation (Speaker to Hearer) maxim. The Obligation (Hearer to Speaker) maxim applies when the interlocutor minimises the speaker's burden or guilt. To maintain this maxim, the interlocutor reduces the speaker's need to express gratitude or apologise by saying things like *"No need to thank me"* or *"It's okay, no need to apologise."* If the interlocutor instead demands

or insists on receiving gratitude or an apology, it is considered a violation of the Obligation (Hearer to Speaker) maxim.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, as defined by Mishra and Alok (2011), who state that descriptive research aims to explain phenomena as they naturally occur, without manipulating any variables. This method is suitable for analysing naturally occurring data, in this case, utterances from the main characters in the novel *Ice Blue* by Emma Jameson. The primary data source is the novel *Ice Blue* (2011), which consists of 225 pages and 26 chapters. The data are collected from the utterances of the two main characters, Hetheridge and Kate, as they engage in social interactions throughout the narrative. These utterances are selected, categorised, and analysed based on Leech's (2014) politeness theory, particularly his seven maxims.

The data collection procedure includes the following steps:

- 1) Reading the novel to understand character relationships and narrative structure.
- 2) Identifying relevant utterances spoken by Hetheridge and Kate
- 3) Categorising each utterance according to the type of politeness maxim and whether it is maintained or violated
- 4) Coding the data using speaker initials, utterance numbers, maxim types, and politeness strategies (e.g., HT1–T1–M1).

The data analysis procedure involves:

- 1) Identifying the type of maxim used and explaining the rationale behind each classification
- 2) Determining whether the maxim is maintained or violated and exploring the frequency and reasoning behind such usage
- 3) Concluding the findings by highlighting dominant and least-used maxims, patterns of politeness strategies, and how these strategies reflect the characters' social dynamics and professional relationships.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

Based on the data obtained from Emma Jameson's novel *Ice Blue*, a total of 234 utterances produced by the two main characters, Hetheridge and Kate, contain various forms of politeness maxims. Both characters demonstrate instances of maintaining and violating all seven types of maxims as outlined by Leech (2014).

Hetheridge maintains 54 politeness maxims throughout the novel. These include 4 instances of the Tact maxim, 17 of Generosity, 6 of Modesty, 7 of Approbation, 5 of Opinion (agreement), and 3 of Feeling (sympathy), along with 1 of Feeling (reticence), 8 of Obligation (speaker to hearer), and 3 of Obligation (hearer to speaker). Notably, there are no instances of Opinion (reticence) being maintained. On the other hand, Hetheridge violates a total of 55 maxims, consisting of 39 violations of the Tact maxim, 6 of Generosity, 3 of Modesty, and 7 of Approbation, with no violations found in the remaining maxim categories.

Kate, meanwhile, maintains a total of 73 politeness maxims. These consist of 7 instances of the Tact maxim, 9 of Generosity, 5 of Modesty, 11 of Approbation, and 4 of Opinion (agreement). She also maintains 10 instances of Feeling (sympathy), 1 of Feeling

(reticence), and 26 of Obligation (speaker to hearer) maxims. However, there is 0 result of Opinion (Reticence) or Obligation (hearer to speaker) being maintained by Kate. In terms of violations, Kate violates 52 politeness maxims in total. This includes 18 violations of the Tact maxim, 2 of Generosity, 3 of Modesty, and 23 of Approbation. She also violates 1 of Feeling (sympathy), 4 of Feeling (reticence), and 1 of Obligation (speaker to hearer), while the remaining categories are not violated. A more detailed breakdown of these findings is presented in the following table:

Table 1 Total maxims maintained and violated by both main characters in Ice Blue

No	Maxim Types	Characters				Total
		Hetheridge Maintain	Hetheridge Violate	Kate Maintain	Kate Violate	
1	Tact	4	39	7	18	68
2	Generosity	17	6	9	2	34
3	Modesty	6	3	5	3	17
4	Approbation	7	7	11	23	48
5	Opinion (Agreement)	5	0	4	0	9
	Opinion (Reticence)	0	0	0	0	0
6	Feeling (Sympathy)	3	0	10	1	14
	Feeling (Reticence)	1	0	1	4	6
7	Obligation (S to H)	8	0	26	1	35
	Obligation (H to S)	3	0	0	0	3
Total		54	55	73	52	234

2. Discussion

This section discusses in detail how Hetheridge and Kate employ politeness strategies, specifically how they maintain or violate the politeness maxims. The data is presented through selected examples of utterances, each accompanied by a brief explanation. The examples shown do not represent the complete data set but are selected instances, one from each character, to depict the use of politeness in context.

A) Maintain Maxim

1) Tact Maxim

HT21-T12-M2 Hetheridge: *"Take me to Mrs. Comfrey and her daughter, please."*

While investigating the murder of Malcolm Comfrey, Hetheridge instructs a young constable to escort him to the victim's wife, Madge Comfrey. He maintains the Tact Maxim by including the word "please" in his directive, softening the force of the command. This mitigated request reflects professional respect and helps preserve social harmony within their hierarchical relationship.

K67-T14-M2 Kate: *"In the meantime, would you mind giving us some privacy with Ms Comfrey and Mr Whitley?"*

During an interview with Jules and Kevin, Kate notices that Madge is also present in the room, which is intended only for the interviewees. To politely ask Madge to leave, Kate maintains the Tact Maxim by using the phrase "would you mind". This mitigated directive helps preserve social harmony by showing respect and encouraging cooperation.

2) Generosity Maxim

HT42-G7-M7 Hetheridge: *"How about a tour of the house? If you can keep from falling asleep, that is. You seem preoccupied."*

When Hetheridge invites Kate to his home, he offers to show her around. In doing so, he maintains the Generosity Maxim by providing her with hospitality and personal attention. This act benefits the interlocutor and reflects Hetheridge's effort to strengthen their relationship and uphold social harmony through respect and warmth.

K38-G7-M7 Kate: *"We'll treat her with every courtesy. CS Hetheridge was very clear on that point."*

During the interview with Jules and Kevin, Madge remains in the room. When gently asking her to leave, Kate maintains the Generosity Maxim by offering an indirect promise that Jules will be treated with courtesy. This act of promise reinforces trust and cooperation, helping to preserve social harmony and reassure Madge as the interlocutor.

3) Modesty Maxim

HT9-MD1-M1 Hetheridge: *"Here you will address me as Chief Superintendent Hetheridge."*

After speaking with Kate in his office, Hetheridge asks her to call him "Chief" instead of "Lord," expressing discomfort with the noble title. By doing so, Hetheridge maintains the Modesty Maxim, showing humility and rejecting self-glorification. This utterance reinforces professionalism, promotes equality, and helps maintain social harmony in the workplace.

K6-MD1-M1 Kate: *"Or who knows, maybe I'm the plonker."*

After arguing with her superior, Jackson, Kate tells Hetheridge that Jackson is a plonker. When Hetheridge responds with a light joke, Kate follows up by suggesting that she might be the plonker. By belittling herself, Kate maintains the Modesty Maxim, softening the tension and avoiding arrogance. This

utterance helps preserve social harmony and shows self-awareness in front of the interlocutor.

4) Approbation Maxim

HT33-A5-M1 Hetheridge: *"Good observation about her hair and makeup looking fresh, Wakefield."*

After returning from the Belgravia crime scene, Hetheridge compliments Kate on her sharp observations about Madge Comfrey's appearance. By doing so, Hetheridge maintains the Approbation Maxim, expressing admiration for her perceptiveness. This utterance helps preserve social harmony by recognizing Kate's skill and strengthening their interpersonal relationship.

K4-A3-M1 Kate: *"Perfect."*

While discussing her conflict with Jackson in Hetheridge's office, Kate comments on his upper-class accent, prompting Hetheridge to jokingly imitate a Cockney accent. In response, Kate compliments his impression. By doing so, Kate maintains the Approbation Maxim, offering praise to acknowledge Hetheridge's skill. This utterance fosters social harmony and strengthens their interpersonal bond through positive recognition.

5) Opinion (agreement) Maxim

HT86-OA5-M5 Hetheridge: *"I agree. What's the presumptive motive?"*

During a phone conversation, Kate informs Hetheridge about Malcolm's affair and proposes interviewing Ivy the next day. Hetheridge agrees with her plan, thereby maintaining the Opinion (Agreement) Maxim. By supporting Kate's initiative, he validates her judgment and reinforces politeness to maintain social harmony.

K96-OA4-M4 Kate: *"Makes sense."*

While discussing Hetheridge's outburst, Kate expresses surprise at his anger, but Bhar explains that it was only an act, part of Hetheridge's skill in navigating interactions with the upper class. Kate then agrees with Bhar's explanation. By doing so, she maintains the Opinion (Agreement) Maxim, expressing alignment with the hearer's view to uphold politeness and reinforce social harmony.

6) Feeling (sympathy) Maxim

HT43-FS1-M1 Hetheridge: *"You'll make one hell of a detective, though."*

When Kate confides in Hetheridge about her struggles at home and her fears of being a bad mother, Hetheridge offers emotional support by reassuring her of her strengths as a detective. In doing so, he maintains the Feeling (Sympathy) Maxim, responding with empathy rather than indifference. This utterance reflects kindness, reinforces their close relationship, and helps sustain social harmony.

K57-FS3-M2 Kate: *"Are you all right?"*

During a playful sparring match at Hetheridge's residence, Kate pins him but quickly lets go when he appears to be in pain. She immediately asks if he is alright. By doing so, Kate maintains the Feeling (Sympathy) Maxim, expressing concern and care toward the interlocutor. This utterance helps preserve social harmony by showing empathy and attentiveness.

7) Feeling (reticence) Maxim

HT66-FR1-M1 Hetheridge: "*Fine. No need to worry.*"

After Kate rejects his marriage proposal, Hetheridge returns home hurriedly. When Harvey expresses concern, Hetheridge responds briefly, saying he is fine, without revealing his emotional distress. By doing so, he maintains the Feeling (Reticence) Maxim, choosing not to burden the hearer with his turmoil. This utterance helps preserve social harmony by upholding composure, dignity, and emotional restraint.

K86-FR5-M1 Kate: "*I am.*"

After mourning Dylan's death, Hetheridge tells Kate she looks a little better. Kate responds by saying she is a little better. In doing so, she maintains the Feeling (Reticence) Maxim by downplaying her emotional state rather than dwelling on it. This utterance reflects her effort to remain composed and professional, helping to maintain a respectful and calm atmosphere in a sensitive moment.

8) Obligation (speaker to hearer)

HT4-OSH1-M1 Hetheridge: "*I... I apologize.*"

During a training session, Hetheridge throws Kate to the mat and momentarily reacts inappropriately. Realising his lapse in professionalism, he quickly regains composure, helps her up, and sincerely apologises. By doing so, he maintains the Obligation (Speaker to Hearer) Maxim, acknowledging his mistake and expressing guilt. This utterance reinforces politeness and helps restore social harmony through accountability and respect.

K8-OSH2-M2 Kate: "*I'm sorry.*"

While in Hetheridge's office, Kate explains her quarrel with Jackson, leaving Hetheridge momentarily speechless. Realising this, she apologises, assuming her words were inappropriate. By doing so, she maintains the Obligation (Speaker to Hearer) Maxim, acknowledging her mistake and taking responsibility. This utterance helps preserve social harmony by demonstrating respect for authority and upholding professionalism.

9) Obligation (hearer to speaker)

HT50-OHS1-M1 Hetheridge: "*I don't know why I took such offence at your mentioning it. At my time of life, I ought to take out an announcement in the Times.*"

When Kate apologises for bluntly suggesting that Hetheridge appeared "aroused" during their earlier conversation, Hetheridge responds with humour, joking that such a reaction is impressive for a man his age. By doing so, he maintains the Obligation (Hearer to Speaker) Maxim, minimising Kate's guilt through self-deprecation and lightness. This utterance preserves social harmony by easing tension and reducing the hearer's discomfort.

B) Violate Maxim

1) Tact Maxim

HT1-T1-V1 Hetheridge: *"I say, that's enough."*

In a tense moment, Hetheridge firmly orders Kate and Jackson to stop arguing and forbids them from speaking further. By doing so, he violates the Tact Maxim, issuing a direct command without any mitigating language. As the speaker, Hetheridge prioritises authority over politeness to restore discipline and professionalism. This violation, though impolite, is contextually justified to maintain order in the workplace.

K12-T1-V1 Kate: *"Tell him I'm on my way."*

While at home, Kate receives a call about a homicide case in Belgravia and is informed that the chief wants to see her immediately. She responds by directly instructing her colleague to inform the chief she is on her way. In doing so, Kate violates the Tact Maxim by issuing an unmitigated command. As the speaker, she gives a directive to the hearer without softening language, despite the informal nature of the situation and absence of urgency. This reflects a preference for efficiency over politeness.

2) Generosity Maxim

HT103-G21-V6 Hetheridge: *"You'll lose control if you get greedy, Madge."*

When Madge attempts to shoot Kate after being exposed as the murderer, Hetheridge intervenes and physically restrains her. As Madge remains threatening, he issues a stern warning, stating that her attempt will fail. In doing so, Hetheridge violates the Generosity Maxim by delivering a threat rather than offering any benefit to the interlocutor. Although impolite, this violation is justified given the life-threatening situation.

K112-G11-V2 Kate: *"I'm not sure what your neighbours will make of me interviewing you on your doorstep, but let's hope they keep their speculations to themselves, rather than call the media."*

Kate approaches Madge's room to speak with her, but Madge refuses to engage. In response, Kate issues an indirect threat, warning that she will interview on the door where neighbours can witness it. By doing so, she violates the Generosity Maxim, as she limits Madge's autonomy rather than offering her greater benefit or privacy.

3) Modesty Maxim

HT95-MD9-V3 Hetheridge: *"I'm within my rights to arrest her."*

Following Ginny's murder, Jules confronts Hetheridge, accusing the police of mishandling the case and unfairly targeting her family. In response, Hetheridge interrupts her and asserts that he has the authority to arrest both Jules and Madge. By doing so, he violates the Modesty Maxim, emphasising his institutional power rather than downplaying it. As the speaker, Hetheridge asserts his superiority over the hearers to regain control of the situation. The violation is contextually justified due to the urgency of the investigation and the need to maintain order at the crime scene.

K55-MD6-V2 Kate: *"Yeah, well, they're not an athletic bunch. Eating Pop-Tarts every day and smoking between training sessions."*

During a conversation about their early days at Scotland Yard, Hetheridge praises Kate for becoming one of the top female detectives. In response, Kate remarks that they were not very athletic, smoked too much, and ate sweets. Kate violates the Modesty Maxim by indirectly asserting her competence rather than downplaying it. She subtly highlights her achievement to Hetheridge, signalling confidence and camaraderie.

4) Approbation Maxim

HT15-A3-V3 Hetheridge: "*New money.*"

Upon arriving at the Comfrey residence in Belgravia, Kate expresses admiration for the home and its surroundings. Hetheridge responds by referring to the Comfrees as "*new money*," implying criticism of their lack of refinement. In doing so, he violates the Approbation Maxim by mocking rather than acknowledging or responding neutrally to Kate's remark.

K2-A2-V2 Kate: "*Because I didn't do you? Because I said no thanks when you pulled out that poor little thing and waved it about?*"

Kate engages in a heated argument with her superior, Jackson, over his drunken behaviour and harassment. When Jackson insults Kate by calling her a "*dyke*," she retaliates by mocking his masculinity. Kate violates the Approbation Maxim by responding with a direct insult. This violation occurs in a high-conflict situation where Kate prioritises emotional expression over polite restraint.

5) Feeling (sympathy) Maxim

K19-FS1-V1 Kate: "*This is no murder. Poor bugger must've topped himself from shame.*"

Upon arriving at the Comfrey residence in Belgravia, Kate expressed admiration for the house and neighbourhood. However, Hetheridge dismissed her compliments by labelling the Comfrees as "*new money*". In response, Kate made a sarcastic remark, joking that the victim might have died of shame over his tacky home décor. Kate violates the Feeling (Sympathy) Maxim by mocking the deceased rather than showing empathy.

6) Feeling (reticence) Maxim

K27-FR1-V1 Kate: "*Quite the buggery bollocks of a family life.*"

At the Hetheridge residence, Kate and Hetheridge engaged in a personal conversation. When Hetheridge commented that Kate's home life must be quite frustrating, Kate openly agreed. Kate violates the Feeling (Reticence) Maxim by expressing her emotional struggles directly, without mitigating or downplaying her dissatisfaction. She discloses her emotional instability to Hetheridge, rather than maintaining emotional restraint.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data presented in the results and discussion, this study identifies a total of 234 utterances by the two main characters in Ice Blue that reflect the use of Leech's (2014) politeness maxims. Both characters apply all seven types of maxims, though the use of sub-maxims is not observed. Each character both maintains and violates these maxims throughout the narrative.

Hetheridge maintains 54 instances of politeness maxims. These include 4 of the Tact maxim, 17 of Generosity, 6 of Modesty, 7 of Approbation, 5 of Opinion (agreement), 3 of Feeling (sympathy), 1 of Feeling (reticence), 8 of Obligation (speaker to hearer), and 3 of Obligation (hearer to speaker). Notably, there are no instances where Hetheridge maintains the Opinion (reticence) maxim. In contrast, he violates 55 politeness maxims, including 39 violations of the Tact maxim, 6 of Generosity, 3 of Modesty, and 7 of Approbation, with no violations recorded in the remaining maxim categories.

Kate, on the other hand, maintains 73 politeness maxims in total. These include 7 instances of Tact, 9 of Generosity, 5 of Modesty, 11 of Approbation, and 4 of Opinion (agreement). She also maintains 10 instances of Feeling (sympathy), 1 of Feeling (reticence), and a substantial 26 instances of Obligation (speaker to hearer). However, she does not maintain any instances of Opinion (reticence) or Obligation (hearer to speaker). Kate also violates 52 politeness maxims, comprising 18 violations of Tact, 2 of Generosity, 3 of Modesty, and 23 of Approbation. Additionally, she violates 1 of Feeling (sympathy), 4 of Feeling (reticence), and 1 of Obligation (speaker to hearer), while no violations are found in the other categories.

Beyond identifying the types and frequencies of maxims maintained and violated by the characters, this study also finds that not all violations reflect rudeness or impoliteness. In many cases, violations occur to fulfil professional duties or to foster interpersonal relationships, showing that politeness strategies are often adapted based on context and communicative goals.

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