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A pragmatic Analysis of Personal Metadiscourse and Politeness Principle across Genres: From Relevance to Adaptation*

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Abstract

This study investigated personal metadiscourse units across genres. Based on Ädel's (2006) taxonomy of the discourse functions of personal metadiscourse and Leech's (2014) grand strategy of politeness, three spoken genres were compared in terms of the use of personal metadiscourse functions and politeness maxims. To that end, a 3,034,025-word corpus consisting of *Panel discussion in politics*, *Interviews with actors*, and *Comedies* genres, which included 30 audio and video transcriptions, was developed. Explicitness, world of discourse, current discourse, speaker qua speaker and listener qua listener were used to identify metadiscourse units. We examined the total frequencies of all personal metadiscourse units used in the corpus. The results of corpus analysis showed that 19.6% of metadiscourse units occurred in comedies, which was the highest among the three genres. The most commonly used metadiscourse units appeared in speaker-oriented metadiscourse with 10.2% in interviews. The results also revealed that in panel discussion the speakers focused more on their own ideas than the listeners or participants. Results of chi-square analysis showed that English speakers used speaker-oriented, participant-oriented, and listener-oriented metadiscourse types statistically significantly differently. A statistically significant difference between speaker-, participant-, and listener-oriented units was found. Results also revealed that speakers in different genres are willing to use such maxims as opinion reticence and modesty more frequently than other maxims. The paper concludes with proposing a new model for analyzing metadiscourse.

Keywords: Genres, Metadiscourse, Politeness Principle.

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Introduction

The debate over metadiscourse centres on propositional versus non-propositional aspect of certain linguistic structures (Ädel, 2010; Flowerdew, 2015). The term propositional derives from systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) in that it meets the ideational metafunction, or how language users share experiences, ideas, feelings, etc. Non-propositional material is about the interpersonal and the textual functions of language. The interpersonal metafunction is about the relationship between writers and readers, or speakers and listeners; however, the textual one is about aspects of texture, cohesion, and information flow in texts (Ädel, 2006). If a statement carries an ideational meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Hyland, 2005; Vande Kopple, 1985), it is not metadiscursive. On the other hand, when statements contribute to organizing texts, or to guiding readers, they are regarded as metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005). According to Flowerdew (2015), it would be unreliable to determine metadiscursive units based on the propositional/non-propositional meaning.

Metadiscourse has recently been defined as “the ways in which writers and speakers interact through their use of language with readers and listeners” (Hyland, 2017, p.16). For speakers and writers, the major component of persuasion is to establish a positive representation of themselves, lending credibility to their arguments. Metadiscourse is a central concept in pragmatics. As Hyland (1998) stated, the appropriate use of metadiscourse depends largely on the rhetorical expectations of a specific communicative context.

To date, studies on metadiscourse have been conducted on a very narrow range of registers, mostly focusing on an academic register in writing; metadiscourse in such studies is a prevalent linguistic resource facilitating writer-reader interaction in the academic discourse community (Abdollahzadeh, 2011; Crosthwaite, Cheun & Jiang, 2017; Gillaerts & Velde, 2010; Hong & Cao, 2014). Within the academic register, researchers have found variations in writers' use of metadiscourse markers across genres, disciplines, and modalities. Although there are a number of studies comparing metadiscourse

markers in written and spoken languages, to our knowledge, no studies so far have put emphasis on Ädel's (2006) metadiscourse units through Leech's politeness principle in different spoken genres.

It is believed that the social and cultural trends of human societies may appear in language, discourse, and communication, and each speech community may follow its own norms, values, and ways of communication. Accordingly, the present article attempts to classify metadiscourse into three main types: speaker-oriented, listener-oriented, and participant-oriented. This model introduces five criteria for units to be metadiscursive: *explicitness*, *world of discourse*, *current discourse*, *writer qua writer* and *reader qua reader*. No study has analyzed how politicians, comedians, and interviewers make use of personal metadiscursive units and the whole range of politeness maxims in communication. That is, despite the importance of metadiscourse use and politeness principle in a variety of contexts, surprisingly little is known about how they are used interactively. Nonetheless, the bulk of the work on metadiscourse has been academic writing (e.g., Gillaerts & Van de Velde, 2010; Jiang & Hyland, 2015; Kawase, 2015).

The aim of the current study is, therefore, to identify the metadiscourse role in revealing how discourse is rhetorically construed in a range of genres. Therefore, to offer greater insight into the use of metadiscourse and to explore how conversational maxims of PP are observed, this study reports on a corpus-based comparative analysis of metadiscourse and politeness maxims. Specifically, this study focuses on politeness and impoliteness because these comprise one of the principles or forces that guide conversation.

Following the goals in this study, we posed the following research questions:

1. What is the distribution of personal metadiscourse units in panel discussion in politics, comedies, and interviews with actors?
2. What is the distribution of politeness principle maxims in panel discussion in politics, comedies, and interviews with actors?

Literature review

Leech's Model of Politeness Principle

The concept of politeness is crucial in interpreting why people choose to say ideas in a particular way in spoken or written discourse, and why they flout a maxim and express an illocutionary act indirectly rather than directly. Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that the basic argument is that when one is involved in social relationships, he/she has to show an awareness of face. This is the way we interact with one another. According to Leech (2014), politeness concerns the relationship between two participants whom we may call self and other.

Grice's (1975) cooperative principle plays a central role in explaining communication activities. However, Grice's model cannot justify why people violate the cooperative principle deliberately in real life situations. Leech (1983) claimed that it is out of politeness that people violate the cooperative principle deliberately. It is essential to remind that Leech's hypothesis of politeness principle between speakers was intended to demonstrate a framework in which the relationship between form and meaning was displayed. For the purpose of this study, it might be enough to recall that his PP consists of a set of maxims subsumed under the categories of *generosity*, *tact*, *approbation*, *modesty*, *obligation (S to O)*, *obligation (O to S)*, *agreement*, *opinion reticence*, *sympathy* and *feeling reticence* indicating the conventions (Table 1) and ways participants in conversation should normally conform to creating successful communication.

This model is primarily developed for oral communication. Few studies were embarked on using the PP in various spoken genres. Among some studies focused on using the PP in different genres, we may mention Jiang and Zhou (2013) and Zhou and Zhang (2018) who analyzed the PP in different texts to show how it functioned in face-to-face interaction and maintained social equilibrium between speaker and hearer since dialogue is considered a reflection of natural life interaction and communication. Yet, this study aims to directly deal with the relationship between the PP and metadiscourse.

Metadiscourse and Politeness Principle

Emerging out of concepts such as sequencers and topicalizers (Williams, 1981), illocution markers (Vande Kopple, 1985), evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2001), attitude (Halliday, 1985), epistemic modality (Hyland, 1998), appraisal (Martin & White, 2005) and stance (Biber & Finegan, 1989; Hyland & Guinda, 2012), metadiscourse “reveals the ways that writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their attitude towards both the propositional content and the audience of the text” (Hyland & Tse, 2004, p. 156).

Ädel’s (2006) model of metadiscourse is perceived as a contribution to the functional analysis of metadiscourse contrary to earlier studies usually engaging in a simple typological analysis of metadiscourse. Furthermore, the present model (see Figure 1) sets clear criteria for the identification of metadiscourse instances and distinguishes reflexive from non-reflexive metadiscourse. The model involves two main categories: metatext and writer-reader oriented metadiscourse. Ädel remarked that metadiscourse can be classified as “personal” and “impersonal”. The former refers to the relationship between the writer and the reader in the text (discourse). It can be elaborated based on three points including *text-oriented* metadiscourse, *writer-oriented* metadiscourse, *reader-oriented* metadiscourse, and *participant-oriented* metadiscourse. Impersonal metadiscourse refers to such implicit references as passives and various impersonal structures in the discourse.

Table 1

The Leech’s Categories of Politeness Principle and Maxims

Maxims	Related pair of Maxims	Label for this maxim	Typical speech-event type(s)
(M1) give a high value to O’s wants	Generosity,	Generosity	Commissives
(M2) give a low value to S’s wants	Tact	Tact	Directives
(M3) give a high value to O’s qualities	Approbation, Modesty	Approbation	Compliments

(M4) give a low value to S's qualities		Modesty	Self-devaluation
(M5) give a high value to S's obligation to O	Obligation	Obligation (of S to O)	Apologizing, thanking
(M6) give a low value to O's obligation to S		Obligation (of O to S)	Responses to thanks and apologies
(M7) give a high value to O's opinions	Opinion	Agreement	Agreeing, disagreeing
(M8) give a low value to S's opinions		Opinion reticence	Giving opinions
(M9) give a high value to O's feelings	Feeling	Sympathy	Congratulating, commiserating
(M10) give a low value to S's feelings		Feeling reticence	Suppressing Feelings

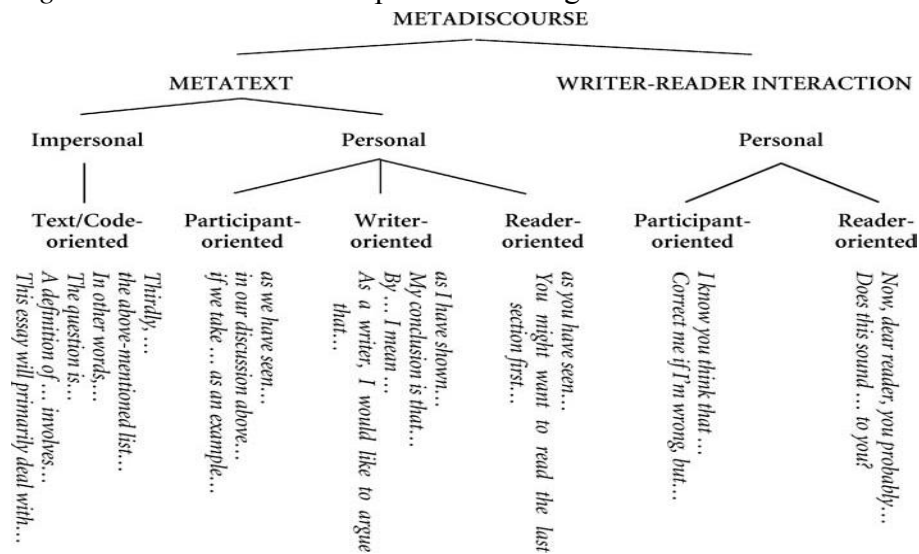
To date, there have been no studies to analyze metadiscourse units through Leech's PP. However, we found it rewarding to generalize the concept of the PP more systematically to the use of metadiscourse units in spoken genres. In different discourse communities, communication can be taken as a cooperation shaping implicit and explicit regulations. Considering native-speakers, this paper tries to tentatively develop a PP which contributes to the way of utilizing metadiscourse units in spoken genres. On the other hand, the current study aims to apply the PP and its maxims to the analysis of three spoken genres, namely, *Panel discussion in politics*, *Interview with actors*, and *Comedies* to show how it functions in face-to-face interaction since dialogue, different from monologue in nature, is believed to be a reflection of interaction.

Studies of Metadiscourse Markers across Disciplines, Genres, Languages, and Cultures

Mauranen (2010) investigated interaction in dialogic speech, and it was hypothesized that “other-orientedness” is widely used in dialogic rather than monologic language. She found that (1) discourse reflexivity is necessary in successful spoken interaction, (2) other-oriented reflexivity rather than self-referential language appears to be outstanding in spoken interactions compared with written texts, and (3) hedging is supported in “discourse collocation”.

Bu (2014) examined metadiscourse markers in academic lectures. The results demonstrated that the occurrence of metadiscourse in academic lectures was pervasive. According to the findings of the study, contextual adaptations to linguistic reality, psychological motivations and social conventions were made by the lecturer to choose appropriate. EAP teachers were more concerned with explicitly framing the discourse to manage classroom tasks and engendering greater student involvement and participation. On the other hand, university instructors' priority was to establish relationships between ideas in the arguments of lectures.

Figure 1. Personal and impersonal configurations of ‘metatext’ and



‘writer-reader interaction’. Adapted from “Metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English” by Ädel, 2006, p. 38.

In another study, Jiang and Hyland (2015) examined *noun complement* structures across disciplines including applied linguistics,

marketing, sociology, philosophy, electronic engineering, medicine, cell biology, and physics. The most frequent forms in the corpus were *N to-infinitive clauses*. The number of stance nouns referring to objects and relations was small. Noun complements appeared to be more common in soft than hard fields. Stance nouns demonstrating entities and attributes were evenly distributed in the soft fields. This study showed that stance is both a lexical feature of discourse and a grammatical phenomenon. Finally, the results showed that the writer's attitude was an effective way to affect how readers interpret the information they convey.

Lee and Subtirelu (2015) investigated how teachers used metadiscourse markers in EAP lessons and academic lectures. To make sure of the comparability of the two sets of two corpora, the researchers used the ratio of teacher and learner contributions in each lesson or lecture to construct parallel levels of interactivity in both corpora. The comparison of two corpora showed that EAP teachers appeared to be more concerned with explicitly framing the discourse to implement classroom tasks. The results showed that EAP instruction consisted of greater direct attempts at learner's engagement to establish interactive and participatory environments so that students could be involved in various academic and linguistic tasks requiring explicit task instructions. Furthermore, EAP teachers used linguistic expressions to explicitly demonstrate engagement with learners more frequently; however, university lecturers whose main responsibility is to help learners achieve disciplinary knowledge could not use explicit engagement markers. However, university lecturers tried to build the relationships between ideas in the lectures.

More recently, Ädel (2017) examined similarities and differences between teachers' feedback on student writing and other written/spoken academic genres of university students' L1 writing, university students' L2 writing, and university lectures. She concluded that the frequency of metadiscourse in the feedback corpus is relatively high where the student-related expressions such as *you* are much more common than the teacher-related expressions *I*. She pointed out that the frequent use of metadiscourse in feedback happened due to the problem/solution-

oriented nature of feedback and the dependence of texts on the previously commented drafts with the aim of improving the text.

Liu and Buckingham (2018) investigated the schematic structure of 20 research article discussion sections in applied linguistics, the organizational features of moves and the distribution of metadiscourse markers across moves. Significant differences were found in the distribution of textual and interpersonal markers. The study showed that the schematic structure could be used in a different dataset from the same field without requesting for additional moves.

Ho and Li (2018) examined both the pattern of metadiscourse use in first-year university students' argumentative essays and the correlation between the frequency of metadiscourse use and the scores Chinese first-year university students' argumentative essays are assigned. Statistical analyses showed essay scores correlated positively with the frequency of use of hedges and attitude markers, but the correlation between scores and frequency of use of engagement markers was negative. Moreover, it was shown that although both writers of high-rated essays and writers of low-rated essays used metadiscourse in different parts of an argumentative essay, the former showed a higher ability to use the resources in two aspects: lexico-grammar and rhetorical functions.

In the present study, the purpose was to relate metadiscourse units to the maxims of politeness principle in three different genres. The rationale was to compare these genres in terms of metadiscourse and maxims observed in each of them. Metadiscourse units were analyzed interpersonally to indicate politeness, i.e., how politeness is projected by using metadiscourse functions. We hypothesise that the use of metadiscourse units in the target language might be influenced by different cultural preferences and norms of politeness.

Methodology

Corpus Development

Over the past few years, researchers have substantially contributed to our knowledge of metadiscourse. Researchers have analyzed metadiscourse markers in different modes of language, in different academic and

professional genres and in various disciplines in terms of the relationship between metadiscourse markers and their communicative purposes, and variations of metadiscourse markers in L2. A major shortcoming of studies on metadiscourse is that they mostly focused on written corpus and ignored spoken genres.

In this study, we extend research on metadiscourse markers as follows. This article reports on a corpus-based study on metadiscourse units in spoken genres. The corpus of the current study is spoken registers compiled in three different genres: *Panel discussion in politics*, *Interviews with actors*, and *Comedies*. The motivation for examining these genres is to determine whether it is possible to empirically reach a generalizable claim about the metadiscursive patterns of these spoken genres. Another rationale for this selection is to investigate how they are structured and to analyze some conversational strategies used by the speakers in dialogues. Moreover, these genres are selected to investigate how the conversational strategies and metadiscourse units in each of them conform to politeness principle.

Our choices were based on availability of data. The genres were chosen in such a way that at least one English native-speaker, judged by the names and accent of the speakers, were present in each genre. To ensure manageability, 30 audio and video transcriptions (approximately 1,000,000 words each) were identified from the above-mentioned genres totaling 3,034,025 words (see Table 2).

We followed the criteria suggested by Ädel (2006) to help the present researchers identify the metadiscourse units in the three spoken genres. Developing our corpus, we adopted purposive sampling to select several samples of each genre. Needless to say, random sampling was also used when the same genre had more transcribed audios and videos than needed to select 2,500 words from each transcription. The same procedure was utilized to select another transcription when a transcribed genre was less than 2,500 words in length.

For the purpose of this study, Ädel's (2006) reflexive model with realization of personal metadiscourse was adopted to analyze the spoken

corpus. It is necessary to point out that spoken data are usually analyzed through personal metadiscourse units (Ädel, 2006). Therefore, the propositions with metadiscourse units were identified manually and investigated functionally to discover PP observed in personal metadiscourse units across genres.

Procedure

We searched for all potential metadiscoursal units based on Ädel's (2006) model. Ädel claims that personal metadiscourse, *involved type*, is a characteristic of spoken language. Therefore, the corpus was investigated through personal metadiscourse consisting of participant-oriented, speaker-oriented, and listener-oriented. To make sure of items serving metadiscursive types, we analyzed each instance manually in its textual context. In order to ensure that analysis was reliable, we used intra-rater and inter-rater reliability. All the data were coded twice with a two-week time interval to avoid any mistakes in detecting and counting the number of metadiscourse units. The degree of consistency in the two analysis attempts was found to be 87.5%. On another occasion, inter-rater reliability was examined; the correlation between the researcher's counts and a second rater's counts was calculated. The agreement was 82.3%, showing a high level of correlation.

We used the following different criteria to identify personal metadiscourse units in this study. The first criterion for identifying metadiscourse items was *explicitness* referring to "commentary on the ongoing text or for building a relationship with the imagined reader" (Ädel, 2006, p.126). The second factor was *world of discourse* meaning whether the event takes place within the world of discourse or within target language related to the "real world". In this study, metadiscourse refers to world of discourse rather than the real world. The third factor to identify the metadiscourse markers was the notion of *current discourse* meaning that the researchers are interested in how texts refer to themselves and not to other texts. It is different from intertextuality through which the other texts are commented on. When there was a reference to the writer herself/himself, that reference would primarily demonstrate the writer in the role of the writer of the text, and not as an

experiencer in the real world. The same was true for references to the reader. Finally, the last feature, *speaker qua speaker* and *listener qua listener*, are interrelated with the world of discourse. That is, intertextuality is distinct from metadiscourse. This distinction is based on whether reference is made to other texts or to the current text.

In the current study, adopting a corpus-based approach, we manually examined the type of personal metadiscourse and its correspondence with PP maxims.

Table 2

Spoken Genres in Our Corpus

Corpus	Panel discussion in politics	Interviews with actors	Comedies (TV episodes)
1.	<i>Afghanistan Political Climate</i>	1. <i>Interview with Ciara McAvoy</i>	1. <i>The One with the Boobies</i>
2.	<i>Bipartisan Policy Center Discussion on Immigration Policy</i>	2. <i>Stevan Riley: The Hollywood Interview</i>	2. <i>The One with the Birth</i>
3.	<i>Future of Iraq</i>	3. <i>Billy Bob Thornton: The Hollywood Flashback Interview</i>	3. <i>The One with the Candy Hearts</i>
4.	<i>Combating Terrorism</i>	4. <i>Christian Slater: The Hollywood Flashback Interview</i>	4. <i>The One with the Butt</i>
5.	<i>Iran and State Sponsored Terrorism</i>	5. <i>Gabriel Byrne: The Hollywood Flashback Interview</i>	5. <i>The One with Mrs. Bing</i>
6.	<i>China and Taiwan Tensions</i>	6. <i>Benicio Del Toro and Josh Hutcherson: The Hollywood Interview</i>	6. <i>The One with the Stones Guy</i>

7.	<i>Countering Violent Extremism</i>	7.	<i>Pierce Brosnan: The Hollywood Flashback Interview</i>	7.	<i>The One Where Ross and Rachel...</i>
8.	<i>Foreign Policy and National Security</i>	8.	<i>RedaKateb: The Hollywood Interview</i>	8.	<i>The One with the Girl Who Hits Joey</i>
9.	<i>Government Reform as a Campaign Issue</i>	9.	<i>Aaron Sorkin: "That Takes Quite an Ego"</i>	9.	<i>The One with The Mugging</i>
10.	<i>Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Middle East Policy</i>	10.	<i>Alfie Allen: "It's a Form of Torture Every Night"</i>	10.	<i>The One That Could Have Been</i>
<hr/>					
Total					
No. of words	1,000,980		1,025,467		1,007,578

Data Analytic Approach

We examined the total frequencies of all personal metadiscourse units used in the corpus and ranked them on a distributional map regarding maxims of PP being observed in the different contexts. After examining the distribution of variables, we analyzed the data through SPSS (version 25) to address the research questions. We used maxims of PP as well as total frequencies in personal metadiscourse units (i.e., speaker-oriented, listener-oriented, and participant oriented) across three different dialogic genres. Furthermore, we examined the interaction between each maxim and personal metadiscourse units to see if the predictive relations vary.

Results

Results Related to the First Research Question

In order to compare the type and distribution of personal metadiscourse employed across three different genres, first we calculated the frequency of three different functions of personal metadiscourse units in spoken

genres. Then, in order to come up with a logical comparison, the frequency counts were changed into frequency per 1,000 words. That is, distributions were normalized to be occurrences per 1000 words. Table 3 shows the total distributions of metadiscourse units in three genres. As shown in Table 3, a sizable number of units are employed to signpost the personal metadiscourse taken by the speakers across genres. As presented in Table 3, in the first genre, *panel discussion in politics*, 9.8% of metadiscourse units were speaker-oriented. This interestingly indicates that speaker-oriented units are commonly used by the speakers in this genre to show the self-reflexive exchanges that take place between the speaker and the listeners in the world of discourse (Ädel, 2006). In the second genre, *interviews with actors*, 10.2% of metadiscourse units were speaker-oriented. Accordingly, in the third one, *comedies*, 8.8% of metadiscourse units were speaker-oriented

In the first genre, *panel discussion in politics*, 3.4% of metadiscourse units were participant-oriented. In the second genre, *interviews with actors*, 0.5% of metadiscourse units were participant-oriented. Accordingly, in the third one, *comedies*, 1.5% of metadiscourse units were participant-oriented. Finally, 4% of metadiscourse units in the first genre *panel discussion in politics* were listener-oriented. In fact, this finding shows that in panel discussion, the speakers try to focus more on their own ideas than the listeners or participants. In the second genre, *interview with actors*, 3.4% of metadiscourse units were listener-oriented. Interestingly, in the third genre, *comedies*, 9.3% of metadiscourse units were listener-oriented.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Personal Metadiscourse Units across Genres

	normalized Per 1,000 words		
	Panel discussion in politics	Interviews with actors	Comedies
speaker-oriented	98.4 (9.8%)	102 (10.2%)	88.9 (8.8%)

participant-oriented	34.28(3.4%)	5.4 (0.5%)	15 (1.5%)
listener-oriented	40.6 (4%)	34.9 (3.4%)	93.2 (9.3%)

As Table 3 shows, speakers in panel discussion, interviews, and comedies rely on different functional types of metadiscourse units. The results of Chi-square analysis showed that English speakers used speaker-oriented, participant-oriented, and listener-oriented metadiscourse types statistically differently (see Table 4).

Table 4

Chi-square Test Results

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	51.8	4	.00
Likelihood Ratio	50.7	4	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.3	1	.00
N of Valid Cases	512		

Results Related to the Second Research Question

Having reviewed personal metadiscourse units across three different genres, the next step is to examine maxims of politeness principle across the same genres in order to determine any possible patterns. Table 5 shows the distribution of maxims of PP observed in *panel discussion in politics*. A great number of maxims are observed in the genre.

Generally, the three subcategories of personal metadiscourse units of genres rely on the use of PP maxims to increase the degree of politeness in communication. A quick look at Table 5 shows that M8 (opinion reticence) and M4 (modesty) were the most frequent maxims in “speaker-oriented” units followed by M2 (tact), M6 (obligation of O to S), M5 (obligation of S to O), M3 (approbation), M7 (agreement), M1 (generosity), and M9 (sympathy), and finally M10 (feeling reticence) standing at the end of the list. In “participant-oriented” units, M8 (opinion reticence) and M5 (obligation of S to O) constitute the most

frequent maxims and M6 (obligation of O to S) and M10 (feeling reticence) are equally listed down the hierarchy. However, in “listener-oriented” units, M5 (obligation of S to O), M10 (feeling reticence), and M1 (generosity) were frequently observed, respectively. M9 (sympathy) was the least favored maxim.

As can be observed in Table 6, differences between metadiscourse and maxims are statistically significant. To put it simply, we conclude that there is a statistically significant difference among speaker-, participant-, and listener-oriented units when it comes to the observation of politeness maxims.

With regards to the second genre, *interviews with actors*, a quick look at Table 7 shows that M8 (opinion reticence), M3 (approbation), and M4 (modesty) were the most frequent maxims in speaker-oriented units followed by M2 (tact), M7 (agreement), M1 (generosity), M9 (sympathy), M10 (feeling reticence), M5 (obligation of S to O), and finally M6 (obligation of O to S). In the participant-oriented units, similarly, M8 (opinion reticence), M3 (approbation), and M9 (sympathy) constitute the most frequent maxims. M2 (tact), M5 (obligation of S to O), M7 (agreement), and M1 (generosity) are second in rank with approximately the same frequency. M10 (feeling reticence), M4 (modesty), and M6 (obligation of O to S) stand at the end of the rank. However, in the listener-oriented units of the genre M1 (generosity), M3 (approbation), M7 (agreement), and M8 (opinion reticence) were frequently observed, respectively. M5 (obligation of S to O), M9 (sympathy), M2 (tact), M10 (feeling reticence), M6 (obligation of O to S), and M4 (modesty) were the least favored and most violated maxims.

Table 8 shows the chi-square test results for this genre across maxims. As can be observed in Table 8, all differences between metadiscourse and maxims are statistically significant. We conclude that there is a statistically significant difference among speaker-, participant-, and listener-oriented units when it comes to the observation of politeness maxims.

Table 5

Distribution of PP Maxims: *Panel Discussion in Politics* (per 1,000 words)

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
speaker-oriented units	29.8 (5%)	71.8 (12%)	38.3 (6.4%)	42.6 (43.3%)	31 (7.1%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	23.1 (7.9%)	34.7 (5.8%)	272.8 (45.8%)	26.1 (4.3%)	24.3 (4%)
Total	595 (26.8%)				

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
participant-oriented units	82.1 (10.1%)	83.9 (10.3%)	85.6 (10.5%)	73.4 (9%)	87.4 (10.7%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	69.9 (8.6%)	71.6 (8.8%)	117.1 (14.4%)	68.1 (8.41%)	69.9 (8.6%)
Total	809.4 (36.4%)				

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
listener-oriented units	115 (14.1%)	73.7 (9%)	66.3 (8.1%)	61.9 (7.5%)	169.6 (20.7%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	60.4 (7.4%)	72.2 (8.8%)	81.1 (9.9%)	58.9 (7.2%)	56 (6.8%)
Total	815.6 (36.7%)				

Table 6
Chi-square Test Results

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	448.9	18	.00
Likelihood Ratio	470.5	18	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	55.6	1	.00
N of Valid Cases	2219		

As for the third genre, comedies, we examined the distribution of maxims of PP observed in the three functions of speaker-, participant- and listener-oriented units. As shown in Table 9, the three most frequently observed maxims in speaker-oriented units are as follows: M8 (opinion reticence), M4 (modesty), and M2 (tact). However, if we put the other maxims in order of frequency, we come up with M7 (agreement), M1 (generosity), M3 (approbation), M5 (obligation of S to O), M6 (obligation of O to S), M9 (sympathy), and M10 (feeling reticence) respectively. Interestingly, in participant-oriented units of the genre, the three most frequent maxims, equal in frequency, are M8 (opinion reticence), M4 (modesty), and M5 (obligation of S to O). M1 (generosity) constitutes the most frequent maxims. With regard to the frequency of maxims, M4 (modesty), M5 (obligation of S to O), M8 (opinion reticence), M1 (generosity), M9 (sympathy) M2 (tact), M3 (approbation), M7 (agreement), M6 (obligation of O to S), and M10 (feeling reticence) are listed from the highest to the lowest. Considering listener-oriented units of the genre, we realized that M3 (approbation), M1 (generosity), and M8 (opinion reticence) are highly observed. M8 (opinion reticence) was frequently observed in speaker-, participant-, and listener-oriented units of the genre. The other remaining observed maxims include M7 (agreement), M9 (sympathy), and M5 (obligation of S to O), M2 (tact), M4 (modesty), M6 (obligation of O to S), and M10 (feeling reticence).

Table 7Distribution of PP Maxims: *Interviews with Actors* (per 1,000 words)

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
speaker-oriented units	24 (3.8%)	64.2 (10.1%)	75.6 (11.9%)	68.2 (10.8%)	17.7 (2.8%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	17.2 (2.7%)	49.8 (7.8%)	274 (43.4%)	20.6 (3.2%)	19.4 (3%)
Total	631.3 (12%)				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5

participant-oriented units	354.8 (9.2%)	387 (10.1%)	408.6 (10.6%)	322.5 (8.4%)	376.3 (9.8%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	322.5 (8.4%)	354.8 (9.2%)	569.8 (14.8%)	397.8 (10.3%)	333.3 (8.7%)
Total	3827.9 (73%)				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
listener-oriented units	178.9 (22.9%)	51.8 (6.6%)	163.8 (20.9%)	41.8 (5.3%)	56.8 (7.2%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	48.4 (6.1%)	71.9 (9.2%)	65.2 (8.3%)	53.5 (6.8%)	48.4 (6.1%)
Total	780.9 (14.9%)				

Table 8
Chi-square Test Results

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3538.8	16	.00
Likelihood Ratio	3650.6	16	.00
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.5	1	.00
N of Valid Cases	5242		

Similar to those two genres, we examined the statistical analysis of the results to detect any possible relation between metadiscourse units and maxims of PP in the third genre, comedies, and detect a pattern. Table 10 shows the chi-square test results for maxims and metadiscourse in this genre. As shown in Table 10, although there are marked differences between the distributions of maxims considering speaker-oriented, participant-oriented and listener-oriented personal metadiscourse units, all differences between metadiscourse and maxims are statistically significant. Therefore, we conclude that there is a statistically significant difference among speaker-, participant-, and

listener-oriented units when it comes to the observation of politeness maxims in comedies.

Table 9

Distribution of PP Maxims: *Comedies* (per 1,000 words)

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
speaker-oriented	48.1	64.2	42.8	66.9	40.8
units	(8.9%)	(11.9%)	(7.9%)	(12.4%)	(7.5%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	35.4	54.8	133.1	32.1	19.4
	(6.5%)	(10.1%)	(24.7%)	(4.9%)	(3.6%)
Total	538.1(18.6%)				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
participant-oriented	198.4	178.5	178.5	206.3	206.3
units	(10.6%)	(9.5%)	(9.5%)	(11%)	(11%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	166.6	178.5	206.3	182.5	162.6
	(8.9%)	(9.5%)	(11%)	(9.7%)	(8.7%)
Total	1865 (64.6%)				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
listener-oriented	67.6	39.5	78.5	37.6	41.5
units	(14%)	(8.2%)	(16.3%)	(7.8%)	(8.6%)
	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
	30	49.8	61.9	44	29.3
	(6.2%)	(10.3%)	(12.8%)	(9.1%)	(6.1%)
Total	480.2 (16.6%)				

Table 10

Chi-square Test Results

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	128.4	18	.00
Likelihood Ratio	121.8	18	.00

Linear-by-Linear Association	3.1	1	.07
N of Valid Cases	2885		

Discussion

The present study investigated the distribution of personal metadiscourse units and politeness principle maxims in panel discussion in politics, comedies, and interviews with actors. The study also aimed to identify the relationship between politeness maxims and personal metadiscourse units across three genres. Every culture has its own way or strategies of showing politeness to others. Leech pointed out that “not all of the maxims are equally important” (Zhu, 2012, p. 9), meaning that some maxims are used more and some are used less.

It was found that three categories of personal metadiscourse units, addresser, addressee, and addresser and addressee, actualize three discourse functions including sending messages (speaker-oriented), receiving messages (listener-oriented), and organizing discourse (participant-oriented). The analysis of personal metadiscourse units has shown that personal metadiscourse units of addresser (speaker) realize the function of sending messages, personal metadiscourse units of addressee (listener) that of receiving messages, and personal metadiscourse units of addresser and addressee (participant) that of organizing discourse. This finding is in agreement with the three basic functions of metadiscursive expressions: the expressive (addresser/speaker), directive (addressee/listener), and metalinguistic (text) (Ädel, 2006).

As shown in the distribution of categories of personal metadiscourse units, it would be conclusive evidence of the claim that mode differences explain linguistic variation (Biber & Barbieri, 2007). In comparison to the two other genres, comedies provide less speaker-oriented frame of reference since we do not need to know about the speaker to understand what is said. Comedies enjoyed listener-oriented personal metadiscourse units much more than the other two genres. This is interpreted with Bakhtin's notion of “*addressivity*”. It is argued that her elaborate

audience interaction and thematic preoccupation with social, biographical and autobiographical issues are one macro act of addressivity, foregrounding the complex intersection of speaker (comedian), listener (present audience) and third person (non-present audience). Regarding participant-oriented units, it was shown that interviews approximately lack interaction and the participants tend not to cooperate. Sometimes, participants feel compelled to cooperate and they need to know to what extent they are able to resist within the interaction. This finding supports that of Brinkman and Kvale (2005) in that the qualitative interview is most frequently conceived of a one-way dialogue. On the other hand, panel discussion, enjoying a high frequency of participant-oriented units compared to other genres, involves participants through multi-directional questions and answers within the discourse. This finding is supported by Perez Lantada and Ferguson (2010), who concluded realizing that “speaker embodies an identity different from that of an instructor in a lecture class; the presence of textual metadiscourse expressions reveals that these speakers are also aware of their intended audience” (p. 69).

Opinion reticence, modesty, and tact maxims are the most observed maxims in speaker-oriented units across genres. The opinion reticence relies heavily on face-threatening act in pragmatics and Grice’s relation maxim in that if the information or opinion is positive, there will usually be no need to violate the relation maxim, i.e. a positive opinion would not be face-threatening. Moreover, modesty maxim in speaker-oriented units contradicts Brown and Levinson’s (1978) concept of face-threatening acts. Sometimes one expresses his/her disagreement with others and criticizes others’ work; sometimes one utters some impolite words or taboo. These all belong to face-threatening acts. On the other hand, this finding confirms Searle’s speech act theory in which tact maxim is in line with directives attempting by the speaker to make the hearer do something.

Moreover, the finding was that opinion reticence maxim is observed more in participant-oriented units across genres. This finding corresponds to Brown and Levinson’s (1978) concept of *solidarity* in that

it has to do with relatively symmetrical aspects of human relationships. Solidarity, corresponding to opinion reticence maxim in participant-oriented units, includes reinforcing their acceptance in a relationship, group, or organization, emphasizing commonalities and also shows understanding, appreciation, and reaffirming the friendship (Lim & Bowers, 1991).

Another finding of the present study, different with the other two findings in terms of the maxim types, was that generosity and approbation maxims are frequently observed in listener-oriented units across genres. Generosity can correspond to commissive in Searle's speech act theory, i.e. listeners take the advantage of speakers' intended meaning through illocutionary act of commissive. For example, Liu (2012) showed that generosity maxim of PP can be applied to advertisements. By using these maxims, the advertisements can attract more attention and achieve the ultimate objective of persuading consumers successfully. Public service advertising can achieve special convincing effects on the consumers. Yaqubi, Saeed, and Khaksari (2016), for example, stated that both generosity and tact maxims are the main reasons behind direct and indirect offers and invitations. Moreover, their studies showed that cost-benefit scale can justify the politeness implicatures raised in performing these speech acts better than directness-indirectness scale.

It is worth noting that speech act theory forces a sentence-based, speaker-oriented mode of analysis, requiring attribution of speech act categories (Brown & Levinson 1987). Speech acts are not isolated moves in communication, but they appear in conversations or discourses. A type of framework for examining speech acts determines the effect a speaker intends to have on a listener's self-image, or face. Politeness, speech act and discourse express an interest area of language use in context. Attention comes from the universality of politeness strategies across the culture.

Table 11 displays a model of the politeness principle in the employment of personal metadiscourse units. In addition, the table contains the maxims that should be at work in helping speakers to

appropriately take advantage of valuable metadiscursive units. As presented in Table 11, from a different perspective, the *generosity maxim* is in line with listener-oriented metadiscourse units. On the other hand, the *modesty maxim* is in parallel with listener-oriented metadiscourse units. *Obligation (O to S) maxim* illustrates participant-oriented metadiscourse units. As a commonly observed maxim across genres, the *opinion reticence*, implying a low tolerance of opinionated behavior, presents speaker-oriented metadiscourse units. Finally, the *feeling reticence*, the least observed maxim across genres, suppresses feelings shedding light on speaker-oriented metadiscourse units.

Conclusion and implications

This paper illustrates the importance of the politeness principle in natural interaction. We set out to analyze the frequencies, structures, and functions of Leech's (2014) politeness maxims in Ädel's personal metadiscourse model across three different spoken genres to understand the use of maxims. We chose three different subcategories of personal metadiscourse to directly compare the results for a better understanding of how speakers in three genres employ maxims and metadiscourse structurally and functionally. Compared to previous studies, we selected different spoken genres, dialogues, and personal metadiscourse to control for the possible effects of various types of genres, dialogues, and different metadiscourse models.

We summarize the major findings as follows. First, in panel discussion politics, speakers used speaker-oriented units more frequently than, participant-, and listener-oriented units. Second, although speakers in panel discussion politics employed the majority of politeness maxims similarly, maxims are underused (26.8%) in speaker-oriented units. The other two units, participant-oriented (36.4%) and listener-oriented (36.7%), are at the same level regarding maxim frequencies.

Table 11

A Model of the Politeness Principle in the Employment of Personal Metadiscourse Units

Personal metadiscourse	The PP maxim	Orientation	Example
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Listener-oriented units	generosity	➤ Minimize benefit to self. ➤ Maximize cost to self.	<i>Could you please give a cup of coffee, please?</i> <i>Stay with us next time.</i>
Listener-oriented units	tact	➤ Minimize the cost to hearer. ➤ Maximize the benefit to hearer.	A. <i>How about having a cup of coffee?</i> B. <i>May I have the honor to have a cup of coffee with you?</i>
Listener-oriented units	approbation	➤ Maximize praise of the hearer. ➤ Minimize dispraise of the hearer.	<i>It looks good on you.</i>
Speaker-oriented units	modesty	➤ Minimize praise of self. ➤ Maximize dispraise of self.	<i>It was all my fault. I am so dumb.</i>
Listener-oriented units	obligation (S to O)	➤ demonstrate apologies for some offense by speakers to hearers.	<i>I am afraid. Excuse me, please.</i>
Listener-oriented units	obligation (O to S)	➤ respond to apologies	<i>It was a pleasure. You are welcome.</i>
Participant-oriented units	agreement	➤ Minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other. ➤ Maximize the expression of agreement between self and other.	A. <i>His idea is admirable.</i> B. <i>Yeah, certainly it is.</i>
Speaker-oriented units	opinion reticence	➤ a low tolerance of opinionated behavior	<i>I think that ...</i> <i>I guess that ...</i>

Listener-oriented units	sympathy	➤	Maximize sympathy towards the hearer.	<i>Congratulations on a superb performance!</i>
		➤	Minimize antipathy towards the hearer.	
Speaker-oriented units	feeling reticence	➤	suppress feelings	<i>A. Hi, how are you? B. Oh, fine. Actually though. . .</i>

In line with Watts' (2003) hypothesis that politeness has the function of maintaining social equilibrium, in the current study, opinion reticence and modesty maxims are frequently observed in speaker-oriented units; however, other maxims are approximately observed the same in different units. Agreeing with Leech (2014), we argue that in Western countries it is positively helpful to express opinions (opinion reticence) in the discussion section following a lecture. People in Western countries believe that if there is no interaction, the speaker may consider the presentation as a "flop".

Although speakers in interviews with actors employed opinion reticence much more than the other maxims, similar to the panel discussion, maxims are underused (12%) in speaker-oriented units. Opinion reticence and modesty maxims are frequently observed in speaker-oriented units. Maxims are overused (73%) in participant-oriented units. However, maxims in listener-oriented units are underused with a frequency of 14.9%.

As for comedies, speakers used listener-oriented units more frequently than, participant-, and listener-oriented units. Participant-oriented units in both interviews and comedies, compared to panel discussion, are at the low level of frequency: 0.5% and 1.5%, respectively. Interestingly, the use of inclusive "we" showing an example of participant-oriented stance marker is common in panel discussion (Ädel, 2006). Although speakers in comedies employed opinion reticence, modesty, and generosity much more than the other maxims, contrary to the panel discussion and interviews, maxims in comedies are

underused (16.6%) in listener-oriented units. Somewhat similar to interviews, Maxims in comedies are overused (64.6%) in participant-oriented units. However, maxims in speaker-oriented units are underused, 18.6%.

Following Ifantidou (2005), who state the contribution of metadiscourse to the pragmatic content of utterances, our approach assumed that in the relationship found between metadiscourse and pragmatics, the PP has an effect on the choices and judgments throughout the total enterprise of speaking for communication at both discourse and metadiscourse levels.

This study was designed to address the important issue of politeness strategies and personal metadiscourse across genres used by native speakers in order to determine the extent to which choice of appropriate politeness strategies in different categories of metadiscourse units differs in relation to speakers involved in different genres. The present study suggested a tentative model arising from a mutual relation between the uses of politeness maxims and metadiscourse units. It revealed that speakers in different genres are willing to use such maxims as opinion reticence and modesty more than others. Surprisingly, “hedges” in Hyland’s (2005) interactional category of metadiscourse converge with Leech’s (2014) “opinion reticence” maxim. Suffice it to say, the contribution of the study to the field is with regard to how a certain group of speakers uses and observes metadiscourse and politeness strategies to facilitate smooth communication.

Now that speakers perform better communication with certain types of metadiscourse use and politeness strategies, language teachers can pay more attention to introducing politeness maxims best suited to metadiscourse units. Therefore, language teachers can design the most appropriate curriculum for students with presenting metadiscourse units along with maxims observed in successful communication. As a result, students will be enthusiastic about knowing and recognizing politeness maxims to be observed in their own interactions. That is, the obligation for a speaker cannot be to use personal metadiscourse units in a certain manner; rather it will be a call to be polite. Therefore, metadiscourse

studies will make speakers cognizant of several resources available to achieve politeness. Finally, this realizes the dynamic nature of genres in the sense of metadiscourse employment.

This study has its own limitations. The first limitation was the nature of the corpus. That is, only the spoken genre was utilized. The second limitation was that the functions of impersonal metadiscourse units were not examined in the corpus. The third limitation relates to the relatively small size of the corpus. Although the corpus used in this study was comparatively larger than those in some other studies, a larger corpus is required to make the results more valid and reliable. The final limitation is concerned with the rationale for selecting the spoken genres. In this study, the speech in the monologue modes was not included in the corpus of the study. The absence of monologues may have affected the number and frequency of metadiscourse units.

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