

## تأثير المكانة الاجتماعية و المسافة الاجتماعية على عبارات الترابط الاجتماعية في برنامج ألين التلفزيوني

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### The Influence of Power and Social Distance on Phatic Communion Expressions in *The Ellen Show*

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#### Abstract

This study deals with the influence of power and distance as social variables on the use of phatic communion expressions in the genre of *The Ellen Show*. The main aim of the study is to detect the influence of the social variables of power and social distance on the use of the phatic communion expressions that are employed by Ellen and the celebrity member, regular member and powerful member. Sociopragmatic and statistical methods are used to analyse three interactions that take place between Ellen, *the hostess of the Show*, and Jennifer, *a celebrity member*, Angle, *a regular member* and Michelle, *a powerful member*. The main conclusions prove that the social variables of power and social distance affect the phatic communion expressions and the realised speech acts that are used by Ellen and the powerful member followed by that of the regular member and then the celebrity member, which receive less.

**Keywords:** Phatic communion expressions, expressive speech acts, sociopragmatic, social variables, power, social distance.

#### المخلص:

تتناول الدراسة الحالية تأثير المتغيرات الاجتماعية وهي (المكانة الاجتماعية و المسافة الاجتماعية) على استخدام عبارات الترابط الاجتماعي على اسلوب البرنامج التلفزيوني "برنامج ألين". بصورة رئيسية، تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى كشف تأثير المكانة الاجتماعية و المسافة الاجتماعية، كمتغيرات اجتماعية، على استخدام عبارات الترابط الاجتماعي المستخدمة من قبل ألين و شخصية مشهورة و شخصية عادية و شخصية ذات مكانة اجتماعية عالية. أُستُخدمت طرق تداولية اجتماعية و احصائية لتحليل ثلاث حلقات جرت بين ألين، مستضيفة البرنامج، و جنيفر، شخصية مشهورة، و انجل، شخصية عادية، و ميشيل، شخصية ذات مكانة اجتماعية عالية. اثبتت الاستنتاجات الرئيسية للدراسة تأثير المتغيرات الاجتماعية وهي المكانة الاجتماعية و المسافة الاجتماعية على عبارات الترابط الاجتماعي و افعال الكلام المستنتجة التي استخدمت من قبل ألين والشخصية ذات المكانة الاجتماعية العالية متبوعة بتلك العبارات و افعال الكلام التي استخدمتها الشخصية العادية والشخصية المشهورة، والتي بدورها حصلت على اقل تأثير.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** عبارات الترابط الاجتماعية، أفعال الكلام التعبيرية، تداولية اجتماعية، متغيرات اجتماعية، المكانة الاجتماعية، المسافة الاجتماعية.

#### 1. Introduction

Language is defined as a tool by which humans not only communicate meaning but also create and maintain social relationships with each other (Trudgill, 1974: 13). The social perspective of language, as Crystal (2008: 360) mentions, is vitally associated with creating a comfortable atmosphere and building rapport between people. This aspect of language is known as *phatic communion* which is defined as a linguistic and/or non-linguistic behaviour that is exploited by speakers of a community in

order to create and enhance social relationships among them, rather than conveying information. It is the British-Polish anthropologist Malinowski (1923) who coins and frames this concept from the Greek word *phatic*. In Malinowski's (1936: 314-316) words, phatic communion 'serves to establish bonds of personal union between people brought together by the mere need of companionship and does not serve any purpose of communicating ideas'. Thus, it becomes clear that Malinowski's concept is aimed at bridging social bonds between interlocutors instead of communicating content. Besides, the concept of phatic communion is modified and associated with one of the decisive and pivotal functions of language. Hence, in such communion, the meanings of the words are not the focus of the utterances. Instead, 'they fulfil a social function, and that is their principal aim'. Accordingly, among its prototypical types may come greeting, thanking formulas, enquiries about health and so forth (i.e., *Hi!*, *How are you?*, *Thanks a lot*, etc.).

## 2. The Problem

Literature on phatic communion expressions in the genre of TV shows is not satisfactory, because it focuses on either the pragmatic perspective or the sociolinguistic perspective. Thus, the present study attempts to bridge this gap of knowledge from a sociopragmatic perspective through answering the following questions:

1. Are there any differences between Ellen and the celebrity member, regular member and powerful member in relation to phatic communion expressions and the realised phatic communion expressions?
2. Can the social variables of power and social distance influence the phatic communion expressions and the realised speech acts that are employed by Ellen and the celebrity member, regular member and powerful member?

## 3. The Hypotheses

1. It is hypothesised that there are differences between Ellen and the celebrity member, regular member and powerful member in relation to phatic communion expressions and the realised speech acts.
2. It is hypothesised that the social variables of power and social distance can influence the phatic communion expressions and the realised speech acts that are employed by Ellen and the celebrity member, regular member and powerful member.

## 4. The Significance

The present study is hoped to be a useful resource to those who have interest in the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, sociopragmatics; and pedagogy as it assists teachers and students of English who are interested or specialised in sociopragmatics. Besides, it is hoped to be beneficial for hosts and hostesses of TV shows, politicians, celebrities and regular people.

## 5. The Aims

1. The present study aims at identifying that there are differences between Ellen and the celebrity member, regular member and powerful people in relation to phatic communion expressions and the realised speech acts.
2. The present study aims at the social variables of power and social distance can influence the phatic communion expressions and the realised speech acts that are employed by Ellen and the celebrity member, regular member and powerful member.

## 6. Theoretical Background

The present study is concerned with the sociopragmatic perspectives of the phatic communion expressions and the realised expressive speech acts that are employed by Ellen and the celebrity member, regular member and powerful member.

### 6.1 Phatic Communion

#### 6.1.1 Definition and Foundation

Phatic communion is also labelled as phatic talk, social talk, small talk, chit-chat, weather talk and gossip to refer to the kind of speech, as Malinowski (1923: 314) claims, in which 'ties of union are created by a mere exchange of words'. The concept is taken by Malinowski (1923) from the Greek word '*phatos*' and firstly used during his research on the Trobriand Islands in Papua New Guinea (Senft, 2014: 104-105). Malinowski (Ibid) mentions that the main purpose of the type of language is to fulfil 'a social function' instead of conveying information. Instead of transmitting thoughts, inquiries about health, greetings, partings and comments about the weather are used to create rapport between speakers. Additionally, it is the defusing of the silence that enhances speakers to employ the phatic communion expressions in interactions (Laver, 1981: 301).

### 6.1.2 Phatic Communion and Phatic Communication

The terms *phatic communion* and *phatic communication* are sometimes used in an interchangeable manner as if they are synonymous. According to Malinowski, the use of language to create a social bond is what the term *communion* indicates, and, hence, communication is very different (Senft, 2014: 107). In this vein, it is stated that the involvement in communion is not similar to that of communication (Laver, 1975: 216). For Graham (2013:1), professionals are responsible for developing communion to communication through time; but maintaining and creating bonds within interactions is what the concept of communion implies. Jumanto (2014:1) believes that to communicate means to convey information, make commands, expressing feelings and so forth. Conversely, to commune implies to use language for the sake of bridging or establishing a social relationship rather than the transmission of information, that is, what Malinowski's concept of communion is aimed at.

### 6.1.3 The Characteristics of Phatic Communion Expressions

To be phatic, a speech must have the following characteristics, according to Malinowski (1946); Laver (1975); Schneider (1988); Padilla Cruz (2005); Senft (2014) and Coupland (2014) (cited in Manzo, 2014: 28-30):

- a. *Social relationships*: this feature is considered as the main, since people exploit the phatic expressions for the sake of cementing and creating social relationships between them.
- b. *Superfluous*: according to this feature, phatic communion expressions are seen to be non-reflective, simple and aimless social intercourse.
- c. *Culturally determined*: it means that the speaker's culture plays a vital role in regulating what is phatic and what is not.
- d. *Complex*: any language user must be equipped with different skills, e.g., social and cognitive skills to be able to involve in phatic situations. Thus, a second language learner has to be pragmatically competent to determine the phatic speech.
- e. *Social lubricant*: due to the phatic communion expressions, speakers can ease tension, break the silence and make the transition of interactions smooth.
- f. *Convergent tool*: speakers of different statuses employ phatic communion expressions to make powerful people converge their speech to accommodate the informal situation. This last point is seen in interviews where hosts employ the informal phatic expressions for the sake of lessening the tension and making the powerful guests behave informally.

### 6.1.4 Forms of Phatic Communion Expressions

- a. Non-verbal phatic behaviour: this type refers to a number of non-verbal behaviours such as *waving, nodding, hugging, bending* and *kissing* that are employed, for the most part, in the opening and closing phases.
- b. Short phatic form: this type stands for one or two phatic expressions that are exploited in all phases of interactions. Among the different phatic expressions may include *Hi, Hello, Thank you, Amazing Good luck, Best wishes, Congratulations, Bye, See you*, etc.
- c. Extended phatic form: this type refers to more than two phatic expressions that people employ in all phases of interactions. Expressions such as *you're looking good, congratulations on your*

*marriage, nice to meet you, I'm very obliged to you, thank you for your considerations, etc.* are examples of this type.

- d. Phatic question form: questions such as *How are you? What's up? How's family?* etc. achieve the phatic function, which people employ in the opening phases.

#### 6. 1. 5 Functions of Phatic Communion Expressions

- a. *Acknowledgement and/or welcome*: this function is often observed in the opening phases of interactions when people meet. The achievement of this function is attributed to the phatic communion expressions such as *Hi, Hello, What's up? How are you?* etc.
- b. *Compliment and/or showing interest*: this function is seen in the opening, medial and closing phases of interactions. Speakers employ this function to compliment and show interest towards other's appearances, performances, possessions and so forth.
- c. *Expressing gratitude*: this function is seen in the opening, medial and closing phases. The reason behind using this function is to express gratitude for something said or done through employing phatic communion expressions such as *Thanks, Thank you very much, etc.*
- d. *Expressing happiness*: on certain occasions, people use phatic communion expressions such as *Congratulations, Happy birthday, etc.* to express happiness and pleasure. Coupled with the compliment and gratitude functions, this function is observed in all phases of interactions.
- e. *Parting*: in contrast to the acknowledgement function, the parting function is only observed in the closing phases of interactions. Phatic communion expressions such as *See you later, Bye, Goodbye, etc.* are used to achieve this function.

To develop a model for analysing the selected data, the present study draws upon Laver's (1974/1975) phases, Searle' (1979) expressive speech acts of greeting, thanking, compliment and congratulation. Accordingly, the model is schematised as in the following figure (1) through which interactions are divided into three phases: the opening, the medial and the closing.

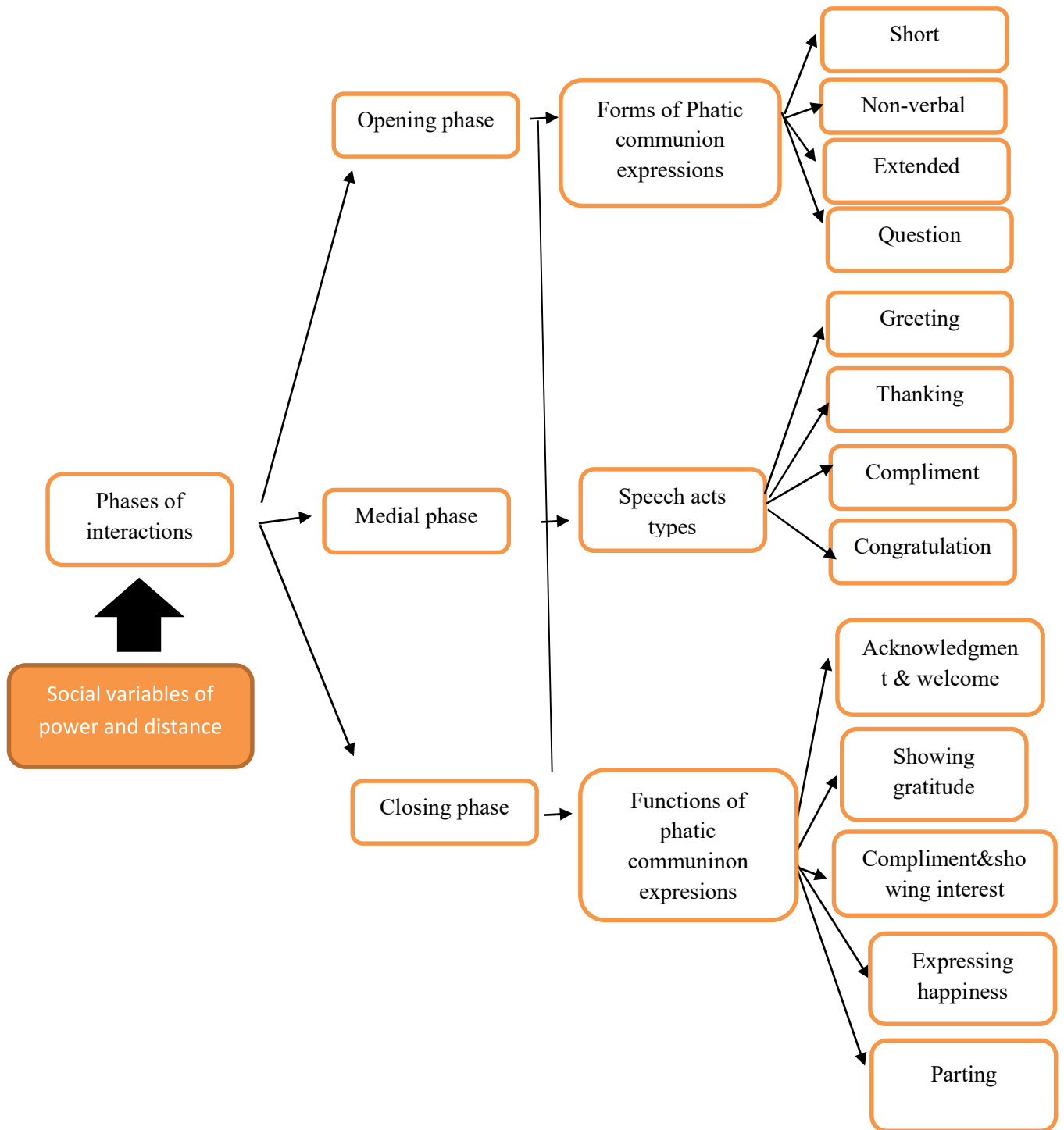


Figure (1) Schematic diagram of the sociopragmatic developed model

The sociopragmatic and statistical analyses are used to analyse the data. The first is achieved by means of the developed model, whereas the second is achieved by using appropriate statistical means.

In a video format, three interactions that take place between Ellen, *the hostess of the Show*, and Jennifer, *a celebrity member*, Angle, *a regular member* and Michelle, *a powerful member* are taken from *The Ellen Show* (see Web Sources). The study focuses on Ellen and the three members’

performance of the phatic communion forms, the expressive speech acts of greeting, thanking, compliment and congratulation.

### 7.1 Interaction No. 1

*It happens between Ellen DeGeneres and Jennifer Aniston, the American actress, who expresses how frightened and uncomfortable she was during an emergency incident on a plane until Ellen sent a message to ask about her. They also talk about the money that Jennifer spends to maintain her beauty in addition to some gossip about her pictures posted to the public.*

#### 7.1.1 Sociopragmatic Analysis

This section is concerned with the sociopragmatic analysis of the phatic communion expressions and the speech acts that are employed by Ellen and Jennifer, a celebrity member.

#### The Opening Phase

Extract No.1 **Ellen:** *Hello!*

**Jennifer:** *Hello, honey!*

**Ellen:** *It's good to see you!*

**Jennifer:** *It's good to see you!*

*(web source 1)*

In relation to the phatic communion forms, extract No. 1 shows that Ellen and Jennifer employ two types of phatic communion expressions: the short phatic form *Hello!* and *Hello, honey!* and the extended phatic form *It's nice to see you!*. The reason behind using these phatic expressions is to ease the entrance to the interaction that they are involved in. Ellen and Jennifer's employment of the informal phatic communion expressions in the opening phase reveals that the social relationship between them is at its maximum, whereas the influence of the social variables of power and social distance is at its minimum.

With regard to the expressive speech acts, the opening phase of interaction no. 1 shows that Ellen and Jennifer only exercise the speech act of greeting. The phatic expressions *Hello!* and *Hello, honey!* are exploited by Ellen and Jennifer respectively, whereas the phatic expressions *It's good to see you!* are adopted by both in order to achieve the speech act of greeting. It is the acknowledgement and welcome that makes Ellen and Jennifer resort to these types of expressions. Reducing the influence of the social variables of power and distance and enhancing the social distance between them require them to do so.

#### The Medial Phase

Extract No. 2. **Jennifer:** *I was in the Pacific Ocean, in the Pacific Ocean.*

**Ellen:** *Yeah, and it was just floating?*

**Jennifer:** *just floating. And I was just like, I'm going to swim out to that and have some deep thoughts.*

**Ellen:** *Ahhh!*

**Jennifer:** *And that's what happened.*

**Ellen:** *Well, you look fantastic!*

**Jennifer:** *Thank you!*

*(ibid)*

As far as the phatic communion expressions are concerned, it is found that that short phatic expressions *thank you!* as well as the extended phatic expressions *that's amazing!*, *you look fantastic!*, *I love it!* and *I love you you're just naturally beautiful!* are used by Ellen and Jennifer. Mixing between the short and extended expressions explains that Ellen and Jennifer want to lubricate the social wheel of their interaction so as to make the transition between the topics easier. In doing so, the influence of the social variables of power and social distance is lessened.

Concerning the speech acts, extract No. 2 illustrates that the speech acts of compliment and thanking are realised in the medial phase. The speech act of compliment is practised when Ellen uses the phatic expressions *you're just naturally beautiful!*; *that's amazing!*; and *you look fantastic!* so as to

compliment and show interest in Jennifer's appearance and activities, whereas Jennifer adopts the phatic expressions *I love you!* to show concern towards Ellen for sending a message to her when she was on the plane, and *I love it!* to express interest in the activities that she is doing. Additionally, the speech act of thanking is exploited by Jennifer by using the phatic expressions *Thank you!* to express her gratitude to Ellen for complimenting her as being naturally beautiful. In doing so, the influence of the social variables of power and social distance is decreased, whereas their social relationship is increased.

### The Closing Phase

*Extract No. 4 Ellen: And I'm glad you are OK, and I'm sorry that I called you to get you here early.*

*Jennifer: That's Ok.*

*Ellen: You look beautiful!*

*Jennifer: Thank you.*

*Ellen: I'm happy you're here.*

*Jennifer: I love you. I'm happy here as always and I always love to do that.*

*(ibid)*

The closing phase of interaction No. 1 shows that the short phatic communion expressions *Thank you* and the extended phatic expressions *I'm glad you are OK, You're beautiful, I'm happy you're here* and *I love you. I'm happy here as always and I always love to do that* are employed by Ellen and Jennifer. The reason behind using these types is to terminate the interaction that they are involved in and pave the way for future encounters. the influence of the social variables of power and social distance is lowered in order to maintain a good social relationship between them.

In relation to the expressive speech acts, it is found that the speech acts of compliment and thanking are exercised by Ellen and Jennifer. The realisation of these speech acts is done by the phatic expressions that are used in the closing phase. Ellen uses the phatic communion expression *I'm glad you are OK; you are beautiful; and I'm happy that you are here* to show concern towards Jennifer for being safe after having a bad flight and to compliment and show interest to Jennifer for being on the *Show* and for the way she takes care of herself. On her part, Jennifer utilises the speech act of compliment to show concern and to compliment Ellen for having her in the *Show* by using the phatic expressions, *I love you and I'm happy I'm here as always*. Secondly, Jennifer employs the speech act of thanking by ascribing to the phatic communion expressions *Thank you!* to show gratitude for Ellen's concern about the dangerous flight and for having her in the *Show*. Two reasons make Ellen and Jennifer to Employ the speech acts of compliment and thanking in the closing phase: to minimise the influence of the social variables of power and social distance and to maintain a good social relationship between them for future interactions.

### 7.1.2 Statistical Analysis

This section presents the comparison made between Ellen and Jennifer in relation to the employed phatic communion expressions and the expressive speech acts in all phases.

*Table (1) the overall use of the phatic communion expressions and speech acts by Ellen and Jennifer, a celebrity member in all phases.*

|                              | Type       | Ellen |      | Jennifer |       |
|------------------------------|------------|-------|------|----------|-------|
|                              |            | Freq. | Per. | Freq.    | Per.  |
| Phatic communion expressions | Non-verbal | 0     | 0    | 0        | 0     |
|                              | Short      | 1     | 12.5 | 2        | 28.57 |
|                              | Extended   | 7     | 87.5 | 5        | 71.42 |
|                              | Question   | 0     | 0    | 0        | 0     |
|                              | Total      | 8     | 100% | 7        | 100%  |
| Speech acts                  | Greeting   | 2     | 25   | 2        | 28.57 |

|  |                |   |     |   |       |
|--|----------------|---|-----|---|-------|
|  | Thanking       | 0 | 0   | 1 | 14.28 |
|  | Compliment     | 6 | 75  | 4 | 57.14 |
|  | Congratulation | 0 | 0   | 0 | 0     |
|  | Total          | 8 | 100 | 7 | 100%  |

In relation to the phatic communion expressions, the findings prove that Ellen uses the extended phatic expressions with a percentage that amounts to (78.5%), which is more than that reached by Jennifer that amount to a percentage of (71.42%). Conversely, Jennifer's performance of the short phatic expressions arrives at the percentage of (28.57%), whereas Ellen's performance of the same type records the percentage of (12.5%). However, Ellen and Jennifer do not use the non-verbal and question phatic behaviours in all phases to record the percentage of (0%).

With regard to the speech acts, it is manifested in the table (1) that the speech act of compliment is the frequent type, followed by the speech act of greeting and then the speech act of thanking. Ellen frequently adopts the speech act of compliment to score the percentage of (75%), whereas Jennifer exploits the speech act of greeting and thanking more than Ellen does with percentages of (28.57%) and (14.28%) respectively.

## 7.2 Interaction No. 2

*It occurs between Ellen DeGeneres and Angle Perez. The American teenager talks with Ellen about the topics that are related to his family members, his outrageous childhood, how he sacrifices to raise his brothers and sister to go to school and do all life stuff alone. As a result, Ellen is inspired by his story and gives him and his siblings enough money for joining college in future.*

### 7.2.1 Sociopragmatic Analysis

This section is concerned with the sociopragmatic analysis of the phatic communion expressions and the speech acts that are employed by Ellen and Angle, a regular member.

#### The Opening Phase

Extract No.4 *Ellen: Hi, Angle!*

*Angle: Hi!*

*Ellen: Hiii!*

*Angle: Oh, I'm like freezing. Wow, this is amazing!*

*Ellen: This is ...first of all it's nice to meet you!*

*Angle: Nice to meet you!*

*(web source: 2)*

Concerning the phatic communion expressions, it is found that Ellen and Angle adopt the short and extended forms. The phatic expressions *Hi, Angle!* and *Hi* are used to achieve the first form, whereas the phatic expressions *Wow, this is amazing, nice to see you* and *It's nice to see you* are used to achieve the second type. Employing the informal short and extended phatic expressions clarifies that Ellen wants to break the silence and build a good social relationship with Angle and to make the entrance to the interaction easy, since they meet for the first time on *the Show*. In doing so, they aim at minimising the effect of the social variables of power and social distance and maximise the social relationship between them.

As for the speech acts, the opening phase of interaction no. 2 exposes that Ellen and Angle utilise two expressive speech acts; namely, greeting and compliment. The realisation of the speech act of greeting is ascribed to Ellen's phatic expressions *Hi, Angle* and *it's nice to you* and Angle's phatic expressions *Hi* and *Nice to see you*. It is the acknowledgement and welcoming that enhance Ellen and Angle to employ the speech act of greeting. Besides, Angle uses the phatic communion expressions *Wow this is amazing!* to realise the speech act of compliment in order to express his interest to Ellen for having him in the *Show*. Accordingly, the influence of the social variables of power and social distance is decreased.



### The Medial Phase

Extract 5. **Angle:** *And so that's exactly how he was able to put us all together and to this day, we are all still together.*

**Ellen:** *What a great guy he is, hmm? He is definitely an inspiration.*

**Angle:** *yes.*

*(ibid)*

In the medial phase of interaction no. 2, Ellen uses the phatic questions *What a great guy he is, hmm?* to lubricate their social bonds. Ellen resorts to this type of phatic expressions to minimise the influence of the social variables of power and social distance between them and make the transition between the topics as smoother as possible.

With regard to the speech acts, it is manifested that the phatic communion expressions *what a great guy he is, hmm?* is used to realise the speech act of compliment to compliment Manual, his stepfather, who supports Angle during his hard times. Converging her phatic communion expressions to accommodate that of Angle's denotes that she aims at decreasing the influence of the social variables of power and social distance, and, hence, increasing their social relations.

### The Closing Phase

Extract No. 6 **Ellen:** *So, I know your siblings are really really important to you, and it's important to go to college...so, Green Dot wants to help even more...they want to make sure that all of your siblings go to college. They are giving all of them \$20.000 as well. So, they're taken of.*

**Angle:** *Thank you so much!*

*(ibid)*

The closing phase of interaction no. 2 clarifies that Ellen and Angle practice the extended phatic forms as well as the non-verbal behaviour. The achievement of the former is attributed to Angle's phatic expressions *thank you so much*, while the achievement of the latter is ascribed to Ellen and Angle's hugs. Ellen and Angle's employment of extended and non-verbal phatic communion expressions reveal that they want to lessen the influence of the social variables of power and social distance between them so as to keep the channel of their social relationship connected for present and future encounters.

As far as the expressive speech acts are concerned, it is found that the verbal and non-verbal phatic expressions are used to realise the speech act of thanking to show gratitude and part each other. The speech act of thanking is firstly launched by Angle when he uses the phatic expressions *thank you so much*, and secondly by both Ellen and Angle when they hug each other. The reason behind the phatic behaviour is to minimise the influence of the social variables of power and social distance between them.

### 7.2.2 Statistical Analysis

This section presents the comparison made between Ellen and Angle in relation to the employed phatic communion expressions and the expressive speech acts in all phases.

*Table (2) the overall use of the phatic expressions and speech acts by Ellen and Angle, a regular member.*

|                              | Type       | Ellen |       | Angle |      |
|------------------------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|------|
|                              |            | Freq. | Per.  | Freq. | Per. |
| Phatic communion expressions | Non-verbal | 1     | 16.66 | 1     | 20   |
|                              | Short      | 2     | 33.33 | 1     | 20   |
|                              | Extended   | 2     | 33.33 | 3     | 60   |
|                              | Question   | 1     | 16.66 | 0     | 0    |
|                              | Total      | 6     | 100%  | 5     | 100% |
| Speech acts                  | Greeting   | 3     | 50    | 2     | 40   |

|  |                |   |       |   |      |
|--|----------------|---|-------|---|------|
|  | Thanking       | 1 | 16.66 | 2 | 40   |
|  | Compliment     | 2 | 33.33 | 1 | 20   |
|  | Congratulation | 0 | 0     | 0 | 0    |
|  | Total          | 6 | 100%  | 5 | 100% |

Table (2) exposes that the extended phatic expressions preside the rank and followed by the short phatic expressions then the non-verbal phatic expressions. Angles' use of the extended phatic communion registers the percentage that amounts to (60%), which is frequent than that of Ellen with a percentage of (33.33%). In the results of the short phatic communion expressions, table (2) authenticates that Ellen frequent use presides that of Angle's with percentages of (33.33%) and (20%) respectively. Ellen and Angle slightly different scores when employing the non-verbal with percentages of (16.66%) and (20%) respectively.

The statistical findings present that the speech act of greeting is highly employed to record the percentages (50%) and (40%) by Ellen and Angle respectively. In contrast, Angle utilises the speech act of thanking more than Ellen does to arrive at the percentages of (40%) and (16.66%) respectively. Additionally, (33.33%) and (20%) are the percentage that is reached by Ellen and Angle when performing the speech act of compliment.

### 7.3 Interaction No. 3

*It happens between Ellen DeGeneres and Michael Obama. The Former First Lady of the United States is hosted on the Ellen Show. Ellen and Michael talk about the new routine of the Barak family; like what they do in their regular life or where they live, etc. Ellen also sheds light on the hard work that she was doing at the White House and the inspiration that she creates not only for the Americans but also for the whole world.*

#### 7.3.1 Sociopragmatic Analysis

This section is concerned with the sociopragmatic analysis of the phatic communion expressions and the speech acts that are employed by Ellen and Michelle, a powerful member.

#### The Opening Phase

*Extract No. 9 Ellen: Don't you miss here? I ... I mean, I'm so honoured. Thank you so much for being here.*

*Michelle: It's my pleasure! I love you!*

*Ellen: I love you too!*

*Michelle: And you look great! Look at you, how cute you are! Look at you, your shows...*

*(web source 3)*

Extract no. 9 shows that Ellen and Michelle's use of the phatic expressions is at the non-verbal level and the extended level. The non-verbal level is achieved when Ellen and Michelle hug each other, while the extended level is achieved when they adopt the phatic expressions *I'm so honoured. Thank you so much for being here, It's my pleasure! I love you!, I love you too! and you look great! look at you, how cute you are!* Employing the verbal and non-verbal phatic communion behaviours denotes that they want to minimise the influence the social variables of power and social distance so as to maintain a good social relationship between them.

In relation to the expressive speech acts, the opening phase illustrates that Ellen and Michelle use the speech acts of greeting, thanking and compliment as well. Firstly, the speech act of greeting is performed when Ellen and Michelle hug each other to show happiness for seeing each in the *Show*. Secondly, the speech act of thanking is exercised by Ellen by means of the phatic expressions *Thank you so much for being here!* to express gratitude to Michelle for being in her Show. Finally, the speech act of compliment is employed when Ellen resorts to use the phatic expressions *I'm so honoured and I love you so much!* to compliment Michelle for being in her Show, whereas Michelle calls for the phatic expressions *It's my pleasure. I love you! and you look great! look at you, how cute you are!* to

compliment Ellen for having her in the Show and to show interest towards Ellen's appearance. Michelle converges her phatic expressions to accommodate that of Ellen's in order to mitigate the effect of the social variables of power and social distance. Thus, the social relationship between them is maintained.

### The Medial Phase

*Extract No. 10 Michelle: ...I had one of the best times with you...am...and I love you so much! Barak loves you. You warm our hearts. You made the world better. You've done so many things for millions of people. You have spent millions of dollars and I'm grateful for everything you do for this country and for the people...*

(*ibid*)

As for the phatic communion expressions, the medial phase proves that it is Michelle who practices the extended phatic expressions to oil the social wheel of the interaction they are involved in. The achievement of the extended phatic form is due to Michelle's employment of expressions such as *I love you so much! Barak loves you. you warm our hearts. You made the world better. You've had so many things for millions of people. You have spent millions of dollars and I'm grateful for everything you do for this country and for the people.* Using these phatic expressions by Michelle in the medial phase reveals that she wants to lessen the influence of the social variables of power and social distance in order to keep their social relationships connected.

With regard to the expressive speech acts, it is found that the speech acts of thanking and compliment are used by Michelle in the medial phase. On one hand, the speech act of thanking is realised by ascribing to the phatic expressions *I'm grateful for everything you do for this country and for the people* to express sincere gratitude to Ellen for being good, generous and helpful to the Americans. On the other hand, the speech act of compliment is realised by using the phatic expressions *I love you so much! Barak loves you. you warm our hearts. You made the world better. You've had so many things for millions of people. You have spent millions of dollars* to compliment Ellen's generosity and kindness towards the Americans and express interest towards Ellen by saying that *I love you* and *Barak loves you*. In doing so, Michelle wants to maintain their social relationships by minimising the influence of the social variables of power and social distance.

### The Closing phase

*Extract No. 11 Ellen: Thank you!*

*Michelle: Thank you!*

(*ibid*)

The closing phase of interaction no. 3 manifests that Ellen and Michelle employ the short and non-verbal phatic behaviours. The first phatic behaviour is observed when they exploit the phatic expressions *Thank you!* whereas the second phatic behaviour when they hug each other. Reducing the influence of the social variables of power and social distance explains why Ellen and Michelle perform the verbal and non-verbal phatic behaviours in the closing phase of the interaction they are involved in.

In the closing phase, the speech act of thanking is realised by ascribing to the verbal and non-verbal phatic expressions, that is, *thank you* and the *hug* for the sake of showing gratitude and parting each other. Closing their interactions with the verbal and non-verbal phatic communion expressions means that Ellen and Michelle want to keep their social relationships connected for future encounters. In doing so, the influence of the social variables of power and social distance is minimised.

#### 7.3.3 Statistical Analysis

This section presents the comparison made between Ellen and Michelle in relation to the employed phatic communion expressions and the expressive speech acts in all phases.

Table (3) the overall use of the phatic expressions and speech acts by Ellen and Michelle, a powerful member.

|                              | Type           | Ellen |       | Michelle |       |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
|                              |                | Freq. | Per.  | Freq.    | Per.  |
| Phatic communion expressions | Non-verbal     | 2     | 33.33 | 2        | 14.28 |
|                              | Short          | 1     | 16.66 | 1        | 7.14  |
|                              | Extended       | 3     | 50    | 11       | 78.57 |
|                              | Question       | 0     | 0     | 0        | 0     |
|                              | Total          | 6     | 100%  | 14       | 100%  |
| Speech acts                  | Greeting       | 1     | 16.66 | 1        | 7.14  |
|                              | Thanking       | 3     | 50    | 3        | 21.42 |
|                              | Compliment     | 2     | 33.33 | 10       | 71.42 |
|                              | Congratulation | 0     | 0     | 0        | 0     |
|                              | Total          | 6     | 100%  | 14       | 14    |

With regard to the phatic communion expressions, it is found that Michelle frequently employs the extended phatic expressions with a percentage of (78%), which is more than Ellen's performance of the same type with a percentage that amounts to (50%). While Ellen scores a percentage of (33.33%) when using the non-verbal behaviour, Michelle records (14.28%) when performing the same type. Besides, the short phatic communion expressions are used by Ellen more than Michelle does to arrive the percentage of (16.66%) and (7.14%) respectively.

As far as the speech acts are concerned, table (3) manifests that the speech act of compliment is highly employed by Michelle to record the percentage of (71.42%). Contrastively, Ellen assigns a higher percentage to the speech act of thanking (50%) more than that assigned by Michelle (21.42%). Besides, Ellen scores a higher percentage (16.66%) when practising the speech act of greeting, whereas Michelle records the percentage of (7.14%) when practising the same speech act.

## 8. Conclusions

The present study arrives at the following conclusions:

1. There are noticeable differences between Ellen and celebrity member, regular member and powerful member in relation to the employed phatic communion expressions and the realised expressive speech acts.
2. It is found out that the extended phatic communion form and followed by the short phatic communion form are the most preferable forms to create and maintain social bonds between speakers than the other forms of phatic expressions.
3. In the results of the speech acts, it has been found that Ellen employs the speech act of greeting with Angle, the regular member more than she does with the other members, since she meets him for the first time, and, accordingly, she wants him to feel that he is welcomed in the Show and get rid of the tension so as to behave as normal and relax as possible. Thus, it is appropriate for speakers to employ the speech act of greeting in the opening phases, since it lessens the potential tension and eases the entrance to interactions, especially when the relationship between them is not close.
4. As for the speech act of thanking, it is found that speakers prefer to use it in the closing phases of interactions, because it shows appreciations for other's good deeds and keeps the channel of their relations socially connected for future encounters.
5. It is found that the social variables of power and social distance have an influence on the choice of the speech act of compliment that is employed by the powerful member more than Ellen and the other members.

6. The variable of social distance has affected the choice of the phatic communion expressions and the speech acts that are used by the regular member when interviewed by Ellen more than the celebrity member and powerful member when interviewed by Ellen, since the social relationship that the regular member is not as close as that of Ellen and the other members.

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