MATT KING'S POLITENESS AS A PARENTING ROLE
SEEN FROM LEECH’S MAXIM AND ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract
This research aims to find out how Matt King's politeness as the role of parent in teaching his two daughters seen from politeness pragmatic and Islamic perspective. The object of this research is the utterances of Matt King when communicating with his two daughters. In this research the researcher applies the descriptive qualitative method. The theories used by the researcher are Geoffrey Leech's Politeness Principle and Islamic ethics in communication. The results of this research are Matt King in teaching his daughters applies the whole of Leech’s politeness principle in his conversation. Those are 8 tact maxims, 5 generosity maxims, 3 approbation maxims, 1 modesty maxim, 7 agreement maxims, and 2 sympathy maxims. Islam also views that Matt King has good communication ethics as the way to solve the problem to his daughters since he applies five ethics from six Islamic ethics in communication. Those are 39 qaul bāliq, 18 qaul karīm, 2 qaul maisūr, 3 qaul layyin, and 16 qaul sadīd.

Keywords: The Descendants, politeness principles, Islamic ethics in communication

A. INTRODUCTION
In communication, people have the intention such as to inform, deliver a message, ask question, apologize, thank, advice, criticize, say hello or goodbye (Kreidler, 1998: 176). In their interaction, certainly the speaker hopes the hearer understands what the intention of speaker's utterance. Therefore, the hearer has to consider several aspects such as the intonation, context, situation, and other in order to get the purpose of the speaker. The speaker and hearer also should concern with who speaks with the aim to create a harmony in their interaction.

In this case, people need the concept of politeness. Politeness becomes a major concern in pragmatics since it is important rule in an interaction. It is a key to build a good relationship with other. The purpose of politeness is to consider other's feeling and establish levels of mutual comfort (Hill et al., 1986: 349). Furthermore, Kushartanti states that a social interaction will be well maintained by the awareness of the form of politeness (2005: 105).

Politeness is very important to be understood by everyone because humans will always need to communicate to others. According to Holmes, in communication, try to keep other’s feeling, make others feel in honor, and use the appropriate language based on the relationship among the participants are the effort of people to be polite (1992: 296-297).

In Islam, the matter of politeness is also discussed. It is stated by God in the Quran surah Al-Isrā’ verse 53.

"Say to My servants that they should only utter good things, surely Satan provokes discord between them, and Satan is surely to mankind an open enemy." (Zidan, 1989:199)

Based on this verse, Allah gives a command to speak with the best words to other. It means being polite is strongly recommended when communicating in any situations and conditions, much more with older people and particularly with the parents.

The practice of politeness is not only seen in daily conversation but also in the movie. Sometimes, a representation of reality depicts in a movie. Each character in a movie delivers the dialog which represents an actual language in everyday life. The Descendants movie is one of the movies which show the theme of daily lives. The movie, directed by Alexander Payne, shows a simple theme, but it is able to package conflicts in an unusual way. It is about the
relationship between father and his two daughters, Alex and Scottie. Matt King, the protagonist in *The Descendants* movie, is a father who tested to take cares his daughters alone. His wife was hospitalized due to a powerboat accident that caused her got a serious injury in her head. He is a busy man who works as a lawyer until he does not have a close relationship with his daughters. The last time he took care of the little girl, Scottie, is when she was three years old. Whereas, she is now 10 years old. Therefore, he gets confusion when he should handle of his daughters alone.

This movie further highlights how a single father demanded to be wise in facing of his daughters' delinquency. Generally, parents always want their children to be polite and have a good manner, especially in speech. Parents also have a right to scold or rebuke the children with the purpose of educating them when children do not respect parents or argue their command. In contrast, in this case Matt King deals it with different way. Here, Mat King applies politeness language in his utterances to teach his daughters and reduce the conflict. He also tries to be a real father and do the best for them. He does realize of his negligence in educating the daughters. Mat King always teaches them patiently to be polite and talk to him with the good words. Initially, they do not consider the advice of their father, but over time they used to be polite to his father and other. Below are the examples from the movie dialog between Mat King and his children:

1. **SCOTTIE.** I don't like eggs.
   **MAT KING.** Why didn't you tell me before I made them?
   **SCOTTIE.** I thought they were for you. (00:21:24-00:21:30)

2. **MAT KING.** I'm sorry for sucking you into this. I should be doing it alone.
   **ALEX.** It's selfish. I'm the one who sucked you in. I'm the one who knew. (01:18:56-01:19:03)

The first example is the conversation between Mat King and his little daughter, Scottie. One day he makes her breakfast. He makes her some eggs. Unfortunately, her daughter does not like eggs and he does not know about that before. Actually, there is nothing wrong in the case. It happens because the father does not know about daughter’s favorite food. It is indeed rather annoyed him as his food is rejected by Scottie. However, he might be in anger to react over Scottie’s statement by saying “why you didn't tell me before I made them” flatly. Whereas, he might be angry by saying “I have been made breakfast for you but you are ungrateful” or “You do not respect me who have worked hard to make you breakfast”.

The second example is the conversation between Mat King and Alex when they are in front of Brian Speer’s cottage, the guy of mother’s affair. They intend to meet the guy since they are curious how is the face which makes her mother and his wife want to go from them. Mat King feels guilty and apologizes to Alex for sucking her into his business, but Alex thinks that her father is not proper to say sorry because she is also sad for making him know with mother’s affair. Actually, Matt King might be in anger to react Alex’s statement by saying “why did you not tell me since a long time? Why do not before your mother’s coma?” But he does not do it. He is thankful for Alex’s information.

The ways of Matt King teaches his daughters are the best part in this movie that can be learnt. Those cases are interesting to be analyzed because politeness is used by Matt King to reduce the conflict with his daughters. Since the movie applied many of politeness, the researchers intended to conduct a research that the problems as follows: 1) How does Matt King teach his daughters trough politeness in their conversations? 2) How Islam views Matt King’s ethics communication in solving the problems to his daughters?

**B. THEORY AND METHOD**

As mentioned before, this researchs focus on analyzing politeness which appears in *The Descendants* movie. The first theory used by the researcher is based on the theory of pragmatics, especially politeness principle proposed by Geoffrey Leech. Politeness concerns relationship between self and other. In a conversation, self is identified as the speaker and other is the hearer (Leech, 1983: 131-138). Leech suggests that politeness principle consists of six maxims. Those are: 1) The tact maxim (TM), the maxim concerns minimizing cost and maximizing benefit to others; 2) The generosity maxim (GM), the maxim concerns minimizing benefit and maximizing cost to self; 3) The modesty maxim (MM), the maxim concerns minimizing praise and maximizing criticism to self; 4) The approbation maxim (ApM), the maxim concerns minimizing criticism and maximizing praise to other; 5) The agreement maxim (AgM),

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the maxim concerns minimizing disagreement and maximizing agreement between self and other; 6) The sympathy maxim (SM), the maxim concerns minimizing antipathy and maximizing sympathy between self and other.

For the second theory, the researchers take the communication ethics from Muchlis. M. Hanafi’s book (2012: 284-273). The book stated that the Quran gives six ethics in communicating to other. Those ethics are: 1) qa’ul balīg, means any words that do not use the strange diction and easily understandable by the hearer; 2) qa’ul karīm, means purely good words, good utterances, judging by the textual and contextual meaning; 3) qa’ul maisūr, means any form of a kind word, gentle, and not making people invent; 4) qa’ul ma’rūf, means any words that appropriate with the rule of God or law; 5) qa’ul layyin, means any words containing soft suggestions, invitations, exemplifications; and qa’ul sadīd, means means providing good information, correcting, educating, delivering constructive criticism and right on target.

This research uses a qualitative method. “Qualitative research method uses words rather than number and it also uses open-ended question rather than close-ended question” (Creswell, 2009: 1). Based on this, the main data are the conversations of Matt King and his daughters in the movie. The source of data is the script of the movie that contains the conversations of Matt King with his daughters. In analyzing the data, the researcher needs some steps or technique to analyze the data, those are: 1) identifying the important data in the movie; 2) focusing on the data chosen: the utterances of Matt King when he communicates to his daughter; 3) classifying the data based on the six types of Leech’s maxims and communication ethics in Islam.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Findings

After analyzes the data the researcher found that based on Leech’s maxims, the whole of maxims were applied by Matt King. Those are tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. There are 26 utterances that delivered by Matt King by using those maxims. While from the Islamic ethics in communication, the researcher finds that Matt King applies five ethics from six ethics. Those are qa’ul balīg, qa’ul karīm, qa’ul maisūr, qa’ul layyin, and qa’ul sadīd. There are 78 utterances that are delivered by him by using Islamic ethics in communication.

Table I: Matt King’s politeness seen from Leech’s Maxim and Islamic Perspective

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<th>Matt King’ Utterances</th>
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If the researcher explains all the data in this discussion, this research definitely takes more pages. Therefore, the researcher only picks one utterance or a conversation that represent those principles or ethics from each example to make the brief discussion.

2. Discussions

As the researcher stated on the first chapter, this research is focused on Mat King’s utterances which contain the politeness seen from Leech’s maxim and communication ethics. There are two classifications in this chapter; the first classification is politeness based on Leech’s maxim and the second classification is politeness based on Islamic ethics in communication. However for the Leech’s maxims which have similar definition with Islamic ethics in communication the researcher explains it above the each maxim. In addition, from each classification, the researcher analyzes the data from the first to the last of maxim or ethic in sequence.

a. Leech’s Politeness Principle

The researcher finds that there are 26 utterances that are delivered by Matt King to the daughters by using politeness principles. Tact maxims are 8 utterances, generosity maxims are
5 utterances, approbation maxims are 3 utterances, modesty maxim is 1 utterance, agreement maxims are 7 utterances, and sympathy maxims are 2 utterances.

1) Tact Maxim

MATT KING. I just found out yesterday. We have to go through this thing together, you and Scottie and me. And I have to go around and tell people what’s happening, family and a few close friends. Sometimes I am gonna need you to come with me. Sometimes I need you to watch Scottie. (00.28: 10-00.28: 35)

This scene happens in the pool when Mat King talks to the eldest daughter, Alex. He tries to explain her that the doctor told him that her mother would not wake up. The doctor would stop caring for her. It means that her mother will die in a short time. He tries to strengthen his daughter. He also conveys that both of them have to get through all of this together. Both of them should be strong for Scottie, the youngest daughter.

In the utterances above, it can be seen that Mat King applies tact maxims since he tries to minimize cost to him and maximize benefit to Alex. Mat King shows that he needs Alex’s helping. He means to be polite to the hearer although it is with his own daughter. He says to his daughter tactfully by a good language.

Actually, he really needs his daughter’s helping but he delivers the utterances as if he does not ask Alex to help him. From his utterances, the researcher assumes that Mat King is success to appeal the solidarity to the hearer. He also thinks of three scales, estimating the benefit of an utterance for him and Alex, considering the amount of choice he allows Alex, and thinking the length of his utterances.

While from the Islamic perspective, the utterances also can be categorized as the interpretation of karīm’s term since Matt King delivers the words by using the good manner. He does realize that although he is a father but he cannot hold anything. He has a weakness for his role as a parent. It means he makes Alex remains honourable.

2) Generosity Maxim

MATT KING. Welcome home. Here. You want some eggs? ALEX. I can’t believe that. (00:22:27-00:22:48)

The situation in the conversation above is when Matt King and his daughters in the home. It is the first day that they are at home without the presence of their mother. Actually, there is ineptness between them. It is only platitude utterance to solve the ineptness between them. Matt King offered Alex for having breakfast with him and her little sister, Scottie. However, Alex rejected. In offering, actually, Matt King is putting pressure on Alex to comply with his offering. This indicates Matt King’s sincerity in having Alex accepts his offering. Since the speaker maximizes the cost and minimizes the benefit to himself, the utterance indicates that he implies generosity maxim in his utterance.

While from Islamic perspective, this utterance is categorized as the interpretation of karīm’s term since Matt King delivers the words by using the good manner. He does intend to offer his daughter breakfast. It means he makes Alex remains honourable.

3) Approbation Maxim

SCOTTIE. Why is it called a jellyfish? It’s not a fish, it’s not jelly.

MATT KING. I have no idea. You ask good questions, Scottie. You’re getting too smart for me. (00:15:14-00:15:21)

The third maxim, approbation, appears on the dialog between Matt King and Scottie. In this scene they have lunch at the club. Both of them agree that the food in the place is very delicious. They also prize the waitress who works there. Here, Scottie finds the name of food that makes her interest to observe. Scottie asks to Matt King about the name of food that she thinks it is strange from her. But Matt King cannot answer her question. He is silent for a while. Then he just realizes that his daughter is such a critical observer so that he appreciates Scottie’s question.

Matt King’s utterances are the form of approbation maxim. It shows the expression of admiration. He amazes his daughter because she asks something that is not crossed his mind. It means he surprised that his daughter has grown to be critical girl until he is overwhelmed to answer the question. Therefore, he appreciates Scottie’s question and praise her with the
utterances. In this case, he tries to maximize praise to Scottie and minimizes criticism of himself.

While from the Islamic perspective, those utterances also can be categorized as the interpretation of karīm’s term since Matt King respects and appreciates Scottie. He does intend to praise her. It means he makes Scottie remains honourable.

4) Modesty Maxim

ALEX. What day does the pool guy come?
MATT KING. He comes... You know, I don’t know when he comes.
ALEX. Awesome. (00:23:28-00:23:35)

The context of the situation that happens in this maxim is when Matt King and Alex are in the pool. Alex has just arrived last night from her school. She is swimming to make her relax. Unfortunately, the pool in their home is really dirty because of lots of falling leaves. She intends to ask her father when is cleaning pool come but unfortunately Matt King does not know what day cleaning the pool would come. Matt King’s answer certainly makes Alex peevish.

This utterance uttered by Matt King above is categorized as modesty maxim since he tries to minimize praise and maximize dispraise of himself. He applies the maxim by saying the utterances. It means that he wants to say to Alex that he is not like her mother who knows everything about the home business including the schedule of pool cleaners come to home. It also seems that he wants to say that he is not a good father, he is a bad father. He realizes his mistake.

While from the Islamic perspective, thus utterances also could be categorized as the interpretation of karīm’s term since Matt King wants to convey his ignorance by the glory word, with no words that mock him and dispraise him.

5) Agreement Maxim

ALEX. Sid’s coming over.
MATT KING. Who’s Sid?
ALEX. A really good friend from Punahou. We were in school together for years.
MATT KING. Oh. Okay. (00:23:39-00:23:42)

The context of the situation that happens in this maxim is when Alex gives information to his father that her good friend will come to home to visit her. Because Matt king feels tactless with his daughter’s friend so that he asks her who he is. After Alex explains shortly about his friend, she also asks permission to her father that her friend will stay overnight in the home. He wants to beside her for all this bad happening. Because Matt King understands what his daughter’s feeling so that he gives permission to her.

This utterance shows that Matt King applies the agreement maxim since he minimizes the expression of disagreement between himself and Alex and maximizes the expression of agreement between himself and Alex.

While from Islamic perspective this utterance can be categorized as the interpretation of balīg since the utterance applies the effective words. Matt King uses short words, dense, clear, understandable and acceptable by hearer, Alex.

6) Sympathy Maxim

MATT KING. I’m sorry for sucking you into this. I should be doing it alone.
ALEX. It’s selfish. I’m the one who sucked you in. I’m the one who knew. (01:18:56-01:19:03)

This maxim appears when Matt King and Alex are in front of Brian Speer’s cottage, the guy of mother’s affair. They intend to meet the guy since they are curious how the face which makes her mother and his wife goes from them. Before they meet Brian, Matt King says something to Alex. He feels guilty for sucking her into his business. He also apologizes to Alex. For him, he should do this business alone but he needs someone to help him. He needs Alex’s helping because he wants her to talk to Brian’s wife while he talks to Brian. He wants to talk privately with Brian about his affair with his wife.

Matt King’s utterances show that he applies sympathy maxim since he shows the guilty feeling for his daughter. It means that Matt King maximizes sympathy by contributing to feel sad between himself and Alex.
b. Islamic Ethics in Communication

The researcher finds that there are 78 utterances that are delivered by Matt King to the daughters by using Islamic ethics in communication. *Balīg* are 39 utterances, *karīm* are 18 utterances, *maisūr* are 2 utterances, *layyin* are 3 utterances, and *sadīd* are 16 utterances.

1) **Qaul Balīg**

Matt King. What's the matter with you, showing those pictures of Mom for your art project?

Scottie. I'm a photographer, Dad, a real photographer.

Matt King. No. You're overdoing it, is what you're doing.

Scottie. I saw it in a book. Some famous photographer lady took pictures of her mom in the hospital...while she was dying, and they're considered art. That's what I'm doing.

Matt King. First of all, your mother is very sick, but she isn't dying. And second of all, we don't share personal stuff with strangers. What's going on with your mom is private.

The context of the situation that depicts in this ethic is when Matt King picks Scottie up from her school. He is invited by Scottie's teacher to come to the school for his daughter is acting out in school. The teacher gives information that Scottie shares inappropriate photographs with her classmates. The photographs are the pictures of her mother in the hospital. It makes some of them went home quite disturbed until the teacher got some angry calls from parents. Unfortunately, Scottie does not feel guilty with her behaviour. She thinks that what she does is right. She considers herself as a real photographer and her pictures are an art like she has seen in a book. Indeed, Mat King surprised for the case. He talks to Scottie and tries to give sufficient explanation that is easily to be understood and accepted by him.

Here, Matt King's utterances show that he applies *qaul balīg*. He tries to deliver something that is easily understandable and acceptable by Scottie. Matt King deliberately conveys the reasons by the good way. He explains that what has been done by Scottie is unacceptable. It is unreasonable. Therefore, this utterance is appropriate with the term of *balīg* that means convey something that pervasive into the soul.

2) **Qaul Karīm**

Matt King. Anyway... Listen, it's nice to see you. Welcome home. Here. You want some eggs?

Alex. I can't believe that.

The context of this term shows by Matt King when he is in the home with Alex and Scottie. It is the first day and the first morning where he is at home with them without his wife. The night before, Alex had just arrived from school. Unfortunately, Alex was still annoyed with her father who forced her to go home. Therefore, she is indifferent and remains silent. There is clumsiness between them. This is understandable because they rarely meet. Therefore, he is very happy to welcome Alex's arrival. He tries to break the silence and confusion that happen between them.

This utterances make Alex remains honorable, give an honor without demeaning. Matt King also has a big heart by deliver the utterances with a good way and do not accompanied by a high voice. There is also an element of glorifying inside it. It is appropriate with the interpretation of *karīm*'s term.

3) **Qaul Maisūr**

Matt King. Hey, let's do something crazy. Let's drive to the airport, we'll hop over to the Big Island...and we'll surprise your sister. What do you say?

Scottie. Right now?

Matt King. Yeah, it'll be fun. She's not expecting us. And we can bring her home. I think she should be with us, don't you? Don't you miss her? I miss her.

Scottie. Yeah. The context of the situation from this term happens in a cafe when Matt King tries to persuade Scottie. In this cafe Scottie is sad because she meets her father's friend who caused her mother's accident and hospitalized for a long time. She really hats him. Therefore, to restore her smile, Matt King tries to persuade her do something crazy. He means invite Scottie to go to
the Big Island to visit her sister who stayed there. He intends to make Alex surprised by his presence and Scottie. This utterance is said by him to make Scottie forget the sadness that always think of her mother's coma.

Those utterances clearly show as the interpretation of maisūr term since the utterances are any form of a kind word, gentle, and not making him lie to Scottie. In contrast it makes his daughter be happy with the invitation.

4) Qaul Layyin
ALEX. What's up, Dad? What's happening?
MATT KING. You need to come home and see your mom.
ALEX. Fuck Mom. (00:20:02-00:20:15)

The context of the situation from this term happens when Matt King visits Alex in school dormitory. He comes there with his little daughter, Scottie. Actually, he wants to make surprise with his arrival by accompanying Scottie. Unfortunately, what has he seen there make him surprised because he seen that Alex was drunk with her boy friend. It makes him confused enough. He does not expect that Alex can do that. Actually, he wants to be angry with her but he keeps his temper. He is only begs her to go back home to see her mother. But Alex refuses the request of his father because she was angry with her mother. She ever caught her mother with another man but she has not told yet her father.

This utterance can be categorized as the interpretation of layyin’s term since this utterance is in the form of soft invitation. It seems like he asks her to go back home but he says it indirectly. This utterance does not loss of firmness and wisdom. In contrast, the words are delivered with gentle and respectful that do not force Alex. It is appropriate with the interpretation of layyin’s term.

5) Qaul Sadīd
MATT KING. I thought you were supposed to be getting your act together.
ALEX. I have gotten my act together. I was just drinking. I've been doing really well, actually. Nobody ever seems to notice that grades are better. I was in that stupid play you guys didn't bother to see. Do you even remember the name of it? That's what I thought. So what? What if I got drunk on the one night you happened to stop by? So fucking what?
MATT KING. Hey, hey, watch your language around Scottie. (00:21:53-00:22:19)

The context of the situation of this term shows by Matt King when he was at home with Alex. He conveys the advice to her in order his daughter keeps her behaviour. Unfortunately, she considers that her behaviour is still on the line. And she also considers that her grades are good enough.

Thus utterances are delivered by Matt King to educate his daughter because he sees that Alex is out off line. The first utterance, he delivers the constructive criticism. It is hoped that Alex should keep her behaviour or change her attitude. For the second utterance he also gives criticism to keep her language in front of her little sister. It means Matt King tries to correct, educate, convey constructive criticism her daughter. It is appropriate with the interpretation of sadīd’s term means right on target.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions in the previous subbab, the researcher concludes several things:

First, Matt King teaches his daughters by using the good politeness as the parenting role in their communication. Matt King uses the whole of Leech’s maxim in conveying his utterances to his daughters. Those are tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. The number of the using of maxim is 26 utterances. It consists of 8 utterances for tact maxim, 5 utterances for generosity maxim, 3 utterances for approbation maxim, 1 utterance for modesty maxim, 7 utterances for agreement maxims, and 2 utterances for sympathy maxims. Tact maxim is more dominant because Matt King often gives benefit to his daughters in his utterances. While modesty is rarely applied since Matt King prefers to praise his daughters without dispraise himself.

Second, Islam views that Matt King has good communication ethics in solving the problems to his daughters since he uses 5 ethics from 6 Islamic ethics in communication. Those
ethics are qaul balīg, qaul karīm, qaul maisūr, qaul layyin, and qaul sadīd. The researcher finds that there are 78 utterances that are delivered by Matt King to the daughters by using Islamic ethics in communication balīg are 39 utterances, karīm are 18 utterances, maisūr are 2 utterances, layyin are 3 utterances, and sadīd are 16 utterances. Qaul balīg is more dominant since Matt King often uses the effective words that easily understandable and acceptable by his daughters. Qaul maisūr is rarely used since he does not need to persuade his daughters by giving the words of hope or optimism. While qaul ma’rūf is not used since in this move does not relate with the rule of law or God.

Besides the two conclusions from two research questions above, the researcher also found interesting finding. The findings are the similarities and differences between Leech’s maxim and Islamic ethics in communication. The first similarity is in the definition. Both maxim and ethics have good utterance to be conveyed to the hearer. The second is both maxim and ethics have the same number that are six. The third is the four of Leech’s maxims that are tact, generosity, approbation, and modesty maxim can be included as one of Islamic ethic in communication. The ethic is qaul karīm. Those have the same assumption in making others remain honourable or maintain comity. However, those maxims should consider the real words in the utterances. Then, agreement maxim also can be included as one of Islamic ethic in communication. The ethic is qaul balīg since the maxim has the same definition in using the effective word. Therefore, the utterance uttered by the speaker is easily understandable by the hearer.

While seen from the difference, Leech’s maxims have limited definition. It means the whole of those maxims should consider of benefit and cost, critics and praise, agreement or disagreement, sympathy and antipathy. While Islamic ethics in communication has more general definition. It does not limited by self and other but it can include a third person or both the speaker and the hearer.

E. BIBLIOGRAPHY


