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## An Analysis Phatic Expression on Hotel Transylvania Animated Movie

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### ABSTRACT

In contemporary filmmaking, the portrayal of emotions is pivotal, with phatic communication playing a crucial role. Phatic communication, involving verbal interactions aimed at maintaining social relationships rather than conveying information, enhances narrative and character development. This study examines phatic expressions in the animated film "Hotel Transylvania," directed by Genndy Tartakovsky, to uncover the deeper meanings and social significance of these seemingly simple interactions. The analysis reveals that greetings, casual conversations, and social courtesies in the film not only establish and maintain social bonds but also contributing to the film's charm and authenticity. By exploring phatic communication in "Hotel Transylvania," this research offers insights into sociolinguistics and communication studies, emphasizing the importance of these expressions in storytelling and the functions of phatic expression in social context so that the readers can apply it to enhance their conversations.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary filmmaking, the portrayal of emotions is a crucial element that filmmakers masterfully incorporate into their works. Within film dialogues, actors often use words or phrases that function as small talk, conversation starters, or other social pleasantries. According to Jumanto (2017, p. 34), phatic communion refers to verbal interactions aimed at maintaining social relationships rather than conveying information. In essence, phatic communication focuses more on social functions than on providing informative content. Despite being frequently deemed insignificant, Cruz (2007, p. 2) notes that some linguists view phatic communication as primarily acknowledging listeners rather than imparting information. Nonetheless, this form of communication is vital for fostering strong relationships between speakers and listeners.

In the world of animated films, "Hotel Transylvania" is distinguished not only by its lively animation and comedic plot but also by its sophisticated use of language. Directed by Genndy Tartakovsky and released in 2012, the film transports audiences to a fantastical realm where monsters, typically perceived as terrifying, are portrayed with relatable, human-like qualities. Set in an extravagant hotel meant to keep humans away, the character interactions in "Hotel Transylvania" offer a charming blend of humor, warmth, and depth. A key aspect of the engaging dialogue in the film is the use of phatic expressions. These expressions, including greetings, casual conversations, and other social courtesies, act as the binding element of conversations. They are essential in establishing and maintaining social bonds, shedding light on the relationships between characters and the film's cultural setting.

This research examines the phatic expressions in “Hotel Transylvania” to understand how these seemingly simple interactions enhance the narrative and character development. By analyzing the dialogues and interactions between characters, we aim to reveal the deeper meanings and social significance embedded in their everyday exchanges.

As the researcher embark on this exploration, it is essential to recognize the broader implications of studying phatic expressions in animated films. These expressions not only enhance our understanding of character dynamics and plot progression but also reflect the cultural and social contexts within which the story unfolds. Through this research, we hope to shed light on the nuanced ways in which language functions in “Hotel Transylvania,” offering insights that extend beyond the screen and into the realm of sociolinguistics and communication studies.

### 1.1 Phatic Communication: Theoretical Foundations

Roman Jakobson’s communication model (1960) categorizes phatic expressions as one of the six functions of language, specifically focusing on the establishment and maintenance of social bonds. Phatic communication often includes rituals such as greetings, farewells, and other conversational conventions that do not convey substantial information but facilitate interpersonal interactions. Malinowski (1923) earlier highlighted phatic communion as essential for establishing a sense of solidarity among individuals.

In additional, Phatic communion, according to Richards et al., (2013) is a term used by the British-Polish anthropologist Malinowski to refer to communication between people which is not intended to seek or convey information but has the social function of establishing or maintaining social contact.‘ They assert that the main purpose of phatic communion is neither to “seek information‘ nor to transfer information‘, but it aims to —establish and preserve sociability.”

Finally, Phatic expressions are thus fundamental in human interactions, serving to foster and maintain social cohesion. By facilitating non-informational exchanges, such as greetings and small talk, these expressions enable individuals to build and reinforce social bonds, ultimately enhancing the fabric of community life.

### 1.2 Functions of Phatic Expressions

Phatic phrases used to remove participants in a discussion from an embarrassing circumstance or to create a comfortable discourse setting. Phatic expressions can indicate awareness of the presence of others. According to Laver (1975, p. 223) the type of phatic function is divided into three types:

#### a. Neutral

This kind of phatic function refers to the condition around the speaker and listener. It does not have any correlation with the condition of speaker and listener. Neutral merely describe the circumstance around the participants. For example: “It is hot than last week”. This kind of utterance describe the atmosphere around the participants.

#### b. Self-Oriented

This is the second type of phatic function. Self-oriented means that the conversation focus on the speaker itself. So, the speaker gives information to the interlocutor. The conversation that contains self-oriented such as telling job, goals, activity or even self-introducing. For instance, “Hi, I am Jim” (to a new roommate). This kind of utterance is including to the self-introduction which oriented to the speaker itself.

#### c. Other-Oriented

This type has the opposite to Self-Oriented type. This type requires the interlocutor or the listener to give the turn or the answer to what speaker asks. It seems the listener should become an attractive way to involve in conversation. For example, “How is your family doing?” This kind of question need to be answered by the interlocutor.

According to Jean Aitchison (1996:22), phatic phrases may be classified into four types:

- a. Ritual words that are exchanged when people meet
- b. Standard topics of conversation
- c. Supportive chats between friends
- d. Meaningless words or even misunderstood words.

So, Phatic functions facilitate smooth conversation flow for participants and help maintain relationships. Additionally, phatic communication is often necessary in certain societies as it is linked to personal politeness.

### 1.3 Phatic Expressions in Animated Media

Animated films and television shows often employ phatic expressions to add authenticity to character interactions and to reflect real-life communication patterns. Research by Wells (2015) on dialogue in animation emphasizes the importance of such expressions in creating believable and relatable characters. Animated media, with its exaggerated and stylized portrayal of interactions, offers a unique lens through which to study the nuances of phatic communication.

### 1.4 Case Study: Hotel Transylvania

“Hotel Transylvania,” directed by Genndy Tartakovsky, is a family-friendly animated film that features a diverse cast of characters, including iconic monsters like Dracula, Frankenstein, and the Mummy, interacting in a hotel setting. The film’s rich dialogue and character interactions make it an ideal subject for examining phatic expressions.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive qualitative research method was applied in this study. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:30) define qualitative research as descriptive. The descriptive method is used by the author to research about Phatic expressions in the Hotel Transylvania film. For this research, the author used the film as a source of data. The film was chosen since it is family-friendly and features a number of phatic expressive phenomena. The research samples for this study were the dialogue, which included phatic phrases used by the characters on the Hotel Transylvania, as found in the data.

Since the author is in charge of the entire research process, she serves as the primary instrument in qualitative research (Meleong 1991:121). Moleong (2005:100) states that the following are the methods by which the author gathers data: 1. Watching “Hotel Transylvania”. 2. Recognizing every instance of phatic language that occurs while viewing the television series. 3. Note down the conversation that uses phatic phrases. 4. Assigning a code to every item of categorized data.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in arbitrary of phatic expression based on analysis data using Jean Aitchison (1996:22) theory. This research has finds 4 form of phatic expression that align with Jean Aitchison theory describe as follows :

### 3.1 Phatic Expression and Function

#### Ritual words that are exchanged when people meet

The exchange of ritual words are used to make it fell normal and comfortable in social relationships. When people get together, they usually converse about common topics. It's often called 'greeting'. It can happen not only in close relationships but also in relationships that are distant, and the context can be informal or formal. It appears in 14 data and is represented by the data number: 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20, 23, 26, 39, 51. The example as follows :

Data 6

Wayne the Werewolf : Drac! How are ya?  
 Count Dracula : Wayne, my old friend!  
 Wayne the Werewolf : Couldn't wait for this weekend.  
 Always great to be out of the shadows for a couple days.

Analysis Context of Situation:

The conversation happened between Wayne the Werewolf and Count Dracula in the hotel lobby. Wayne and Dracula are best friends and they don’t meet for a while. Wayne come for Mavis Dracula birthday and see Dracula. The utterance “Drac, how are you?” is uttered by Wayne the Werewolf as a greeting when he meets Count Dracula. The utterance is included to the form of Ritual Words that are exchanged when people meet because it is a way for Wayne to greet Dracula. It also functions to break the silence and start the conversation. Dracula than replies “Wayne, my old friend” also indicate that the utterance is included to the form of Ritual Words that are exchanged when people meet. Dracula doesn’t answer Wayne question “How are you?”. This behavior indicates it is only the phatic expression.

#### Standard topic of conversation

Typically, the conversation starts with something to break the ice or just to be polite. When two people get together, they usually start off talking about common topics like the weather and their family's health. That is standard topic of conversation. It creates a social channel via which other topics can be discussed. It appears in 18 data and may be found in data number: 8, 10, 17, 24, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 37, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 52, 53. The examples as follows :

Data 28

Mavis Dracula : Come in, Dad.  
 Count Dracula : How'd it go? How was the big world? How was it out there?  
 Mavis Dracula : It was okay, Dad.

Analysis Context of Situation:

The conversation happened between Mavis Dracula and Count Dracula at Mavis’s Room. Mavis has just come home from visiting the nearby human village. His dad, Dracula, come in and start asking mavis “How’d it

go ? How was the big world ? How was it out there? “. It is included in phatic expression named standard topic conversation because the utterances are used to start a conversation and talk about common topics. In this case, it is mavis’s day.

### Supportive Chat

Supportive Chat aims to offer encouragement, empathy, and unity. A supportive conversation is a type of phatic communication in which people exchange information in little amounts but express their support in large amounts. It appears in 12 data points in this study and may be observed in data number: 2, 3, 5, 15, 25, 31, 32, 36, 50, 55, 56, 59. The examples as follows :

Data 25

Mavis Dracula : Bye, everyone.

Frankenstein : Drac, I can't believe how calm. You are about her leaving. I'm proud of you.

Analysis Context of The Situation:

The conversation happens at Mavis’s room between Mavis and Frankenstein. Mavis wants to go outside to go to human village and for the first time, Count Dracula permit her. Mavis excitingly goes to visit the village. Frankenstein gives compliment by saying “Drac, I can’t believe how calm you are about her leaving.” Then Frankenstein then applies phatic expression, “I’m proud of you”. This utterance is included in Supportive Chat because it offers encouragement and empathy from Frankenstein to Dracula.

### Meaningless Words or Misunderstood Words

Meaningless Words or Misunderstood Words seeks to maintain social interactions, break the silence, and carry on the conversation. The speakers use this type of phatic phrase. It could be nonsense or the word that emerged to express something. It appears in 15 data and may be found in data number: 1, 11, 18, 21, 22, 30, 35, 38, 41, 46, 48, 49, 57, 58, 60. The examples are as follows :

Data 49

Jonathan : Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hold on, guys. Stop.

That's cute, but kind of old school.

Frankenstein : Yes, thank you, Johnny.

Analysis Context of the Situation:

The conversation happened on the hotel bar when Wayne the werewolf, Murray the Mummy and Frankenstein are singing to show their talents. Jonathan see the performance and trying to break in and carry the conversation. He utters “Whoa, whoa, whoa” to carry the conversation and express how he feels. The utterances have no meaning and are used to carry the conversation, which indicates that it is phatic expression named Meaningless Words or Misunderstood words.

### 3.2 Reflection of the social function within the context of the society

In the movie of Hotel Transylvania, the researcher has found several phatic expressions and its form, all with their functions in the movie. This function can be a reflection of the social function in society. In the first form, Ritual words that are exchanged when people meet, has social function to greet people to start a conversation. In the movie, Count Dracula meet his friends that he hasn’t meet for a long time. They use a phatic expression when they first met again for example, “Drac, how are you” by Wayne the Werewolf. This phatic reflects in the context of society where people meet their friends and begin to use the phatic expression to greet them. it serves the social function to greet people and break the silence.

From the second form, Standard topic of conversation, Dracula ask her daughter about his day by saying “How was the big world? How was it out there?”. This is one of the phatic expressions to ask about common topic. Its social function is to start off the conversation and create a social channel. It reflects in the society by how people usually ask about common topic to start conversation or avoid awkward situation. It incline with the research from (Masing et al., 2023) that said phatic expression to preserve social interaction or escaping the unpleasant position. Some of the topics is, weather, job, family or day. In the movie, Its use day as the topic

The third form, Supportive chat, is a phatic expression to encourage or compliment others. In the movie, Frankenstein compliment Dracula by saying, “I'm proud of you”. It reflects a social function to lift up Dracula spirit and give him the empathy. In society, people tend to compliment other about their achievement to give encouragement and give a sense of unity like “good job”, “you did great” which in this case, is a phatic expression.

On the fourth form, Meaningless word or Misinterpret word, the researcher finds several data of words that has no meaning but impactful to the story. “Whoa, whoa, whoa” Jonathan said is one of the phatic expressions with no meaning of the word. It serves to carry out the conversation with other. In society context, it reflects on how people use these words to utter their conversation or maintain it. Words like “whoa”, “Yea”, “Huh” is something people use to keep the conversation going and it is phatic expression.

Society use phatic expressions for many things, such as break the silence, greet people, maintain the conversation, or even avoid awkward situations. It reflects on the Hotel Transylvania movie on how they use phatic expression throughout the movie. It also gives the researcher insight of how to use the phatic expression on the society and also its functions. It could potentially, improve the conversation skill in our societal life and also increase the understanding of communication in the society by understanding its functions.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the research highlights the significance of phatic expressions in the animated film "Hotel Transylvania" and their role in enhancing narrative and character development. By incorporating phatic communication, the film's dialogues succeed in creating authentic and relatable interactions that mirror real-life social exchanges. These expressions, including greetings, small talk, and supportive chats, are pivotal in establishing and maintaining social bonds among characters, contributing to the film's overall charm and appeal. The study demonstrates that phatic communication, often overlooked as trivial, serves essential functions in storytelling by providing context, fostering relationships, and reflecting the film's cultural setting.

Moreover, the analysis of "Hotel Transylvania" reveals that phatic expressions are not merely decorative elements but integral to the film's structure and emotional resonance. By examining instances of ritual words, standard topics of conversation, supportive chat, and seemingly meaningless words, the research underscores the depth and complexity of phatic communication in animated media. This study reveals that phatic expression can help in many areas of our conversation such as : break the silence, greet people, maintain the conversation, or even avoid awkward situations that could enhance our ability to speak and talk to a lot of people.

This study also contributes valuable insights to the fields of sociolinguistics and communication studies, highlighting the broader implications of phatic expressions in media and their impact on audience engagement. And also show the functions of phatic expression, for the readers to apply in daily conversation.

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