

An Analysis of Phatic Expressions Using Greetings & Salutations In English

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Abstract

Phatics expressions are vital in our day- to-day interactions with the society. They are intended to create ties of union among the people who interact with each other in the form of minitalk. The aim of the study includes (1) the reasons why phatic expressions are important in English, (2) the way how the pathic expressions are classified, (3) what makes them different from interjections. The data used are the greetings and salutations commonly used in English by employing some references regarding phatic particles, words and phrases. This is a descriptive research approach by collecting secondary data, analysing and classified accurately. This is just a preliminary survey without deeply analysing the data. The writer describes the phatic expressions based on the observations and examples by Beare, Kenneth and Nordquist, Richard on thoughtco.com. The data show that the beginning of a conversation, letter, email, or another form of communication, a *salutation* is a polite greeting, an expression of goodwill, or other sign of recognition. Salutation terms are an important part of a conversation to tell the other that we feel friendly toward them, and they are maybe the start of a longer conversation. The writer found that the phatics expressions are in the form of particles, words and phrases phatically. Based on the analysis it is concluded that the phatic pressions are purposed at strengthening solidarity and ties of union while interjections convey emotion and they are emotive while the phatic expressions are content-free and context-based. Syntactically the phatic expressions can be positioned either in the beginning, in the middle or in the end of the sentences or utterances while the interjections are only put in the beginning.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

Language does not only convey information, ideas, advice, messages and so on but also at the same time while being in use civilize people as human beings all of us in our day-to-day life. Nowadays, we often hear uncivilized expressions on the social media, criticizing people with harsh words, blaspheming people, insulting one another, gossiping, talking bad things about, mocking them, swearing, insulting without politeness, killing their character without evidence even the presidential candidates of the super power country blaming each other by using harsh statements in the debate, etc. Language is used uncivilizedly without realizing that we as users wrongly use the language in all countries of the world. Why is that? We are uncivilized with our language. Language is not just a means of communication any longer but a means of uncivilizing people because of our uncivilizedness, in fact language should be ideally used as a means of civilization. We are civilized from the way we use language, we as users of language are civilized, civilizing us among each other.

This paper is not meant to describe why we are not civilized by language, it is purposed to describe how language can be used to civilize us with words we express to show our civilizedness with language in order to be able to create solidarity, to produce ties of union, to show that we as humans have a sense of togetherness and unitedness.

One of the many ways in creating ties of union in English are the use of phatic expressions through greetings or salutations. Greetings or salutations are the kind of expressions often used when people meet such as “hello”, “hi” etc. We can never be away from our fellows, we cannot be alone or separate from each other. We greet and salute. It is a fact that when we meet we commonly greet or salute to each other by using different greetings depending on whether we greet a friend, family or a business associate or the people we don't know well or even strangers. The expressions we use will depend on who we meet, when we meet friends, we use informal greetings, when we meet other people, it is really important to determine what greetings we use, we may greet them formally with formal greetings.

Greetings or salutation are often used at the beginning of a conversation, letter, email, or another form of communication. We use a *salutation* as a polite greeting, an expression of goodwill, or other sign of recognition. Greetings are salutation terms and function as an important part of a conversation- they tell the other that we feel friendly toward them and they are maybe the start of a longer conversation.

Greetings or salutations in English Language are forms of phatic expressions. They're used to convey politeness (maintaining the social distance), for expressing politeness and friendship (shortening the social distance), and to extend friendship (eliminating the social distance) to different hearers in the factors of power and solidarity. We often in English communicate phatically expressing the social distance and positive politeness strategies (strategies of informality), showing the closeness. We use phatic expressions to communicate strategies of deference or strategies of emotive communication to show interpersonal supportiveness by interpersonally supportive delivery of messages to avoid interpersonal conflicts. It is of volitional strategies, that is the active selection from the speaker's will in the open communication system which is dynamic and is oriented to different hearers in the factors of power and solidarity.

The functions of phatics in English are seldom discussed but in fact they are vital in our day-to-day ties of union. We use phatic expressions in our day-to-day mingling in speaking and in writing too.

Based on the above background and on some previous studies the writer has an interest in exploring more about the functions of phatic expressions using the data from several resources and the observations and examples presented by Nordquist (2020) because the writer has seen at a glance that further research studies would be beneficial for users of the language, teachers, lecturers and researchers. In addition, the functions of the phatic expressions in many languages not only in English are often ignored.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What is phatic communication?

Phatic communication popularly known as *small talk* refers to the nonreferential use of language to share feelings or establish a mood of sociability rather than to communicate information or ideas. The ritualized formulas of phatic communication such as "Uh-huh" and "Have a nice day") are generally intended to attract the attention of the listener or prolong communication. It is also known as *phatic speech*, *phatic communion*, *phatic language*, *social tokens*, and *chit-chat*. The term *phatic communion* invented by Malinowski (1923) appeared in 1923 in *The Meaning of Meaning* by C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards. The etymology is derived from the Greek "spoken" (Nordquist (2020)

2.2 Phatic Categories

A. Phatic Particles and Words

The following are some 19 of the most popular phatic particles used in English that they can be positioned in the beginning, in the middle or in the end of a sentence. We can see further the use of the particles on www.oxfordonlinedictionary.com as well their positions.

1. **hey** (used to attract attention, to express surprise, interest, or annoyance, or to elicit agreement): "hey, what's going on here?"
In US used as a friendly greeting ("I just called to say hey"
2. **oops** (used to show recognition of a mistake or minor accident, often as part of an apology. ("“Oops! I'm sorry. I just made you miss your bus.”” “ Nothing like a celebrity oops to get some concert video footage on Youtube”, “ She enjoyed a string of pop hits beginning with Baby One More Time in 1998, followed by Crazy, Oops)
3. **ouch** (Jackson heard Elizabeth say,” Ouch. Oh no I cut myself” , “ When I was watching him, he was going ouch ouch but then swore it didn’t hurt afterwards”)
4. **gee** (used a mild expression, typically of surprise, enthusiasm, or sympathy. “ "Gee, Linda looks great at fifty!", “ Every facet of the film is hackneyed - car chases, **gee** whiz technology, explosions, constant, constant, slaying of people.”)
5. **oh** (used to express an emotion (such as surprise or desire) or in response to physical stimuli
Oh, no! I forgot my key. Oh, don't stop! “Oh, no! The rug is on fire! Oh, no!”
6. **ooh** (used in direct address “oh, waiter!” to express amazement, joy, or surprise.
“Ooh, what a lovely dress! ”Is that shirt silk?
“Ooh, let me have a feel!”, “ Quick, get to the loo - **ooh**, my back aches”
7. **eh** (used to represent a sound made in speech in a variety of situations, in particular to ask for something to be repeated or explained or to elicit agreement.
“Eh? What's this?”
"The weather is nice, **eh**?"

8. **ugh** (used to express disgust or horror)

Examples:

"Ugh! What's this disgusting object?" "Ugh, um," she sputtered, as some of the flour flew into her eyes and nostrils. The furthest of those two poor devils stuck up there against the rock—ugh! He gave him some stuff out of a little flasky bottle, too, and Greg sputtered over it and said "Ugh!"

9. **yo** (used for getting someone's attention, greeting someone, or expressing strong feelings.

Examples:

Yo is also used to mean "here" or "present," as in response to a roll call. Yo is a very flexible interjection that is used similarly to hey.

Examples: Let's get the hell out of here. Let's do it. yo. Hopefully people watch it and enjoy the show and go right, **yo** u are just like us.

10. **wow** (used to express astonishment or admiration)

Examples:

Wow!" he cried enthusiastically, I thought, ' "Wow, what a good idea!', Save it for those extra special dishes to **wow** your friends and family with its complex flavors., A castle model will likely **wow** all of your guests, but if the finished product doesn't taste good, it may not leave the best impression.

11. **brr** (in American English used to express sensations of cold)

Examples: Brr it's cold outside. It's winter, brr, let's go inside to the chimney!

12. **sh** (used to urge silence)

Examples: Sh, you'll wake the baby! U guys sh all! Listen to her presentation, sh!

13. **yippee** (used to expressing wild excitement or delight.

Examples: "Peter suggested they should go home. "Yippee!" shouted Katie" "She took one look at the new car in the driveway and exclaimed, "Yippee!

14. **hmm (hmm)** used to express reflection or hesitation.

Examples: "hmm, interesting idea", Electricity (**hmm**), I guess the trailer was solar powered), a refrigerator, air conditioning.

Let's have a look, hmm, very loyal....and passionate.

15. **my** (used to express surprise or pleasure)

Examples: My, what delicious food! , My, oh, my, what a busy day! My, don't you look lovely?

16. **yup** (used as an affirmative reply)

Examples: Can you see it?" "Yup, there it is.", Is she the world's best actress?, Yup, according to thousands of voters in our readers' poll.

17. **ha** (used in writing to represent a noise that people make to show they are surprised, annoyed, or pleased about something.

Examples:

Ha! said Wren. Think I'd trust you?, Hah! Just as I suspected. Ha, ha, that's a good one. Oh, very funny, John, ha ha.

18. huh (used to show that someone is surprised or not impressed).

Examples:

Can we just get on with it, huh? Clever, huh? Huh? What's going on? You want to tell me what I did? Huh. What are you so excited about? I guess that means Leo won a cup of coffee, huh? Just as this kid's leaving town, she puts this story on you, huh?

19. nope (sometimes used instead of 'no' as a negative response).

Examples:

'Is she supposed to work today?'—'Nope, tomorrow.' I don't say yeah, when I want to say **nope**.

B. Phatic Phrases

The following are some of phatic phrases in English. These can be used as to begin as salutations and to end the interactions between the speaker and the hearer. They are also used by the sender and the recipient as complimentary close in letters or emails in English.

1. Good morning, Good afternoon, Good evening, Good night, Good day!, Happy Anniversary, Goodbye, Happy Working, etc (used when beginning and ending the interactions between the speaker and the interlocutor, suitably with the need and the situation). The following is an example of greeting in a formal conversation:

(1)

John: *Good morning.*

Alan: *Good morning. How are you?*

John: *I'm very well thank you. And you?*

Alan: *I'm fine. Thank you for asking.*

John: *Do you have a meeting this morning?*

Alan: *Yes, I do. Do you have a meeting as well?*

John: *Yes. Well. It was a pleasure seeing you.*

Alan: *Goodbye.*

We greet people as we leave people. In English (as in all languages), there are different ways to greet people in formal and informal situations. The question 'How do you do' is only a formality. In other words, the question does not need to be answered. Rather, it is a standard phrase used when meeting some for the first time. The following dialog shows how the greeting "How do you do" is used:

- (2) **Tom:** Peter, I'd like to introduce you to Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith this is Peter Thompson.

Peter: How do you do?

Mr. Smith: How do you do?

The phrases below are used to say that we are happy to meet someone when introduced for the first time.

- It's a pleasure to meet you.
- It's nice to meet you.

Greetings after an Introduction: *How are you?* is used once we have met someone, and it is common to use standard greetings such as 'Good Morning', 'How are you?' and 'Hello'. as in the following dialog:

(3) Jackson: Hi Tom. How are you?

Peter: Fine, and you?

Jackson: I'm great.

The following are more examples and observations how phatic expressions using greetings and salutations are used (Nordquist, Richard. "The Definition and Examples of Salutations." ThoughtCo, Aug. 27, 2020, [thoughtco.com/salutation-communication-1691923](https://www.thoughtco.com/salutation-communication-1691923))

(4) Greetings “Trust me”, “Oh, hey”, “How are you?”, “Good” are used in context:

"There's more to the story," Alex announced. "Trust me."

Katie hadn't heard him come up, and she stood.

"Oh, hey," she said, blushing against her will.

"How are you?" Alex asked.

"Good." She nodded, feeling a bit flustered." (Nicholas Sparks, *Safe Haven*. Hachette Book Group, 2010)

(5) J.D.: *Greetings and salutations.* You a Heather?

Veronica Sawyer: No, I'm a Veronica. (Christian Slater and Winona Ryder in *Heathers*, 1988)

(6) Greetings “Howdy”, “Beautiful evening”, “Yeah” are used.

Cowboy: **Howdy.**

Adam Keshner: **Howdy to you.**

Cowboy: Beautiful evening.

Adam Keshner: **Yeah.** (Monty Montgomery and Justin Theroux in *Mulholland Dr.*, 2001)

(7) How Are You (Ya)?

"I bumped into an acquaintance. '**Hi Sally,**' I said. '**How are you?**' She paused and then stopped and said hello and how was I and how were the children and it was manifestly obvious she couldn't remember my name." (Philip Hesketh, *How to Persuade and Influence People*. Wiley, 2010)

"The phone rang. 'O'Neil speaking.'

'''**Howdy, Pat. It's Mac.**'

'''**Mac, how are ya?** I was just thinkin' about ya. **Great to hear from ya.**''' (Jay Feldman, *Suitcase Sefton and the American Dream*. Triumph Books, 2006)

We learn that when people say, 'How are you?', they don't really say, 'How are you?' They say, 'How are ya?' . . . 'How are ya?' but it means 'Just say "good," and walk away. "I don't really want to know"'. (Paul Reiser, *Couplehood*, 1995)

(8) How Ya Doin'?

"Everyone seems friendly at first, everyone stops and asks, 'Hi, how ya doin'?' But after a while you realize that that's it, nothing ever follows up that 'Hi, how ya doin'?' And to answer that with anything less exuberant than, 'Pretty good,' is a social outrage. The creed is to be bright, brisk and busy."

(Upamanyu Chatterjee, *English, August: An Indian Story*. Faber and Faber, 1988)

"When you meet somebody at a post office, he or she says, 'How are you, how are you doing?' At Laguna, people will stand there and they'll tell you how they are doing. At Laguna, it's a way of interacting."

(Leslie Marmon Silko, *Yellow Woman*. Simon and Schuster, 1997)

Hey!

"Hey . . . is basically a synonym for *hi*--a friendly greeting. Until fairly recently, it was confined to the American South. *The Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)* cites a 1944 survey as reporting that *hey* is 'the common term of familiar salutation of children and young people in most of the South; *hello* seems to them either semiformal or archaic. On many northern and western campuses the term is *hi*.' . . . "But not anymore. . . . it is sensed that among people under about 40 from all regions, *hey* for some time has been at least as popular as *hi*, and probably more so, and now seems completely unremarkable." (Ben Yagoda, "'Hey' Now." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 6, 2016)

- 2) Thank you (used after the speaker feels getting something from the interlocutor)
- 3) Condolences (used to convey sympathy and grieves)
- 4) Excuse me! (used when attracting attention)
- 5) Oh my gosh! (used to show surprise)
- 6) If God's willing (when the speaker receives an offer from a person)
- 7) Praise the Lord (when feeling thankful)

There are also pathic phrases used in in writing, such as:

- a) Dear Sir, Dear Sirs, Dear Sir or Madam, Dear Sirs or Madam, Yours faithfully, Gentlemen, etc (used when to open to greet the receiver(s) of a letter or email)
- b) Yours faithfully, Yours sincerely, Sincerely, Truly yours, Yours truly, Best wishes, Regards, etc (used to end alter depending on the formality and the informality of the letter).

8. In addition, there are also phatic expressions with other class of words functioning as phatics: "*you know*", and "What is it?" These are phrases with little meaning, used while you are trying to think of what to say next:

Examples:

Well I just thought, you know, I'd better agree to it. I'm not happy with the situation but, you know, there isn't much I can do about it.

2.2 Interjections

There are two types of interjections primary interjections and secondary interjections. Primary Interjections are single words (such as *ah*, *brr*, *eww*, *hmm*, *ooh*, and *yowza*) that are not derived from any other word class, are used only as interjections, and don't enter into syntactic constructions. Primary interjections generally serve to "lubricate" conversations in a ritualized manner. **Secondary interjections** (such as *bless you*, *congratulations*, *good grief*, *hey*, *hi*, *oh my*, *oh my God*, *oh well*, *rats*, and *shoot*) also belong to other word classes. These expressions are often exclamatory and tend to mix with oaths, swear words, and greeting formulas.

Interjections are more commonly used in speech, but you might also find yourself using these parts of speech in writing as well. The examples include "Ooh, that's a beautiful dress" "Brr, it's freezing in here!", "Oh my God! We've won!"

The punctuating both primary and secondary interjections in writing depends entirely on the context in which they are used. In the first example above, the term *ooh* is technically a primary interjection that generally does not enter into syntactic constructions. It often stands alone, and when it does, the word is generally followed by an exclamation point, as in *Ohh!* Indeed, you could reconstruct the sentence so that the primary interjection stands alone, followed by an explanatory sentence, as in: “Ohh! That's a beautiful dress”

In the second sentence, the primary interjection *brr* is followed by a comma. The exclamation point, then, does not come until the end of the connected sentence. But again, the primary interjection could stand alone—and be followed by an exclamation point—as in: “Brr! It's cold in here.”

The third example contains a secondary interjection *Oh my God* that stands apart from the second sentence, with the interjection and sentence both ending in exclamation points. You can also use secondary interjections as integral parts of sentences:

- Hey, why did you let the dog in here?
- Oh my, I knew I should have turned off the oven!
- Good grief Charlie Brown! Just kick the football.

Interjections depend so heavily on how they are used in speech and the punctuation they take varies greatly, according to context, but they are usually followed by an exclamation point. Interjections express emotions while the phatic expressions are used to create ties of union or to express attitude. (Richard, 2020)

Kridalaksana (2010) different from Malinoski (1923) thought that silence or quietness also has phatic function, however the theory or ideas by Malinoski itself can be retained even though it was written 20 years ago.

III. METHODS

The writer carried out this research by collecting the data from several resources including the theory of several references. This is a qualitative descriptive approach. The writer collected the data from several resources available in books, on the internet. In analyzing the data, he took some steps as the research procedure. First, she collected the data. Second, she read carefully while underlining the utterances. Third, she identified each utterance and took note of the minitalk. Fourth, she analyzed and presented an explanation of why phatics expressions are used.

IV. RESULTS

Language is used first through speech is used to promote and uphold human warmth, this is as good a definition as any of the **phatic** aspect of language. We are social creatures and cannot bear to be cut off too long from our fellows, even if we have nothing really to say to them." (Burgess, 1964) . Phatic communication refers also to trivial and obvious exchanges about the weather and time, made up of ready-made sentences or foreseeable statements. This is a type of communication that establishes a contact without transmitting a precise content, where the

container is more important than the content. (Casalegno and McWilliam, 2004) Phatic communication, or small talk, is an important social lubricant. Goffman (2002) suggested the gestures which we sometimes call empty are perhaps in fact the fullest things of all. Boxers, (2002).

Jakobson (2002) identified phatic communication as one of the six functions of language. It is content-free: when someone passes you in the corridor and inquires 'How are you?' it would be a breach of manners to take the question as having content and actually to tell them what a bad day you've had." (Hartley, 2002). Phatic communication refers also to trivial and obvious exchanges about the weather and time, made up of ready-made sentences or foreseeable statements. Therefore this is a type of communication that establishes a contact without transmitting a precise content, where the container is more important than the content." (Casalegno and McWilliam, 2004)

It is an important social lubricant. Goffman (2002) says the gestures which are sometimes called empty are maybe in fact the fullest things of all. (Boxer and Benjamins, 2002) The strictly rhetorical, 'phatic' purpose of 'keeping in touch' for the sake of keeping in touch is best illustrated by the 'uh-huh' that the listener on the other end of a telephone connection knows that she is with us there (Winterowd (1968). Such as "Nice weather we're having' is perfect, Leonard. It's a subject that lends itself to speculation about future weather, discussion of past weather. Something everyone knows about. It doesn't matter what you say, it's just a matter of keeping the ball rolling till you both feel comfortable. Eventually if they're all interested you'll get through to them. (Kaikkonen, 1984)

Phatics uttered is a mode of action just in their being voiced. In short, a phatic utterance communicates not ideas but attitude, the speaker's presence, and the speaker's intention of being sociable. (Landon (2013)

Malinowski (1923) in Burke (1950) called phatic communion' might seem close to 'pure persuasion, randomly talked, it is purely for the satisfaction of talking together, the use of speech as such for the establishing of a social bond between speaker and spoken-to. Yet 'pure persuasion' should be much more intensely purposive than that, though it would be a 'pure' purpose, a kind of purpose which, as judged by the rhetoric of advantage, is no purpose at all, or which might often look like sheer frustration of purpose."

The data show that the beginning of a conversation, letter, email, or another form of communication, a *salutation* is a polite greeting, an expression of goodwill, or other sign of recognition. Grzega (2008) pointed out in the article "*Hal, Hail, Hello, Hi: Greetings in English Language History*," Salutation terms are an important part of a conversation--they tell the other 'I feel friendly toward you, and they are maybe the start of a longer conversation"

V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis phatic expressions are first to promote and uphold human warmth, to establish a contact without transmitting a precise content, where the container is more important than the content, it is an important social lubricant, the gestures sometimes called empty are in fact the fullest things of all, Jakobson (2002) identified phatic communication as content-free, it is an important social lubricant, purposed of 'keeping in touch for the sake of keeping in good touch, it is just keeping the ball rolling to make us both

feel comfortable, communicates not ideas but attitude, the speaker's presence, and the speaker's intention of being sociable, as pure persuasion, purely for the satisfaction of talking together, the use of speech as such for the establishing of a social bond between speaker and spoken-to. Injections are used to convey an emotion such as surprise, excitement, happiness, or anger while phatic expressions are used to convey attitude. Interjections are one of the traditional parts of speech and are grammatically unrelated to any other part of a sentence. The data show that the beginning of a conversation, letter, email, or another form of communication, a *salutation* is a polite greeting, an expression of goodwill, or other sign of recognition.

SUGGESTION

Phatic expressions are very important to explore. They are used as a *salutation* to create politeness, to expression goodwill, or other sign of recognition, solidarity and as good attitude. Since language is not only meant to communicate ideas, messages and of the same kind, but to strengthen solidarity and ties of union among the people the writer suggests that future student researchers conduct research more deeply on phatic expressions in English, Indonesian or in other languages in Indonesia.

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