POLITENESS IN COMMUNICATION

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Abstract:

This article observes the importance of politeness in communication on the basis of three different approaches to the analysis of politeness in language namely, politeness as social rules, politeness as adherence to an expanded set of Gricean Maxims, and politeness as strategic attention to "face". It clarifies that the last one can account for the observable commonalities in polite expressions across diverse languages and cultures, and positions the analysis of politeness as strategic attention to face in the modern context of attention to the evolutionary origins and nature of human cooperation.

Key words: Politeness, face, communication, face threatening acts, social interactions, conflict, maxims, pragmatic rules.

Introduction

Politeness is very important aspect in communication as it is usually referred as tact so as to create friendly atmosphere in the interaction of people. When speakers and hearers are cooperative, normally their conversation works best. Politeness is the feature of language use that most clearly reveals the nature of human sociality as expressed in speech. Politeness is essentially a matter of taking into account the feelings of others in order to how they should be interactionally treated, including behaving in a manner that demonstrates appropriate concern for interactors' social status and their social relationship. We each have expectations as to how we should be addressed by the various people we meet in the various situations. The study of politeness is the study of

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the ways whether these expectations are met or not. In this sense, politeness is regarded as the linguistic expression of social relationships. Being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately especially ones' superior in the light of one's relationship. Politeness has become a cover term for whatever choices that are made in language use related to the need to preserve people's face in general. Since, on the whole, taking account of people's feelings means saying and doing things in a less straightforward or more elaborate manner than when one is not taking such feelings into consideration, ways of being polite provide probably the most pervasive source of indirectness, reasons for not saying exactly what one means, in how people frame their communicative intentions in formulating their utterances. It is observed two quite different kinds of feelings to be attended to, and in turn there are two distinct kinds of politeness. One kind arises whenever what is about to be said may be unwelcome, prompting expressions of respect, restraint, avoidance which is called negative politeness, while another arises from the fact that long-lasting relationships with people can be important in taking their feelings into account, prompting expressions of social closeness, caring, and approval namely, positive politeness. To be more specifically, negative politeness is intended to avoid giving offense by showing deference and this kind of strategy includes questioning, hedging and presenting disagreement as opinions. On the other hand, positive politeness is intended to avoid giving offence by highlighting friendliness which includes stablishing common ground, using jokes, nicknames, honorifics, tag questions, special discourse markers, (please) and in group jargon and slang. For instance, a controversial feedback strategy is the feedback sandwich: a positive comment before and after a criticism.

Since politeness is crucial to the construction and maintenance of social relationships, politeness in communication goes to the very heart of social life and interaction; indeed it is probably a precondition for human cooperation in general. Politeness phenomena have therefore commanded interest from

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theorists in a wide range of social sciences. It has been observed three various kinds of theoretical approach to the analysis of politeness in communicative language namely politeness as social rules, politeness as adherence to politeness maxims and politeness as face management. When we analyze the first one to the layman, it is a concept designating "proper" social conduct, rules for speech and behavior stemming generally from high-status individuals or groups. In literate societies such rules are often formulated in etiquette books. These "emic" (culture specific) notions range from polite formula like "please" and "thank you", the forms of greetings and farewells, and so more, elaborate routines for table manners, deportment in public, or the protocol for formal events. Politeness is conventionally attached to certain linguistic forms and formulaic expressions, which may be distinguished in different languages and cultures. This is how the "person on the street" tends to think about politeness, as inhering in particular forms of words. For example, in Uzbek culture, for instance, a kiss on cheek among females who have a close relationship is a sign of politeness and respect. Among heterogeneous members of society, however, it is a taboo in social places as it is highly connected with keeping religious rules among members of society. In English culture, they may use a handshake or hug in greetings or in introducing to each other. During the 1970s this perspective was formulated in linguistic pragmatics in Gricean terms, with politeness seen as a set of social conventions coordinate with Grice's Cooperative Principle for maximally efficient information transmission ("Make your contribution such as required by the purposes of the conversation at the moment"), with its four "Maxims" of Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner. Another famous scholar Lakoff suggested that three "rules of rapport" underlie the choice of linguistic expressions, rules which can account for how speakers deviate from directly expressing meanings. Choice among these three pragmatic rules namely, "Don't impose," "Give options," "Be friendly" gives rise to distinct communicative styles. Leech's more detailed proposal is in the same vein.

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Complementary to Grice's Cooperative Principle, Leech postulates a Politeness Principle – "Minimize the expression of impolite beliefs," with the six Maxims of Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy. As with Grice's Maxims, deviations from what is expected give rise to inferences. Cross-cultural differences derive from the different importance attached to particular maxims. The conversational maxim approach shares with the social norm approach the emphasis on codified social rules for minimizing friction between interactors, and the view that deviations from expected levels or forms of politeness carry a message. In the last approach to politeness known as face management, face work is at the core of politeness. According to Goffman politeness is an aspect of interpersonal ritual, central to public order. He defined face as an individual's publicly manifest self-esteem, and proposed that social members have two kinds of face requirements as mentioned above like positive face, or the want for approval from others, and negative face, or the want not to offend others. Attention to these face requirements is a matter of orientation to Goffman's "diplomatic fiction of the virtual offense, or worst possible reading", the working assumption that face is always potentially at risk in communication, so that any interactional act with a social–relational dimension is inherently face-threatening and needs to be modified by appropriate forms of politeness. A face threatening act is an act which challenges the face wants of an interlocutor. Well-known linguists Brown and Levinson considered face threatening acts may threaten either the speaker's face or the hearer's face with positive or negative face in communication. For example, *"I think your report was not concise enough"* here the hearer's positive face is threatened because he is blamed for having done something badly and his self-image is negatively evaluated, while in another example like *"Please give me that book"* the speaker expresses an anticipation of some future action of the hearer and thereby restricts his personal freedom with a negative face.

Conclusion

After observing the importance of politeness in social interactions, it can be understood that people must constantly make various linguistic choices of what they want to say, how they want to say it and the specific sentence types, words or sounds that best unite the what with the how. Right choice of appropriate linguistic forms must be used to achieve politeness in communication. Being on the receiving end of politeness affects both the speaker and addressee differently because polite utterances establish correct relationship between the speaker and the addressee. If we do not see the relationship between ourselves and the person who addresses us as they do, we will be upset by the strategies they employ since these strategies imply the nature of our relationship which is the heart of linguistic politeness. From the strategies that have been observed above, it is discovered friendly and peaceful co-existence is obtained by means of using positive politeness in social interaction. Negative or face threatening acts must be avoided as they lead to impolite responses misunderstanding, friction and conflict among people in their communication. Therefore, it is vital for people to know how politeness is important in communication and the using the accurate choice of its strategies, together with cultural norms of politeness in various nations while having a communication.

References

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