

ON POLITENESS THEORY AND ITS LINGUOCULTURAL IMPLICATION

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Abstract

In this article the principles of effective speech communication, general provisions of the theory of politeness have been widely discussed and the definition of the concepts of “politeness”, “interrupting a conversation” has been formulated as well. The article contains certain theoretical and practical ways upon expressing politeness in different languages on the material of phrases implying polite interruption in business discourse in terms of the linguocultural traditions of the category of politeness occurring in the given languages. The article also discusses some critiques of the most commonly used theories of politeness, and highlights some of the trends in which these critiques might help to advance researches on politeness in the future.

Keywords

communicative postulates, business communication, culture, category of politeness, markers of politeness, interruption of speech action.

Introduction

Among the classical theories of politeness, P. Brown and S. Levinson’s Universal Theory of Politeness has had the greatest influence on further research in this area of sociolinguistics. Scientists began to consider politeness as a fundamental aspect of the socio-communicative interaction of people. With its generally recognized value, “the Universal Theory of Politeness rises above most other theories, being a guiding star for scientists looking for the phenomenon of politeness in the examples of interactions between communicants. It is

distinguished by the breadth of penetration into the essence of human behavior, which is not characteristic of any other theory of politeness " [14, 9-10].

If we briefly dwell on the main shortcomings of the classical theories of politeness, they are as follows:

- 1) the ontological status of politeness is not sufficiently defined in all models
- 2) the definitions of politeness presented in them are characterized by a number of restrictions
- 3) these theories are essentialist in nature and are governed by rationalistic principles
- 4) practically all classical theories of politeness leave out of the field of interest the phenomenon of impoliteness, i.e. the phenomenon that politeness is designed to avoid.

According to Universal Theory of Politeness by P. Brown and S. Levinson, its shortcomings include:

- 1) the claim to its universality
- 2) the analysis by the authors of individual speech acts considered out of context
- 3) dialectical, but not dynamic understanding by the authors of the central concept of the social face "face", coupled with the European understanding of the cornerstone categories "politeness" and "threat to the social face", which implies the wrong, from the point of view of representatives of collectivist Asian cultures (China, Japan, Korea), understanding by the authors of this theory of some speech acts, for example, compliments
- 4) ignoring the social nature of the phenomenon of politeness
- 5) the explicit addressing-centeredness of the theory, since the authors pay excessive attention to the social faces of the addressees, but not the addressees of the statements
- 6) almost complete ignorance of situations of aggressive, offensive or rude communicative behavior.

A certain weakness of the Universal Theory of Politeness, according to S. Mills, is manifested in the fact that "although it is possible to find data that confirm the adequacy of the theory of Brown and Levinson in the analysis of politeness in the communication process, nevertheless, this model can only consider cases of manifestation of explicit communication by participants, open politeness".

Main Body. The definition of politeness is not a simple one but we nevertheless hold that it is possible to isolate those utterances which are considered to be polite or impolite by participants. Whilst we value the development of terms such as relational work and rapport management, we still hold that politeness is a

term which we will continue to use, despite its problems. We all define politeness differently, because of our different perspectives. In the essays that we have written for this collection, we all define politeness and impoliteness, but here are some of those definitions. Sara Mills defines politeness in the following way: For me, politeness has to be defined in two separate ways.

Jonathan Culpeper defines politeness as:

(a) an attitude consisting of particular positive evaluative beliefs about particular behaviours in particular social contexts

(b) the activation of that attitude by those particular in-context-behaviours

(c) the actual or potential description of those in-context-behaviours and/or the person who produced them as *polite, courteous, considerate*, etc.

Politeness “cultures” are social groups who share similar politeness attitudes, that is, they share a politeness ideology. Linguistic politeness refers to linguistic or behavioural material that is used to trigger politeness attitudes. Politeness strategies (plans of action for achieving politeness effects) and formulae (linguistic/behavioural forms for achieving politeness effects) are conventionally associated to some degree with contexts in which politeness attitudes are activated. Impoliteness, although its performance involves significant differences from politeness, can be defined along similar but contrary lines: it involves negative attitudes activated by in-context-behaviours which are associated, along with the person who gave rise to them, with impoliteness metalanguage (e.g. *impolite, rude, discourteous*, etc.)

Louise Mullany views im/politeness as an ongoing, evaluative process with which interactants actively engage rather than something which statically pre-exists any interaction. She maintains the importance of “face” as a valuable analytical concept and incorporates notions of “personal” face and “social identity” face into her analytical framework. She sees im/politeness evaluations and judgements emerging across discourse(s). This can include judgements shifting between different speech events as our perceptions of interactants are part of an ongoing process that both develops and maintains itself over time and in different contexts.

Sandra Harris would stress the importance of both speaker intention (even if less accessible) and, more crucially, hearer evaluation when defining im/politeness as the active and ongoing process of negotiating interactive relationships, emphasising the significance of the immediate and wider contexts in which they are situated. Such encounters are less influenced by the pre-existence of politeness norms than the discursive engagement. Impoliteness or (im)politeness is used by many theorists to mean politeness and impoliteness.

From these definitions, it is clear that we are not offering one simple definition of politeness and impoliteness; this very difficulty with offering a definition indicates the complexity of politeness.

In linguistics category “politeness” was chosen to be part of an overall strategy speech behavior or when analyzing the features of speech acts in a particular language (apologies, gratitude, compliments, expressions of sympathy, etc.). Ways of expressing politeness in different languages depend on the structure of the society in which these languages are in operation, and it accepted models of social behavior. In Korean, for example, the category of politeness has the following stages: polite, respectful, characteristic of the female speech, polite, intimate, familiar, and patronizing, physical. The general provisions of the theory of politeness are presented in the works of P. Brown and S. Levinson. Let us consider this theory in more detail as the most complete and consistent. The main concept of this theory is the concept of “face” (public self-image face), which refers to the positive social value that each member of society has. Any action is performed in order to save “face” or to avoid “losing face”. Using the concepts of “saving / losing faces” P. Brown and S. Levinson develop a general theory that justifies predictability in the implementation of the category of politeness, based on the assessment of the “weight” of the speech act. This weight is determined by the following factors: the difference in the social distance and distance of power between the speaker and the listener and the complexity of performing an action associated with the threat of “losing face”.

The main idea of this theory is the position that the greater the state of the speaker creates a threat of losing face for the listener (The person threatening actions), the more polite he will be.

The norms of politeness are also associated with the channels of modern business communication (telephone conversation, telegram, communication by fax or via the Internet), where they have their own characteristics and rules.

As follows from the definition, each of the language levels is characterized by the presence of politeness markers. At the lexical level, preference is given to normative vocabulary. Universal polite means are not only cliched, standard phrases, but also such positively emotionally colored words as fine, nice, good, please, kind, happy, very well, etc. At the level of grammar, complete sentences are used, with the correct grammatical form. The semes of politeness are realized due to the grammatical form of the subjunctive mood, the question positive and negative constructions, as well as modal verbs. At the level of phonetics, clarity and thoroughness of the full version of the pronunciation,

moderate volume of the sound and the use of prosodic markers of politeness are required.

The sociality of the act of polite communication is manifested in its special qualities.

It is among these qualities that we stand out:

1) the historical connection of the given symbolism of communication with the people

2) the ability to be an expression of a common ethnic group

3) the ability to form and use culture, which are manifested only in speech.

Striking differences in the norms of etiquette speech behavior are manifested at the interlanguage level. If in Russian speech etiquette, in an official setting, it is not permissible to address the student to the teacher with the "you-ты" (yes in the case when the teacher is about the same age as the student), as well as to an adult, then in English (you), the address in this situation usually has a touch of intimacy. Or: in Russian speech etiquette, in a situation of greeting, it is customary for a younger person (by age, position) to inquire about the life, health, and affairs of an older person, while in English, this form of politeness is permissible form of a allowed and bear the character of frequent use. However, in Uzbek it is not permissible to address the student to the teacher with the "you-sen" in any situation even if the student is in the same age with the teacher.

When addressing speech etiquette is quite a complex phenomenon. Its character is influenced by both vertical and horizontal connections in the process of interaction. Situations of speech etiquette are subject to standard regulation. It embodies the concepts of accepted, due, required, expected, approved in society.

They tend to reflect the cultural and historical processes taking place in the environment. In various national variants of it, there are also specific norms of speech etiquette, which are sometimes not identical with each other, and sometimes the academic standard. They can be interpreted as accepted in speech in the practice of this national collective in this period of time, etiquette (polite) forms of speech behavior.

In English, there are three types of communication situations: neutral, informal, and formal. The category of politeness is indirectly represented in the second situation, which is reflected by short, elementary structures in which only the decisive component is present, while as in the third one, it leads to the construction of structures oversaturated with politeness indicators, where the number of pragmatic signals can exceed three.

At the first stage of the situation, the number of pragmatic signals is balanced. It is important to take into account the very nature of these signals, which also

forms a clear opposition neutral communication (light structures of direct speech) official communication (heavy structures of direct speech). So, in the field of formulas of speechetiquette of the English language, the oppositions are distinguished: informal, officialand neutral communication.

The situation of neutral communicationis characterized by the same pragmatic signals, such as: the structure of the general question, the structure of the subjunctive ,formulas of apology (Gosh sorry, I'm afraid), modal verbs, verbs of mentalactivity (can/could).

The situation of formal communication is characterized by detailed formulas, including a large number of complex sentences with main sentence, such as: I hope you don't mind my asking but ... I wanted to know if you could tell me..., I should be interested to know...(I hope you don'tmind me asking, but... . Could you tell me... I would like to know ...). Functional expressions of this type contribute to creating greater distance between speakers, thereby achieving the effect of super-politeness.

Situations informality is expressed by short and ellipticalsentences with the omitted subject and part of the predicate, such as: (Happen to) know...? Heard about...? (Don't happen to know..? Did you happen tohear...?) These structures contribute to the achievement of close contact between speakers, i.e. they are markers of the situation of informal relations between speakers. This suggests that social communication formulas are importantpragmatic signals for speakers. They regulate their socialrelationships and implement specific communication tasks. Their study from this point of view is the most important condition for learning andmastering a second foreign language on a communicative basis.

It should be noted that one of the most characteristic features of thepolite speech behavior of native English speakers is their inimitable ability to maintain an easy, relaxed conversation. Payingtribute to the traditions of upbringing and observing decency, the British follows the ingrained habits of men circle and those prescribed by x ethicsthat allow him to keep in a convenient distance and intimate, personal, social interaction with the interlocutor dependencies on the configuration. The essence of effective communication is the ability to respond to cues adequately to thesituation, but at the same time avoiding hidden confrontation

“in conversation the English... **hardly ever lie, but they would not dream of telling you the truth**” in the conversation, the English **hardly ever** will lie, but they will not dream of telling you the truth.

Politeness in communication, from the point of view of representatives of British culture, involves two main lines of behavior “commandments”, which can be conditionally called “not british politeness”: 1) don't be directand negative, and

2) don't be silent. I think we can assume that the habit of always to keep a distance. Based on the above, we can imagine that the ethical foundations categories of politeness can be put it in the form of several levels. The first category includes cognitive processes, primarily thinking. The second set of linguistic and extra-linguistic knowledge. The following components can be included in the knowledge base: 1) language knowledge: a) knowledge of language; b) knowledge of the principle of speech communication; 2) non-linguistic knowledge : a) knowledge of the context and situation, about the addressee (including knowledge of the set goals and plans, ideas about the speaker and the surrounding environment and so on); general phonetic knowledge (i.e. knowledge about the world). This can also include knowledge of the psychological mechanisms of influence of their addressee.

The third level is the culture of speech, which is the sum of skills and abilities that provide the same characteristics of the utterance, logic, expressiveness, stylistic adequacy, etc. At the same level are also the skills of both correct / normalized and expressive use of non-verbal means in communication . And finally, the fourth level, which includes the ability to plan the discourse and manage it for the purpose of performing a speech action on the addressee.

Conclusion. The category of politeness has received a fairly wide coverage in linguistic science, however, among researchers there is no common view on the definition of the very concept of “politeness” in the aspect of linguistic investigations.

At present time in the development of linguistics, none of the three stages in the study of the phenomenon of linguistic (in) politeness has not fully clarified the social complexity of this multifaceted phenomenon and has not proposed any unified clear theory for conducting research in this area of human relationships.

In our opinion, it will not be superfluous to study this phenomenon taking into account the theoretical provisions of linguoecology, since sociolinguistics, pragmalinguistics and linguoecology can easily find common ground in the analysis of both environmentally friendly speech devoid of “rude” (V.I. Jelvis’s term) speech, and speech in which, due to various factors, including the factors of the addressee and the addressee, there is non-ecological under normal conditions, the vocabulary clogging up speech, which, nevertheless, cannot always be unambiguously attributed to speech manifestations of rudeness.

The English language has a rich system of similar lexical and grammatical formulas: modal verbs and their equivalents, subjunctive mood, passive voice, interrogative constructions, etc. After analyzing some sources relating to the

category of politeness, we came to the conclusion that the principle of politeness is widespread in the English language.

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