



A THEORITICAL TAKE ON THE ISSUE

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Annotation

Languages should be taught within the cultural contexts of their speakers. This is because speakers have an intention when performing a language act. Failure to understand the speakers' intentions will result in failure to respond to the intended message and, thus, failure to use the language. Pragmatics is concerned with how language is employed in a specific context or situation. A major pragmatic issue is civility, which means being cognizant of another person's public self-image. This essay focuses on the politeness phenomenon and the level of success in learning English. The subjects explored include the concept of politeness, tactics of politeness, politeness in Oriental civilizations, politeness in the setting of Indonesian cultures, and the implications of politeness phenomenon.

Politeness is one of the sociolinguistic forms. It is because politeness has a relationship with sociolinguistics itself. According to Ronald Wardhaugh (2009), sociolinguistics is the study of relationships that exist above language and society. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of language structure and how language functions in society class. The purpose of sociolinguistics is that when we study the language, we can understand its social structure. Politeness, as a type of sociolinguistics, is one technique to examine ways to help students understand the subject during discussions by using politeness as an element of communication without sacrificing learning objectives.

Typically, students avoid using politeness because they believe that their classmates who are not fluent in English will struggle to understand the subject. The concept of politeness is derived from Goffman's work (1955, 1967). In social interactions, people present their faces to others and vice versa. It is also used in class discussions because the class consists of both students and teachers. Because the classroom is a social environment, courtesy must be used in all situations, particularly during discussions. Politeness can be defined as the use of a suitable word or phrase in the appropriate situation, as decided by societal conventions. Maintaining politeness in social contact is maintaining harmony.

Politeness can be defined as the use of a suitable word or phrase in the appropriate situation, as decided by societal conventions. Maintaining civility in social interaction entails maintaining harmonious and seamless social engagement while avoiding speaking behaviours that may be perceived as face-threatening or destructive. The principle is founded on the use of politeness, intimacy, closeness, and relationships, as well as the social distance between the speaker and the listener. People pick and execute particular values on a pragmatic scale based on their culture and the context of their current social interaction.

There are two types of politeness :

1. Showing the listener or reader that you value and respect them
2. Changing or softening what you say so as not to be direct or

forceful. In the late 1970's, the subject of politeness became a major concern in the field of pragmatics and it has been discussed widely among pragmatist. The base of this paper is to contribute some ideas for this rapprochement by considering an explanation of politeness in the framework of Relevance Theory (hereinafter, RT), a model of verbal communication in which cognition plays a central role. I will begin by discussing what is politeness. Then, I will sketch the lines along which a picture can be drawn of politeness phenomena in relevance-theoretic terms. Finally, I will briefly comment on some consequences of adopting such an approach. On the nature of politeness What is politeness? From social deixis to indirect speech acts, from conventional formulae to conversational strategies, from tact to friendliness, too many different things seem to have been bundled under a single label: indeed, politeness usually covers such a variety of phenomena that no consistent characterisation seems to be within reach. In fact, in the standard meaning of the word polite at least three dimensions can be identified:

- 1) polite as civil or socially correct;
- 2) polite as kind or friendly;
- 3) polite as tactful or diplomatic.

A quick look at the literature easily shows that different researchers have favoured different senses. Echoing Fraser (1990), one could say that for Leech (1983) being polite involves making the hearer to 'feel good' (polite as friendly); to Brown & Levinson (1987) it means making him not 'feel bad' (polite as diplomatic); for Fraser himself it is 'the expected state' (polite as socially correct). Although pointing in opposite directions, both Leech's and Brown & Levinson's frameworks share a crucial property: they put the stress on the "functional" or strategic nature of politeness, against the 'old-fashioned' view that politeness is merely a set of arbitrary social conventions. Also the common distinction between 'positive politeness' and 'negative politeness' as the two sides of any politeness system emphasises the idea that the efforts made to show appreciation for the addressee or to avoid any intrusion into his legitimate privacy are the only constitutive parts of politeness. However, a central issue seems to be missing from these approaches. Conversational strategies, or conversational efforts, can only have their *raison d'être* as exploitations of a default, 'unmarked' behaviour. Put in other words, being able to prevent undesirable results or to enhance positive effects entail having first a precise knowledge of expected courses of events (including, obviously, linguistic events and behaviour), and their social consequences. If so, politeness must primarily be a matter of social adequacy, established in terms of expectations. And any sort of conversational manoeuvres used to achieve a particular aim will be necessarily derived, since they will be dependent on strategic plans assuming default or expected effects. Thus, although analysing strategic moves is a significant part of a theory of politeness, only social adequacy can be a primitive notion. Politeness: A Relevant Issue for Relevance Theory "... upon entering into a given conversation each party brings an understanding of some initial sets of rights and obligations that will determine, at least for the preliminary stages, what the participants can expect from the other(s). "The status, the power and the role of each speaker, and the nature of circumstances" are, according to Fraser (1990: 232), the relevant parameters for calculating the initial set of rights and obligations. They "play a crucial role in determining what messages may be expected both in terms of form and content." Status, power or social role are indeed basic notions to define social relationships.

But there seems to be something unique to them and to social categorisation. Ordinary categorisation uses perception as its main source of data; social categorisation, by contrast, usually has to invoke elements and establish relationships with no direct perceptual motivation. Most of our social activities depend on created categories (such as profession, role or friendship), which are defined through social convention and do not necessarily relate to any essential or perceptible property of the individual. This fact strongly suggests that social cognition should be considered as a specific, separate domain or faculty.

On the other hand, if defining factors depend ultimately on convention, a straightforward prediction will be that different cultures will presumably produce different created categories. Status, power, distance, social role or face, as abstract notions, are universal; but their particular content is clearly culture-sensitive: each society establishes its own conditions on what the relevant properties are that determine the values selected for each parameter. This explains why different cultures present radical differences in their politeness systems; and this explains also the misunderstandings in intercultural communication: what is polite (i.e., adequate) in a given culture may be seen as rude in other communities. Politeness can be, thus, conceived of as a matter of social adequacy. Polite is the word we use to refer to a (linguistic) behavior conforming to a given set of cultural norms: this is its central meaning; strategic uses of language should be parasitic on it. Only if a detailed characterisation is first provided of what counts as socially adequate can a proper account be offered for further-reaching manoeuvres. Politeness as social adequacy.

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