AFFAIRS OF POLITENESS WITH CERTAIN ATTENTION TO ENGLISH AND ARABIAN CULTURE

Yazen A. Al mulla bakr[1]

[1] Istanbul Aydin University,Turkey, Istanbul, Department of English Language and Literature, Institute of Social Sciences.
Email: yazenakramsalehalmul@stu.aydin.edu.tr

Abstract

This article investigate the influence of understanding respect and politeness as learned etiquettes inwards the conventionalized matters and norms of a certain community. Humans communicate respect and politeness to express their understanding of what it means to act and speak in civil and socially approved ways. Respect and politeness deal with and refer to the ratification of a set of obligatory principles that have been agreed upon based on cultural-specific norms that are passed on historically from generation to generation as a base of socializing individuals and communities. Because they are cultural constructs, what is pondered polite and dignified in one culture may not be seen the same way in another. This is why it is indeed important to understand the social practices, cultural norms, and conversational behaviors of different communities when learning overseas language.

Key Words: Politeness, Etiquettes, Community, Culture Behavior

I.   Introduction

The aim of this article is to concentrate on the affairs of politeness in language, with certain attention to English and Arabian. Author realized that how remarkable politeness can be and how smartly its role and value can change across languages and cultures. My purpose is not only to dialogue about the definition and the theories of politeness, but to give empirical examples, such as dialogues and schemes, that can help us to understand how the presence through the participants of different applications of politeness principle can have an influence on communication besides in everyday life. The question is: what politeness as a matter of fact means for humans? what is considered polite , what is considered impolite, what kind of correlation exists between educational background and politeness?. Author selected to concentrate on the affairs of politeness in English and Arabian not only because of finding some differences in the common idea of politeness English-speaking people and Arabian have. As a matter of fact, our understanding of directness and indirectness should not be constricted to a certain view which may not be usable cross-culturally. Author compare the two forms in both language communities, rather than simply outlining the main differences between them. Author concentrate as much as possible on the resemblances between the ways in which directness and indirectness are accomplished in these two cultures as on the differences between them, orderly to show that these two cultures are not conflicted.

II.   Politeness Definition

Politeness is best expressed as the practical application of good manners or etiquette. It is a culturally defined phenomenon, and therefore what is considered polite in one culture can sometimes be quite rude or simply eccentric in another cultural context. While the goal of politeness is to make all of the parties relaxed and comfortable with one another, these culturally defined standards at times may be manipulated to inflict shame on a designated party.

Anthropologists Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson identified two kinds of politeness, deriving from Erving Goffman's concept of face: "Negative politeness: Making a request less infringing, such as "If you don't mind..." or "If it isn't too much trouble..."; respects a person's right to act freely. In other words, deference. There is a greater use of indirect speech acts.
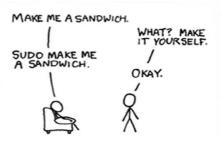

Figure 1. Brown and Livenson's Politeness Theory*.

"Positive politeness: Seeks to establish a positive relationship between parties; respects a person's need to be liked and understood. Direct speech acts, swearing and flouting Grice's maxims can be considered aspects of positive politeness because: "they show an awareness that the relationship is strong enough to cope with what would normally be considered impolite; they articulate an awareness of the other person's values, which fulfills the person's desire to be accepted [1].

III.   Politeness, Directness and Indirectness

   Majority traditional opinions discuss for a positive interconnection between indirectness and politeness. I would discuss that directness can be acceptable in specific cases but denied in others. Correspondingly, indirectness can be used politely in specific contexts, but it can also be used to provide intended malefaction or harsh criticism in others. However, directness should not be handled as a default from which the speakers always spoil, as it can simply be used because there is unnecessity for fairness due to the fact that the same semantic repertory is shared by the speakers. Subsequently, more concealed forms are preferred in such situations. This is not specific to a certain culture, but acceptable to both Arabic and English. As such, it would be complicated to assort a whole community as direct or indirect, because we cannot simply make generalizations about the interpretations and the functions of indirectness within or across cultures (Mills and Kadar, 2011). However, it might be workable to distinguish some of the opinions of certain language activities that are shared among many of the speakers within both communities. Subsequently, there is no single way to express or describe directness and indirectness. The supposed association between the English use of indirectness and politeness may not be always delicate, because indirectness can every so often be used to cause premeditate disgrace. Directness, as a further matter, which is ideologically related to harshness in English, may be furthermore continual in everyday interactions in English than it is generally believed to be. On the other hand, in spite of the attempts by cross-cultural researchers to present positive evaluations of direct speech in their culture, the same effort has not been made to discuss the negative evaluations that indirectness may incur [3].

IV.   Respect Towards People From Other Cultures

Culture is an intricate idea. We frequently use the term to refer to things like food, holidays, clothing, music, and religion, but it also goes much deeper than that. Behaviours, customs, beliefs, and values are also part of your culture. So when we face people from various cultures, we can often find that there are large differences in how we see the world, even if we dress in a similar way or speak the same language.

1. REALIZE YOUR OWN CULTURE

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE'S CULTURES IS TO FIRST CHECK YOUR OWN. MOST OF US TAKE OUR BACKGROUND FOR GRANTED, AND DON'T EVEN REALISE THAT OUR CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS MIGHT SEEM STRANGE TO SOMEONE ELSE. IF YOU THINK OF YOUR OWN WAY OF LIFE AS THE DEFAULT AND EVERYONE ELSE'S AS A STRANGE VARIATION, IT'S HARD TO APPROACH THOSE DIFFERENCES WITH RESPECT.

WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT THE WORLD, AND ABOUT HOW PEOPLE SHOULD TREAT EACH OTHER? ARE ANY OF THEM INFORMED BY YOUR OWN CULTURE AND THE WAY YOU WERE BROUGHT UP? WHAT BEHAVIOURS DEFINE YOU, AND WOULD ANY OF THEM SEEM ODD OR UNUSUAL TO SOMEONE WITH A DIFFERENT CULTURE? FOR EXAMPLE: DO YOU TAKE YOUR SHOES OFF WHEN YOU GO INSIDE? IT'S A SIMPLE THING, BUT IT'S A HUGE MARKER OF CULTURE! IN JAPAN, YOU WOULD NEVER GO INSIDE WITHOUT SWAPPING YOUR OUTDOOR SHOES FOR SLIPPERS, WHEREAS IN THE UNITED STATES, MANY PEOPLE DON'T BOTHER TAKING THEIR SHOES OFF WHEN THEY COME IN. THESE AREN'T ALWAYS EASY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER, BUT STOPPING TO THINK ABOUT THEM IS SO IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTANDING YOUR PLACE IN THE WORLD, WHICH WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE BETTER, TOO.

2. Learn

Maybe you've recently met someone from a different culture that you find interesting, or you're just curious to learn about how different people live. There are so many ways to learn about different.

3. Make Friends

Get to know your friends' families and see how their customs and traditions differ from yours. You might be surprised to find how culturally different two people living even in the same town can be!

4. Talk to People

When you meet people from a different culture, ask them about their lives. But be polite about it and remember that they don't owe you an answer, and might not want to give it - not everyone wants to explain everything about their culture, and if they're a minority in the area, they might get asked the same questions a lot. Only ask if you have genuine interest in them as a person, not just as an example of their culture.

5. Read

Seek out books by and about people who are different from you. Memoirs, biographies, and other nonfiction books are an obvious way to learn about the facts of a country or someone's life, but also try to read novels that have been translated from other languages or written by people who might have a very different perspective on life in your own country.

6. Watch Movies

Like with books, you can watch documentaries and nonfiction series, but check out other kinds of films, too. You get a more varied and nuanced perspective on a culture by seeing the kinds of fictional stories they tell.

7. Listen to Radio Shows and Podcasts

Radio and podcasts often feature people in more informal conversation, which is another great way to get an insider's perspective on a different culture.

8. Travel

Immersing yourself in a completely different culture through travel is an amazing way to understand how different other ways of life can be. But even if you don't have the time or money to visit different countries, you can find pockets of other cultures in your hometown. Wherever you live, there are probably immigrant communities or neighbourhoods with their own cultural heritage. The more you learn, the more accustomed you get to greeting cultural differences with curiosity rather than suspicion [4].

9. Appreciate the Differences

Differences between us are what make life so interesting. So embrace the differences between yourself and your friends from different cultures - but remember that what is a fascinating difference

to you is just their normal life!

The best way to respect people from other cultures is to strike a balance between curiosity and appreciation: ask questions if your friends are open to it, but also learn how to just silently observe and appreciate the differences that make us unique [5].

V.   Conclusion

After this "fly" towards languages and cultures, I can say that this work was very interesting and deductive for me because it opened me new spectacles and through this disquisition, I had the chance to understand what politeness indeed is and how many expressions of it exist in our planet.

At the beginning, I thought that politeness was mere delicacy but I ultimately understood that it is a very complex phenomenon which plays a central role in our world. I think that a comparative study was the right option because it gave me the permission to understand both English and Arabian culture more excellently and effectively.

I chose to read not only books and articles but also blogs, because it helped me to understand what is the common idea of politeness "normal" people have and what are the different ways they show politeness when communicating with other people.

Finally I can say that this article granted me to reflect on how careful we must all be when arbitrating negatively other people's behaviour, attitudes and thinking we have right on our aspect.

In my viewpoint it's positive that every culture and language has its certain way and application of politeness (even though sometimes it can have negative compliments), since I do think there can be an "unity without uniformity and diversity without smashing " and I totally agree with what the writer and poet Oliver Goldsmith says: "*Ceremonies are different in every country, but true politeness is everywhere the same*".

Acknowledgment

References

[1]   Rudvin, M., 2005, Politeness Strategies in Cross-cultural Settings. Negotiating linguistic identities in interpreter-mediated communication for public services, 9th International Pragmatics Conference at Riva del Garda, Italy, 10-15 July..

[2]   Bowe, H., Martin, K., 2007, Communication Across Cultures. Mutual Understanding in A Global World , Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

[3]   Hale, S., 2007, Community Interpreting, MacMillan, Houndmills Basingstoke.

[4]   Scollon, R., Wong Scollon S., 2001, Intercultural Communication (2° edition), Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

[5]   Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1987) Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[6]   Kadar, D. and M. Haugh (2013) "Understanding Politeness". Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[7]   R. A. Danbolt Simons M., 2004, Teach yourself English , Cox & Wyman, Reading. 121-123.

[8]   G. O. Velkley, Richard L (2002). "The Tension in the Beautiful: On Culture and Civilization in Rousseau and German Philosophy". Being after Rousseau: philosophy and culture in question.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 11–30. ISBN 978-0-226-85256-0. OCLC 4793077 15-64.

[9] James, Paul; Magee, Liam; Scerri, Andy; Steger, Manfred (2015). Urban Sustainability in Theory and Practice: Circles of Sustainability. London: Routledge. p. 53. ISBN 978-1-138-02572-1. OCLC 942553107. Archived from the original on June 26, 2017. Retrieved May 29, 2017.

[10] Pyszczynski, Tom; Solomon, Sheldon; Greenberg, Jeff (2015). Thirty Years of Terror Management Theory. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology. 52. pp. 1–70. doi:10.1016/bs.aesp.2015.03.001. ISBN 978-0-12-802247-4.

[11] Lind, J.; Lindenfors, P.; Ghirlanda, S.; Lidén, K.; Enquist, M. (May 7, 2013). "Dating human cultural capacity using phylogenetic principles". Scientific Reports. 3 (1): 1785. Bibcode:2013NatSR...3E1785L. doi:10.1038/srep01785. ISSN 2045-2322. PMC 3646280. PMID 23648831.

[12] Chigbu, Uchendu Eugene (July 3, 2015). "Repositioning culture for development: women and development in rural community". Community, Work & Family. 18 (3): 334–50. doi:10.1080/13668803.2014.981506. ISSN 1366-8803. S2CID 144448501.

[13] O'Neil, Dennis (2006). "Culture Change: Processes of Change". Culture Change. Palomar College. Archived from the original on October 27, 2016. Retrieved October 29, 2016..

[14] Arnold, Matthew (1869). "Culture and Anarchy". Archived from the original on January 6, 2017. Retrieved May 29, 2017.

[15] Simmel, Georg (1971). Levine, Donald N (ed.). Georg Simmel on individuality and social forms: selected writings. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p. xix. ISBN 978-0-226-75776-6. Archived from the original on September 12, 2017. Retrieved May 29, 2017*Transmission Systems for Communications,* 3rd ed., Western Electric Co., Winston-Salem, NC, 1985, pp. 44-60.

[16] R. Sokal, Alan D. (June 5, 1996). "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies". Lingua Franca. Archived from the original on March 26, 2007. Retrieved October 28, 2016. Physicist Alan Sokal published a paper in a journal of cultural sociology stating that gravity was a social construct that should be examined hermeneutically. See Sokal affair for further details.