

What is the Politeness theory?

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Introduction

Politeness theory (PT) is theory that appeared in framework of pragmatic approach in linguistic. According to PT, the people use particular strategies to achieves successful communication. These strategies make tem enable to create maximumly comfortable environment for communication (Allan & Salmani Nodoushan, 2015; Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987; Salmani Nodoushan, 1995, 2006a, 2012; Verschueren, 1999).

What is politeness?

Although politeness has been study in variety of cultures for many year, Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's politeness theory has became very influential (Capone & Salmani Nodoushan, 2014; Kazemi & Salmani Nodoushan, 2018; Salmani Nodoushan, 2015b, 2016c; Scollon & Scollon, 2001). In 1987, Brown and Levinson propose that politeness is universal concept which based on speech act theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987; Searle, 1969, 1975, 1979). PT has had some disagreement within academia. Politeness is the expression of the speakers' intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts toward the listener (Capone & Salmani Nodoushan, 2014; Salmani Nodoushan & Mohiyedin Ghomshei, 2014). Another definition is "a battery of social skills whose goal is to ensure everyone feels affirmed in a social interaction" (Salmani Nodoushan, 2013a,b). Therefore, being polite can be

attempt for the speaker to save their own face or the face of who he or she is talking to (Salmani Nodoushan, 2014c, 2017, 2019a,b).

The key ideas of politeness theory were offer in the works by P. Brown and S. Levinson “Politeness: some universals on language usage” (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Relying on the works by American sociologist Erving Goffmann (1972), the authors chose the notion of “face” as the basis of their theory. It reflect two opposite needs of human: on the one hand, a desire to be approve of and appreciated by interlocutor («positive face»); on the other hand, to have his/her independent point of views and relative freedoms of opinion («negative face»). Therefore, politeness is understand as ability of people to use interactive strategies depending on communicative situation (Salmani Nodoushan, 2006b,2007b,c, 2008,c). By their means the communicator is capable of making a good impression on the interlocutor and creating a positive self-image or, on the contrary, expanding his/her personal space (Holmes, 2006; Salmani Nodoushan, 2006b,2007a, 2008a,b; Salmani Nodoushan & Allami, 2011).

Brown and Levinson gradually develops their concept considering every action of the communicants from perspective of potential threat to an individual face. According to the authors’ position, person tends to protect their own face in communication process thus deviating clear and direct communication. On basis, we can distinguished the strategies of positive politeness (for instance, demonstration of interest, sympathy) and negative politeness (for example, expressing pessimism, apologizing). Moreover, estimating face threatening acts three basic socio-cultural variables is taken into consideration: social distance between interlocutors, the degree of power on each other and ranking (Holmes, 2006; Salmani Nodoushan, 2015a, 2016b).

Development of PT

The comprehensive theory offer by the researchers becomes the centre of attention of scholars from different fields of science: the concept was use for cross-cultural comparison of speech

acts, in gender research, in social psychology and etc. However, despite the obvious contribution of the scientists into ... formation and development of politeness theory, Brown and Levinson's research gets a whole range of critical remark and, thus, new approach to studying this phenomenon were outlined (Salmani Nodoushan, 2016a).

In particular, universal application of Grice's Maxims (Grice 1975) and static perception of process of interference were negatively receive by some scientist. As result, in response to such remarks the Relevance theory (Salmani Nodoushan, 2017) appear that try to overcome drawbacks of previously theory (Pizziconi, 2006; Salmani Nodoushan, 2014a,b, 2018).

Despite fact that basic ideas of study of politeness were formed within the framework of pragmatic approach it do not covers all aspects of this particular phenomenon. Nowadays, the issue remain quite relevant. It is essential not only specify notion of politeness but also consider appearance and distribution of such speech norm and boundaries of its variability within context of different cultures (Salmani Nodoushan, 2015a, 2016a,b). Further work on issue of politeness is continued from perspective of critical discourse analysis, Relevance theory; analysis of empirical data also reveals new prospects for further researches (Pizziconi 2006; Salmani Nodoushan, 2017).

Conclusion

Despite some shortcoming in PT theory, it can not be argue that politeness theory is certainly unique area of study within communication field; it is very applicable and helpful in guiding individuals in ways to improve their speech and actions (Salmani Nodoushan, 2019a,b). Two qualities in particular stand out: (1) PT theory has motivate scholars to implement more research into grasping these ideas or finding alternatives to this way of thinking; (2) PT theory consider factors that plays role in field of communication such as language, identity, relational definition, social power, distance, and culture.

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