TRANSLATABILITY OF POLITENESS FORMULAS IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: This article investigates the area of linguistic politeness and the translatability of politeness formulas in English. Expressions of linguistic politeness are attempted for translation into English and the concept of politeness as a reflection of both normative and linguistic behavior is defined and discussed.

Keywords: linguistic politeness, translatability, lingua-pragmatics, social values, language-specific, culture-specific.

There has been a great deal of interest in politeness in pragmatics, and just as definitions of pragmatics vary, so to do definitions of politeness. Not only is the term used in different ways, but the term itself is not defined. Indeed, as Watts, Ide and Ehlich [2, 292] observe: "One of the oddest things about politeness research is that the term "politeness" itself is either not explicitly defined at all or else taken to be a consequence of rational social goals such as maximising the benefit to self and other, minimising the face-threatening nature of a social act, displaying adequate proficiency in the accepted standards of social etiquette, avoiding conflict, making sure that the social interaction runs smoothly, etc.

Another difficulty is pointed out by Kasper [1, 106], noting the different meanings of the term in ordinary parlance and pragmatics. In the former, … 'politeness' refers to proper social conduct and tactful consideration for others, whereas in the latter,

…'politeness' as a technical term in linguistic pragmatics refers to a broader, substantially more democratic concept. Since the object of pragmatic inquiry is linguistic action, 'politeness' as a pragmatic notion refers to ways in which linguistic action is carried out – more specifically, ways in which the relational function in linguistic action is expressed.

LoCastro [3, 253] points out that the term "politeness" is frequently confused with related folk terms like "etiquette" and "manners" and it has folk meanings that are not clearly distinguishable from its more technical or formal meanings. Indeed, the definition of "polite" in Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (1987) is in line with the folk meaning of the term, in the sense of referring to good manners and social correctness.

Someone who is polite has good manners and behaves in a way that is socially correct and considerate of other people's feelings. Polite describes things that you say or do simply because it is socially correct to do or say them, rather than because you mean them sincerely. (Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary, 1987: 1109)

In Britain "politeness" is typically used to describe negative politeness, which is presumed to be "a good thing." In this respect, I believe that the Japanese translation of "politeness," teinei, also has a similar connotation. According to Hori [5, 86], the Japanese concept of "being polite" includes only negative politeness. These views of politeness coincide with what Watts et al. (1992a) have termed "first-order" politeness in their scheme in which they distinguish between the folk and pragmatic definitions of the term, the latter being "second-order" politeness in their classification. Second-order politeness is located within a theory of social behaviour and language use, and is not equated with

any moral or psychological disposition towards being nice to one's interlocutor. It is in this pragmatic sense that I will use the term.

Politeness is not only viewed from the speaker, but it also viewed by the interlocutor. It makes many experts has different perceptions about politeness. Leech stated that politeness is one of pragmatic perspective. He begins by establishing two pragmatic systems: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. Pragmalinguistics includes the speakers' intentions and illocutionary acts. Hence, it refers to the more linguistics application of politeness. Meanwhile, sociopragmatics refers to how the speaker wants to be perceived socially.

Moreover, politeness could be defined as means of expressing that are used in conversation that has specific roles depending on the participant. Fraser and Nolen define politeness as a conversational contract that has a set of rights and obligations that participants must follow and can be negotiated and rearranged during a conversation. It meant that the conversational contract is based on the expectations of the members involved in a conversation and determined by the participants.

Meanwhile, Richard in Pichastor states that there are two definitions of politeness (a) how language expresses the social distance between speakers and their different role relationship (b) How to create, insist, and keep face during conversation carried out in speech community).

Furthermore, being polite or impolite basically cannot be determined for sure. One of the experts has the scale in generally. Ide et al. cited in Aubed (2010) points out that politeness is a neutral concept, which we use as the label for a scale ranging from plus – through zero – to minus politeness. Thus, politeness refers to plus-valued politeness, while being impolite means minus-valued politeness and non-polite works the neutral or zero valued centre of the scale.

Asking other people to do things is known as making a request. Requests take many different forms and may be very polite, moderately polite or not very polite (rude). When a speaker wants the interlocutor to commit to some future action, it means of a request. According to Svartvik cited in Marzita (2009) request can be mentioned as the act to ask your hearer whether he is willing or able to do something". In politeness patterns in request, there are two types of request. The first one is syntactic realization, and the second one is lexical realization.

The main important rule of a request is to make the listener understands that some actions are desired of him, but there are various ways in which this action can be achieved. These ways are as follows:

The Imperative Sentence Types: The imperative tense in English is used to give an order, a warning, an appeal, an advice, a suggestion, an instruction and in some cases a request to another person. Palmer request can be expressed by imperative sentence.

Simply take the verbs' infinitive form (without the "to" infinitive indicator). Usually the verb will be placed at the beginning of the sentence. Levinson [1, 198] stated that the imperative sentence is very rarely used to issue request in English.

Realization of request by the imperative sentence-type can have the following forms: 1.Give me your book, 2. Don't open the window, 3. Do study for tomorrow's test, 4. Calm down, 5. Let's go for watching a movie and Have a sit. Based on the examples above, types of requests are issued to make the listener to do something for the speaker. An imperative sentence has an understandable subject (you), and the verb is in the simple form.

Moreover, sometimes people use word "please" to make imperative sentence types more polite. According to Sifianou in Martinez the word "please" has been regarded as one of the most transparent politeness markers that serves to soften the imposition carried out by request being uttered.

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2. The Interrogative Sentence-types

Requests can be marked by using interrogative sentence types (Sadock, cited in Aubed. Besides that, Leech stated that interrogative sentence has the meaning of questioning in request. They are either Yes/No questions or Wh-questions. Yes/no interrogatives are questions that can be answered with a yes or a no response and Wh-interrogatives sentences begin with a wh-word and call for an open-ended answer. A yes or no answer is not appropriate for these questions.

The following examples are: (1) Have you got a car? (yes/no question), (2) Do you have an extra piece of paper?(yes/no question, (3) Do you have some money?(yes/no question), (4) Why don't you cook for dinner?(Wh-question) Several examples show that utterance(1) has a question force; utterance (2) requesting a piece of paper; utterance (3) needs a request for some money; whereas utterance (4) has the illocutionary force of requesting for cooking for dinner.

3. The Declarative Sentence-types:

Requests can be marked by using declarative sentence-types. In addition, Palmer mentions that declarative include types statements that command. It means the term "command" used to refer request.

The following examples are: (1) I am very hungry. (A request for some food), (2) This soup needs some salt. (A request for some salt), (3) It is cold here. (A request for closing the door or the window), (4) You won't drive the car, will you? (A request for not driving the car)

In utterance (4) the tag-question has been used to confirm what is said in the first part of the utterance and its function is to make the request more tactful.

4. Modal Auxiliaries:

Austin says that modal auxiliaries can be used for expressing the speech act of requesting. The following examples tell different realizations of this type of politeness in request requests : (1) Could you help me to move this table?, (2) Can you pour the tea into a cup?, (3) Will you get me a pillow?, (4) May I borrow your pen?, (5) Would you help me?, (6) Wouldn't you take me to the airport?

When the speaker used the modal auxiliary verb "can" means that the speaker is asking whether he is able to do the action or not. Can is used to make basic requests from a friend or co- worker. It is often used for small things. Can you is often used informally. It usually sounds less polite than could you or would you. May is used in request that little more formal than could.

In addition, using the past tense form "would" or "could" means the speaker makes his request more tactful and polite. In a polite request, could has a present or future meaning, not a past meaning. The meaning of "would you" and "will you" in a polite request is the same. Would you is more common and is often considered more polite. The degree of politeness, however, is often determined by the speaker's tone of voice.

For the purpose of this study, I take politeness to refer to the use of communication strategies intended to maintain mutual face and to achieve smooth communication, taking into account human relationships. The promoting and maintaining of politeness calls for displays of appropriate behaviour. What is considered to be appropriate varies from situation to situation and culture to culture, while personal values and tastes may also influence judgements of appropriateness.

To conclude, we can say that in a sense, as suggested by Mills [3, 75] "cultural norms are mythical; the nation, whatever we take that to mean, cannot speak with one voice, according to one view of what is appropriate or inappropriate. At any one time, there will be a range of different norms or notions of appropriateness circulating within the Communities of Practice and within the culture as a whole." In the process of social interaction, people communicating inter-culturally produce polite,

impolite and neutral utterances. But when people of different cultures communicate with each other, they employ different codes of politeness which leads to cultural differences.

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