

# The Role of Principle of Politeness and Its Representation at Lexical Level

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**Abstract:** As it is known, pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies the structure externally, that is, how the unit of language used in communication. In everyday life well-beings unconsciously interact with others in several ways such as gestures, expressions and primarily language. In communication the speaker is expected to give or share information with others. In order to make a conversation clear and brief by the speaker and the hearer, there must be the general principle of language use, which is called the cooperative principle (CP). The principle gives an emphasis to what the speaker gives in conversation in which the speaker is engaged. The very principle includes four categories, which are constructed through basic rules or maxims. "Maxim is a set of norms which language users adhere to in order to uphold the effectiveness and efficiency of communication". [8] G. Leech (1983) underlines the six maxims of Politeness Principle (PP) as a way of complementing the CP: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, sympathy. This article is devoted to the deeper analysis of the very maxims of politeness principle. The main attention is paid to the usage of principles politeness in lexical level of linguistic area.

**Keywords:** cooperative communication, principles of communication, principle of politeness, maxims, lexical level, softener, qualifier, intensifier.

## INTRODUCTION

As it is crystal clear, today, adult members of a socialization process in every society are supposed to deal with the rules to behave politely, linguistically and culturally within communication. Admittedly, in modern linguistics, politeness has not been an inborn instinctive of mankind property, but it is a phenomenon which has been formulated via sociocultural and historical processes. "Politeness is the most important part of effective communication and the participants of communication should be aware of the principle politeness and their meaning". [1, 2] Politeness research had an upper and a lower limit in developing theoretical concepts, notions of politeness and acknowledging universal validity across different cultures and languages to find out politeness in individual cultures to make a discovery of cultural slant on commonsense notions of politeness. Politeness plays a great role in the life of human being in different cultures. Moreover, it is also one of the main parts of modern trends of linguistics such as linguaculturology and pragmatics.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this article, we will attempt to describe and expose the deep-rooted knowledge formed in principle of politeness. Many scholars such as Geoffrey Leech, Brown and Levinson, Grice and others paid too much attention to the problems of effective communication and its principles as well as politeness. They have shown a great interest in the theoretical aspects of the whole problem and its various parts. Researchers are still treating to investigate main problems of modern trends of linguistics. We have used their books, articles and thesis dealing with the theme of our investigation in order to achieve the peak of researching. The actuality of the work can be seen in the present significance of learning and teaching foreign languages. So, we focus on principles of communication and the significance of politeness principles.

One can meet 2 methods of inquiry were used in the work: **descriptive method** is to describe main points of the research work and **componential analysis method** is beyond the aim of taking component: politeness principle out of the whole principles of communication.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the scope of modern linguistics, broadly, in pragmatics, Leech will be in favor of the study by means of conversational principles of the kind illustrated by H.P. Grice's cooperative principle. Leech attempts to present into pragmatics not only solid principle, for, cooperative one, but other principles, such as a politeness principle. Leech worked on the Politeness Principle (PP) and proposed politeness as a regulative factor in communication through a set of maxims. "Politeness", as Leech, found out, "is a facilitating factor that influences the relation between 'self', by which Leech means the speaker, and 'other' that is the addressee and/or a third party". To Leech politeness is described as "minimizing the expression of impolite beliefs as the beliefs are unpleasant or at a cost to it" [6]

During the communication, using the right words and the right grammar can present a solid aim to remove some of the unpleasantness of the message people undesirably have to direct. It can also help us to maintain a level of deference that we wish to show to our hearers in the normal course of communication. Using language politely can be a challenge, even when speaking our mother tongue, but it is especially difficult when speaking a foreign language since we often lack the appropriate vocabulary, and knowledge of alternative grammatical structures.

If we analyze the principle of politeness, we can notice that at each linguistic level there exist some elements of politeness. And now, we do try to give the representation of principle of politeness at lexical level. At this level, elements of politeness can be seen by the followings:

### 1. Softeners

As a linguistic tool, softener functions to soften the tone of our content or deliver politeness when we utter. Softeners usually stand at the beginning of a sentence to prepare us for upcoming positions, especially, for bad news: (to be honest, unfortunately, with all respect/taking all my respect to you into consideration, I'm afraid, so sorry,) and to soften the speech (I respectfully submit, it is kind of you, I hope you don't mind and so on).

Consider the following sentence:

I haven't finished the report. (violation of Tact Maxim through directness)

The speaker has not done anything here to soften the negative content of the utterance. A politer version might look something like this:

I'm afraid I haven't finished the report.

'I'm afraid' is commonly referred to as a 'softener' and in this way of delivering message; the Tact Maxim is used appropriately. Other examples:

To be honest, I think we need to rethink our defense strategies.

Taking all my respect to you into consideration, I don't agree with what you just said.

In a dialogue:

A: It's kind of you to help send letters to the Browns as soon as possible, Mary.

B: Why not, I will certainly send them today.

In this conversation, A uses a softener "it's kind of you" and softens his/her speech and achieves to deliver the message politely. In the dialogue, softener shows speaker's behavior and represents the Tact Maxim. B also doesn't violate politeness principle and uses the Generosity Maxim by offering her help.

### 2. Qualifiers

"Qualifiers are words used to modify other words and they increase or decrease the quality signified by those words". [4] Here's a simple example:

It is very hot.

In this sentence, the qualifier 'very' is used to modify the word 'hot' and increases its quality. If we give such qualifiers to lessen the quality of a word, they make great 'softeners'. Here are some of the most common qualifiers in English (though a number of these words have other functions as well): *really, pretty, even, a bit, a little, a (whole) lot, a good deal, a great deal, kind of, sort of, very, quite, rather, somewhat, more, most, less, least, too, so, just, enough, indeed, still, almost, fairly.*

Instead of saying, "They are facing problems with the new friends." It is more politely to say:

"They are facing one or two problems with the new friends."

It is a polite way to avoid of delivering message saying:

"The marketing department will be a little bit behind schedule." Instead of saying:

"The marketing department will be behind scheduled."

Consider the dialogues:

— Will you have some more chicken?

— No, thank you.

— What about you, Mr. Thompson?

— Yes, please, just a little. It's delicious.

In the conversation above, Mr Thompson shows his politeness speech using qualifier "a little". Actually, this qualifier expresses by the one of politeness principle, Agreement maxim. If we pay attention his message, there is another maxim. According to Modesty maxim, Mr Thompson acts humbly using qualifier "a little".

Another example:

— Your child's health is in a rather bad condition; he must be thoroughly examined in the policlinic.

— But, doctor, we have no condition to leave the house, he's too weak.

— Maybe, we must take him to hospital then.

— Oh, doctor, is it impossible to treat him at home?

In this dialogue, there also exist the qualifiers "rather" and "thoroughly" in doctor's speech. Speaker A (doctor) uses The Tact Maxim in order not to frighten hearer (child's mother) in its place by using "rather" as well as he prepares his listener to worse news (he must be thoroughly examined in the policlinic). Then, Speaker A uses "thoroughly" for increasing the status of his message's importance.

### 3. Intensifier

In English grammar, an intensifier is a word or two words come together that emphasizes another word or phrase. It is also known as a booster or an amplifier.

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Absolutely, actually, basically, awesome, very etc.

The word “absolutely” has been used yes as the best way of expressing agreement in English. And not just in American English. People use it to signify agreement. It is politer to use this multisyllabic adverb instead of the simple and emphatic yes. Let’s look through the extract from “A day’s wait” by Ernest Hemingway:

... He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o'clock in the morning. "You poor Schatz," I said. "Poor old Schatz, it's like miles and kilometers. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer thirty-seven is normal. On this kind it's ninety-eight."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely," I said. "It's like miles and kilometers. You know, like how many kilometers we make when we do seventy miles in the car?"

"Oh," he said. [4]

From the extract, we can notice that the intensifier “absolutely” serves to express the speakers persuading answer. Speaker avoids of saying just “yes” and uses The Agreement Maxim in its place.

Clearly, the word itself doesn’t carry any meaning, but when used usually as verbal filler it scarcely adds much to the meaning of the utterance.

A.: You're from Wales, aren't you?

D.: Yes, that's right. I come from Swansea actually.

In the above dialogue, Speaker D shows his/her agreement with Speaker A. From his/her answer, we can say that, there The Agreement Maxim is verbalized by means of intensifier at lexical level.

There is a prime example of intensifier, “very” which carries two functions in diverse positions: one is as an adjective and another one as an adverb. This softener can be used repeatedly in flabby writing. In virtually, every context in which it is used, its misuse would influence on most negligible loss. And in many sentences, the idea would be more powerfully expressed without it.

A: Is anything wrong with you?

B: I would be better if you turn off the radio. It is very, very, very noisy for me.

In this sentence, repeating the intensifier shows speaker’s complaining and speaker uses The Approbation Maxim to express his complain.

Intensifiers can be repeated for emphasis, e.g. very, very good, so so much better, far far more carefully. They can be called 'a repeat-intensifier'

-I so so love you'

-I really really really love you'

Here the repeated intensifiers have the paradoxical effect of decreasing the sentence's sincerity. While analyzing principle of politeness at lexical level, we should be aware of softeners, qualifiers and intensifiers which help both addresser and addressee to be polite communicators.

## CONCLUSION

After emphasizing the research and discussing the problems case about politeness principle of Leech’s maxim, we can summarize that the politeness principle underlined by Geoffrey Leech is applied here as a prime model to observe the linguistic phenomenon of increasing or decreasing the position of A (or generally Speaker (S)) or B (Hearer (H)) in speech communication. The user or speech-maker analyze the maxim if the purpose of speaker are same with what they say. But, if the purposes of delivering an utterance are different means the speaker sides are flouting the maxims.

The dominant category of maxim is observing maxim. Used forms like assertive/representative, commissive, directive and expressive utterance are the types of speech act [5] Then, the intention of speaker depends on the maxims which is observed or flouted by the characters.

This study made an attempt to introduce the principles of the most well-known theories of politeness and principles by Leech in much broader way. As it was indicated the earliest theories of politeness were seeking universal principles of verbal interaction based on which they can provide a universal framework for polite verbal behavior on the one hand.

On the other hand, the theories accounted for the variation of such social factors as distance, power, and weight of imposition respectively and the consequent influence of these variables on the formulation of politeness strategies.

To sum up, the maxim of politeness principle is supposed to have been brought and done since early due to its intention of teaching how to speak in polite communication, makes a good social relation and more closely in contact with others. The readers, who are doing the similar research, of our article may come across some easy examples which give the reference for the people who have difficulties in catch the core meaning of Leech’s maxim of politeness principle. In that case, the material adds contribution to give motivation for the other many research studies to be better than this material.

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