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Politeness in Dickens's tale of two cities

ABSTRACT

By Dr- Hasan A. Naji

Translation department
College of Arts

Hasan 302004@Yahoo.com

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* Corresponding author: E-mail :
adxxxx@tu.edu.iq

This paper deals with the basics, levels, and various definitions of Politeness. The concept of politeness has always been the device through which the speaker commits himself/herself to the truth in his/her declaration and in confirming his/her speech. To be polite is to perform a complex speech act that is both an assertion and a conditional promise. It explains the concept of politeness in different context and also how these countries deal with politeness. Beside its applicability on Charles Dickens's novel "A tale of two cities" we have extracted the quotations which contains a sense of politeness and the maxims that Charles Dickens used in this novel. The study concludes that both the benefit and cost of fulfilling the politeness act is linked to the hearer letting the speaker have no role to do but to mediate between the rewarder and the rewarded people. Moreover, in every day communications and particularly in commercial business politeness is commonly attained by two participants (the speaker and the hearer), while in other texts, the speech act of politeness is happily performed by the existence of three participants (the writer, the speakers, the mediators and the hearers).

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التهديب في حكاية مدينتين لجانرلس دكنز

د.حسن عبد الجبار ناجي / كلية الاداب/ الجامعة العراقية

الخلاصة:

في هذا البحث تناولنا اساسيات ومستويات والتعريفات المتنوعة للكياسة او المداراة. حيث يعد مفهوم الكياسة الوسيلة التي يلتزم من خلالها المتحدث بصدق قوله وتأكيد خطابه. ولكي يضمن المتحدث القيام بإنجاز خطاب معقد بشكل تأكيداً و وعداً . تطبيق مفهوم الكياسة في حضارات عدة، والطريقة التي يتعامل بها البلدان مع الكياسة. وكذلك تطبيق هذا المفهوم على رواية الكاتب تشارلز ديكنز " حكاية بين مدينتين " حيث استخرجنا الاقتباسات الحاوية على معاني الكياسة والثوابت التي استخدمها الكاتب في هذه الرواية.

Introduction

Charles John Dickens born on February 1812 is a great writer on the social life during the Elizabethan period where we find little poor children living in dirty quarters of London. Dickens was the one that established the world's best known fictional characters and is regarded by many as the greatest novelist in the Victorian era

His works enjoyed unprecedented popularity during his lifetime, and by the twentieth century critics and scholars had recognized him as a literary genius .

A tale of two cities, which is one of two historical novels written by him, is set in London and Paris and the French countryside at the time of the French revolution, dickens narrate this tale in a unique style but yet many problems faced him because of dissimilarities in culture however this was not an obstacle to him cause he genius in literary field. He was aware of most linguistics maxims one of these problems is called politeness, how dickens try to demonstrate to us that variance in culture or prestige have different way to impact our minds cause dealing with people is not easy task so what about dealing with two dissimilar cultures? the life , conversational skills Business deals, personal interactions, work place intermingling all require certain type of behavior, but that was not an issue to dickens he was and is the pioneer of all time he succeed to express to us all these contradictories and contrasts by his tale we are going to throw a light on one basic of phenomenon that is called politeness Why to be polite ?

Amitabh Shukla, 2000 define it as showing behavior that is respectful and considerate of other people, so, basically it is treating people with respect and it exists in all cultures and languages.

Politeness is very important in life, there are many reasons for this, "if you are polite, you are close enough to reach your goals and get what you want". Also, people are more likely to take you seriously and deal with you in good way .

George Yule says that Politeness "it is best expressed as particle application of good manners or etiquettes", the actions taken by speaker in a community in order to attend possible social or interpersonal disturbance.

However Meyehoff believes that politeness is a culturally defined phenomenon and what is considered polite in one culture can often be quite rude or simply strange in another, while the goal of politeness is to make all the

parties relaxed and comfortable with one another. When we speak we need to know what we want to say and how we want to say it.

Whenever we talk we are carefully choices the words according to the relationship with listeners, many languages have different strategies in the choice of words and expressions regarding politeness. In modern world, much interaction takes place at both personal and professional level. That is why one has to be polite. (Ronald Wardhaugh).

Techniques to show politeness:

First one called "expressing uncertainty through indirectness and hedge."

Hedge is defined as a mitigation device to lessen the impact of an utterance. These are normally adverbs and adjectives

For example: "He is a *slightly* stupid person." There might be just a *few* problems, we need to settle "

Second called "polite lying"

It is a lie that a politeness standard requires and which is usually known to be untrue by both parties. It is culture dependent.

For example: "A politeness lie to decline invitations because of scheduling difficulties ."

Third called, use of euphemism (which makes use of ambiguity and connotation)

- 1- Euphemism : is the substitution of an agreeable or less offensive expression in place of one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant to the listener , euphemism requires skill to sugar-coat a bitter pill to swallow . There are some superstitious euphemisms based on the idea that words have the power to bring bad fortune. For example: not speaking the word "cancer ."
- 2- Connotation: It has different meaning in other fields but here we will define it as " A subject cultural or emotional coloration in additional to the explicit meaning of any specific word or phrase in language" (emotional association with a word).

for example:" A stubborn person may be described as strong-willed or pig-headed." Although both have same literal meaning but strong-willed connotes for the level of someone's will, while pig-headed connotes frustration in dealing with someone .

Fourth, preferring tag questions

To direct statement, such as "You were at the store, were not you "?

A- Modal tag request information of which the speaker is uncertain, "You did not go to the store yet, did you "?

B- Affective tag indicates concern for the listener. "You have not been here long, have you "?

C- Softeners reduce the force of what would be a brusque demand. "Hand me that thing, could you?" (World Linguistics Council,2001)

Lakoff,1976, Beeching,2002, Have shown that women are more likely to use politeness formulas than men, though the exact difference are not clear. Since there is a clear association between politeness norms and the stereotypical speech of middle class white women, at least in UK and US.(Linguist List,England)

Fact theory

Erving Goffman who is An American sociologist established the columns of politeness theory, it is essential to be familiar with face theory, the basic idea of this theory is what we lead unavoidably social lives as we depend on each other but as far as possible, we try to lead our lives without losing our own face. Our face is a very fragile thing which other people can very easily damage. So we should lead life according to golden rule : " Do to others as you would like them to do to you"(Hudson .)

Brown and Levinson in their book (Some Universals in Language) suggested that it was useful to distinguish two types of politeness; they called the strategies that avoid offence by showing deference "Negative Politeness strategies. And the strategies that avoid offence by highlighting friendliness positive politeness strategies .

First: Positive politeness

This type is concerned with positive face of the hearer. It is used to make the hearer feel good about himself, his interests or possession, and are most usually used in situations where the audience knows each other fairly well. This strategy seeks common ground or co-operation. Such as jokes or offers.

For example :

"do not you want some dinner now?" "Help me with the bags, will you"?

Second: Negative Politeness

It is oriented towards negative face of the hearer. These strategies presume that the speaker will be imposing on the listener and there is a higher politeness for awkwardness or embarrassment.

For examples from Brown and Levinson :

"would you know where oxford street is"?

Leech in his book titled (Pragmatics of politeness) proposed six types of politeness maxims that enable us to use the proper style of behavior that can help the speaker to choose from and they are:

1- Tact maxim

The tact maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other.' The first part of this maxim fits in with Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategy of minimizing the imposition, and the second part reflects the positive politeness strategy of attending to the hearer's interests, wants, and needs.

For example :

"Could I interrupt you for a second "?

"I need a little bit of advised here"

2- Generosity maxim

Leech's generosity maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of beliefs that express or imply benefit to self; maximize the expression of beliefs that express or imply cost to self.' Unlike the tact maxim, the maxim of generosity focuses on the speaker, and says that others should be put first instead of the self.

For example :

"You relax and let me do the dishes""

" We would be so glad , if you had dinner with us "

"

3- Approbation maxim

The approbation maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other; maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of other.' It is preferred to praise others and if this is impossible, to sidestep the issue, to give some sort of minimal response (possibly through the use of euphemisms), or to remain silent. The first part of the maxim avoids disagreement; the second part intends to make other people feel good by showing solidarity.

For example :

"I heard you singing at the karaoke last night. It sounded like you were enjoying yourself."

"Gideon, I know you're a genius – would you know how to solve this math problem here"

4- Modesty maxim

Maxim of modesty is one of the six maxims proposed by Leech (1983) in his book (politeness principle) meaning to minimize praise or to maximize dispraise of self. The modesty maxim states: "Minimize the expression of praise of self; maximize the expression of dispraise of self."

For example :

"Oh, I'm so stupid – I didn't make a note of our lecture! Did you" ?

5- Agreement maxim

The agreement maxim runs as follows: 'Minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other; maximize the expression of agreement between self and other.' It is in line with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategies of 'seek agreement' and 'avoid disagreement,' to which they

attach great importance. However, it is not being claimed that people totally avoid disagreement.

It is simply observed that they are much more direct in expressing agreement, rather than disagreement.

For example :

"I don't want my daughter to do this, I want her to do that"

"Yes, but ma'am, I thought we resolved this already on your last visit".

6- SYMPATHY MAXIM

The sympathy maxim states: 'minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between the self and other.' This includes a small group of speech acts such as congratulation, commiseration, and expressing condolences – all of which is in accordance with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategy of attending to the hearer's interests, wants, and needs.

For example :

"I am sorry to hear about your father"

These maxims was the tool that been used to analyze (A tale of two cities) that written by dickens so in the below quotation we notice that dickens applied the agreement maxim

" There will be a paket to calais, tomorrow,drawer?"

" Yes sir, if the weather holds and the wind sets tolerable fair. The tide will serve pretty nicely at about two in afternoon,sir , bed, sir?"

((The drawer used here to demonstrate Agreement maxim in a very polite formula in talking to Mr.Lorry because his job requires respecting each and every customer. (Mr.Lorry) was special one because he belongs to high class category, unlike any other passenger stay in this hotel)).

"Pray take a seat, sir" said Miss Manette in a very clear and pleasant young voice.

"I kiss your hand, Miss" said Mr.Lorry, and took his seat.

((here in this quotation we noticed that Lucy used a Generosity maxim to talk with Mr.Lorry in polite way that imply cost to self the reason behind that because Mr. Lorry is an old , strange man was doing a big favor to her in finding her father, whom she had not seen in 18 years)).

" O, sir, at another time you shall know my name , and who my mother was, and who my father ,and how I never knew their hard, hard history, but I can not tell you here and now, is that I pray to you to touch me and to bless me, my dear."

((In this quotation Miss Manette said these words and used such politeness way when she applies a sympathy maxim with her father , the old man who had lost his memory and arrested for years in prison, she tried to make him feel save and remove the burden from his a heart and mind by talking to him in such way , then she helped him to remember his life ,his job and even his daughter that he do not know or remember now. This hard situation requires use politeness in particular case.))

"It is a far, far better thing that I do , than I have ever done; it is a far , far better rest that I go to than I have ever known"

((in this quotation we notice that Sydney Carton used a modesty maxim to Lucy Manette. This speech contains a lot of politeness in style, because he was directed his last words to his beloved Lucy, the women that he sacrificed his life for her sake, for her happiness. He offered not only himself but also he offered his life in order to keep her life in saves. That mean his pleasure was in save her husband from execution, this why the letter was fully of politeness)).

"But for you, dear stranger, I should not be so composed, for Iam naturally a poor little thing, faint of heart; nor should I have been able to raise my thoughts to him who was put to death. I think you were sent to me by heaven" said the girl. "or you to me" said sydney carton."

((In this quotation we are seeing how , Miss.Lucy used a modesty maxim to Sydney carton in polite way ,because he stand with her in this unordinary situation when he sacrifices by his soul and flesh to the one who love when they were going to guillotine.))

Conclusion:

In this study we conclude that dickens writing(was and is) thrilling his readers mind by his uncommon way of writing his awareness of the maxims that he use every time to shock his readers through his characters. A number of important contributions to the continuing debate about politeness theory are made. And as long as there are cultures and peoples there is politeness in public life and in dealing the people of each other. So far, the use of politeness in the civilizations of peoples indicates their progress and development. Especially since politeness can be defined as the expression of "particle application of good manners or etiquette.

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