

## **The Realization of Positive Politeness Strategies in Language:**

The Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson

**Instructor Rufaidah Kamal Abdul-Majeed\***

### **Abstract:**

Politeness gains a great deal of interest in the past twenty-five years. Much has been written on politeness principle and theories. The politeness theory postulated by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson was originally published in 1978 and later expanded and republished in 1987 under the title *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* is considered the most important theory that almost all the linguists depend on in their writing on this subject. This work consists of two parts. The first part is their fundamental theory concerning the nature of 'politeness' and how it functions in interaction. The second part is a list of 'politeness' strategies (positive and negative) with examples from three languages: English, Tzeltal, and Tamil.

The purpose of the present paper is to tackle the realization of positive politeness strategies in language in English language only.

### **Politeness Theory**

#### **Introduction**

Politeness, as a sub-discipline of pragmatics, gains a great deal of interest in the past twenty-five years. Much has been written on politeness principle and theories. It is crucial in explaining why people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean.

Within politeness theory, face is best understood as every individual's feeling of self worth or self image. This image can be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others. In everyday conversation, there are ways to go about getting the things we want. When we are with a group of friends, we can say to them, "Go get me that plate!", or "Shut-up!" However, when we are surrounded by a group of adults at a formal function, in which our parents are attending, we must say, "Could you please pass me that plate, if you don't mind?" and "I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, but I am not able to hear the speaker in the front of the room." In different social situations, we are

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\* English Language Dept. – College of Education for Women- University of Baghdad

obligated to adjust our use of words to fit the occasion. People are often so polite in what they mean. We make and break the rules, we can choose not to be polite, for example, and 'flout' the principle of politeness, if our circumstances are such that we think our aims and goals are better realized by not being polite.

### **Studies on Politeness:**

Lakoff (1973: 296) was among the first to adopt Grice's construct of Conversational Principles in an effort to account for politeness. She explicitly extends the notion of grammatical rule to the domain of politeness and considers the form of sentences, i.e. specific constructions to be polite or not. She suggests two rules of Pragmatic Competence: (i) Be clear, and (ii) Be polite.

Leech's (1983: 82) model of politeness is founded on interpersonal rhetoric and views politeness as conflict avoidance. He introduced the Politeness Principle whose function is:

To maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place.

He (ibid.: 132) provides a finer differentiation within his Politeness Principles. He proposes six interpersonal maxims:

*(Tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim and sympathy maxim)*

He (ibid.) distinguishes between what he calls 'Relative Politeness' which refers to politeness in a specific situation and 'Absolute Politeness' which refers to the degree of politeness inherently associated with specific speaker actions. Thus, he takes some illocutions (e.g. orders) to be inherently impolite, and others (e.g. offers) to be inherently polite.

Watts (1989: 19) identifies politeness as linguistic behaviour which is perceived to be beyond what is expectable. Politeness is viewed as:

explicitly marked, conventionally interpretable subset of 'politic' responsible for the smooth functioning of socio-communicative interaction and the consequent production of well-formed discourse within open social groups characterized by elaborated speech codes.

Lakoff (1990: 34) defines politeness as "a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange.

Fraser (1990: 232) presents the notion of politeness as a Conversational Contract. He states that:

Upon entering into a given conversation, each party brings an understanding of some initial set of rights and obligations that will determine, at least for the preliminary stages, what the participants can expect from other(s).

Cruse (2000: 362) defines politeness as "a matter of what is said, and not a matter of what is thought or believed." He further specifies the purpose of politeness in saying:

The purpose of politeness is the maintenance of harmonious and smooth social relations in the face of the necessity to convey belittling messages. Of course, the nature of reality, social, psychological, and physical constraints the scope for politeness: if our world is to 'work', we must respect this reality.

He defines positive politeness as "it emphasizes the hearer's positive status: for example: Thank you, that was extremely helpful.

Scollon and Scollon (2001: 46) propose a model of social interaction to analyze the negotiation of face relationships in intercultural communication. They adopt the term *involvement* as a way of reminding us that the emphasis is on the common ground, highlighting the "person's right and need to be considered a normal, contributing, or supporting member of society."

By *involvement*, they mean paying attention to others, claiming in-group membership, using first names, or to show that the speaker is closely connected to hearer.

Eelen (2001: 240) argues for an alternative conceptualization of 'politeness' with the characteristics of variability, evaluativity, argumentativity and discursiveness. This view of politeness:

takes full account of the hearer's position and the evaluative moment; is able to capture both politeness and impoliteness; provides a more dynamic. Bi-directional view of the social individual relationship; and thus acknowledges the individual (in terms of both variability and creativity) as well as evolution and change as intrinsic to the nature of politeness.

Watts (2003: 20) refers to 'Politic behaviour':

that behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction. The construction may have been made prior to entering the interaction, but is always negotiable during the interaction, despite the expectations that participants might bring to it.

He (ibid.: 143) tries to offer "ways of recognizing when a linguistic utterance might be open to interpretation by interlocutors as '(im)polite'".

### **The Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson**

The politeness theory postulated by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson was published in their 1978 study *Universals in Language Usage: Politeness Phenomena* and later expanded and republished in 1987 under the title *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*.

Brown and Levinson's work consists of two parts. The first part is

their fundamental theory concerning the nature of 'politeness' and how it functions in interaction. The second part is a list of 'politeness' strategies with examples from three languages: English, Tzeltal, and Tamil.

Brown and Levinson's politeness theory provides a model for speakers' motivated usage of politeness strategies in spoken interaction. Brown and Levinson propose that "all competent adult members of a society have (and know each other to have) face" (Brown and Levinson 1987:61). They define "face" as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (ibid.). Face has two aspects, identified as negative face and positive face. Negative face can be defined as the basic claim of a member of society to personal freedom of action and to personal space, which is not to be invaded by other members of society. Positive face is the wish to create a positive self-image in relation to other members of society. That means a member of a society wishes to be perceived as positive by other members of society and to gain their approval. The claim for negative and positive face by members of society creates norms and rules that direct how members of society interact.

However, face also is a basic want that every society member wants to satisfy, namely the want to keep up negative and positive face in direct interaction with other members. Brown and Levinson emphasize this definition of face as an individual want rather than a societal norm in order to account for actual linguistic behavior between persons. They restate the definition of face as:

- (1) *negative face*: the want of 'every competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others
- (2) *positive face*: the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others  
(ibid.: 62).

They explain negative face as the notion of formal politeness, the "politeness of non-imposition" (ibid.). Positive face is the want to obtain positive, admiring or approving reactions from fellow members of society. Brown and Levinson propose that speaking behavior is the main arena in which those face wants are satisfied. Speakers strive to obtain satisfaction of both their negative face and their positive face. In order to achieve their communicational purpose, it is beneficial for speakers to take care that they do not impede the face wants of their addressees. However, it is sometimes necessary for speakers to perform acts that threaten their addressees' face. These acts are referred as "face-threatening acts" or "FTAs" (ibid.:65). FTAs happen consciously and can threaten the negative face or the positive face of a person. FTAs threaten negative face if they indicate "that the speaker (S) does not intend to avoid impeding H's [the addressee] freedom of action" (ibid.). This includes, for example, orders, requests, advice or threats. FTAs

threatening positive face are acts “indicating (potentially) that the speaker does not care about the addressee’s feelings, wants, etc” (ibid.:66), for example expressions of disapproval, contempt or ridicule. FTAs can threaten the face of the addressee, but they can also threaten the face of the speaker. An expression of thanks threatens a speaker’s negative face, since the speaker admits a debt towards the addressee. FTAs function not only in the direction speakers to addressees, but speakers can commit FTAs threatening their own face.

The authors conclude that “in the context of the mutual vulnerability of face, any rational agent will seek to avoid these face-threatening acts, or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat” (ibid.:68). That implies that speakers have different possible strategies to achieve their communicational purpose while committing as few FTAs as possible. FTAs are, however, a necessary part of communication. When committing FTAs it is therefore rational that speakers minimize the threat to their addressees' face so as to not impede communication itself. There are different strategies for committing FTAs which Brown and Levinson lay down in the following figure:

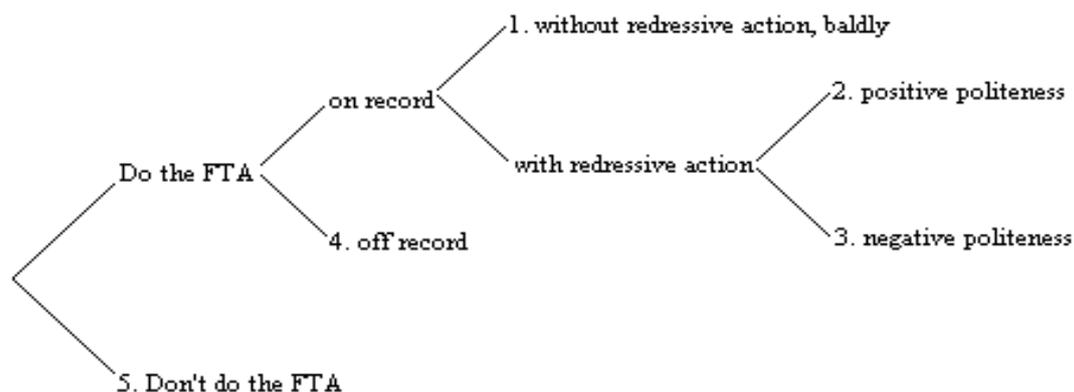


Fig.1. Possible strategies for doing FTAs (Brown and Levinson 1987:69)  
[The numbers 1-5 refer to strategies to minimize threats from FTAs]

Speakers have several possibilities to commit FTAs varying in the amount of face threat each act possesses. They can decide not to commit an FTA at all (5). If speakers decide to commit an FTA they can do so either on record or off record (4). On record means that their intent is clear and unambiguous and can be so interpreted by the addressee. To minimize the threat, however, it is also possible to commit an FTA off record, so that it cannot be unambiguously interpreted as such. If speakers commit the FTA on record they can then either commit it without redressive action (baldly) (1) or with Redressive action is “action that ‘gives face’ to the addressee, that is, that attempts to counteract the potential face damage of the FTA” (ibid.:69). Redressive action can either be directed towards the positive face (positive politeness) (2) or the

negative face (negative politeness) (3) of the addressee.

Brown and Levinson employ this model to explain politeness strategies in language. They use the construct of a Model Person, who is a "willful fluent speaker of a natural language" (ibid.:58) and possesses the two properties of face and rationality.

According to Brown and Levinson, politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearers' "face." Face refers to the respect that an individual has for him or herself, and maintaining that "self-esteem" in public or in private situations. Usually you try to avoid embarrassing the other person, or making them feel uncomfortable. Face Threatening Acts (FTA's) are acts that infringe on the hearers' need to maintain his/her self esteem, and be respected. Politeness strategies are developed for the main purpose of dealing with these FTA's.

### **The Realization of Positive Politeness Strategies in Language**

Having chosen a strategy that provides an appropriate opportunity for minimization of face risk, S then rationally chooses the linguistic (or extra-linguistic) means that will satisfy his strategic end. Each strategy provides internally a range of degrees of politeness (or face-risk minimization), so S will bear in mind the degree of face threat in choosing appropriate linguistic realizations of positive politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 70) say that positive politeness is oriented toward the positive face of H, the positive self-image that he claims for himself.

They (ibid.: 101) add that:

"it is redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable. Unlike negative politeness, positive politeness is not necessarily redressive of the particular face want infringed by the FTA; that is, whereas in negative politeness the sphere of relevant redress is restricted to the imposition itself, in positive politeness the sphere of redress is widened to the appreciation of alter's wants in general or to the expression of similarity between ego's and alter's wants.

Positive politeness is, in many respects, simply representative of the normal linguistic behaviour between intimates, where interest and approval of each other's personality, presuppositions showing shared interests and knowledge are exchanged. (ibid.)

The strategies of positive politeness involve three broad mechanisms: They are:

**First: Claim common ground**

**Second: Convey that S and H are cooperative**

**Third: Fulfil H's want (for some x) (ibid.: 102)**

The first group consists of eight strategies; it involves the S and H both belong to some set of persons who share specific wants, including goals and values. There are three ways for making this:

- A. S may convey that some want (goal, or desired object) of H's is admirable or interesting to S too,
- B. Or he may stress common membership in a group or category, thus emphasizing that both S and H belong to some set of persons who share some wants,
- C. S can claim common perspective with H without necessarily referring to in-group membership.

The outputs of these three methods of stressing common ground give us positive-politeness strategies from 1 to 8:

Now let's examine the 1-8 positive politeness strategies in turn: (ibid.: 103)

### **First: Claim common ground**

#### ***Strategy 1: Notice, attend, to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods)***

"S should take notice of aspects of H's condition (noticeable changes, remarkable possessions, anything which looks as though H would want S to notice and approve of it)" (ibid.: 103)

Ex: (1)

Goodness, you cut your hair! (...) By the way, I came to borrow some flower.

Ex: (2)

You must be hungry, it's long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?

Ex: (3)

What a beautiful vase this is! Where did it come from? (ibid.: 103)  
Another way of noticing H's condition is that when H makes an FTA against himself (a breakdown of body control, or any *faux pas*), S should 'notice' it and indicate that he's not embarrassed by it. He can do this by a joke, or teasing H about his penchant for *faux pas*: (ibid.: 104)

Ex: (4)

God you're farty tonight!

Or by including S himself as part of the act:

Ex: (5)

We ate too many beans tonight, didn't we!

Similarly, if H's nose is running, a positively polite thing for S to do is to offer H a tissue, or comfort for having a cold, rather than ignoring it as in negative politeness. (ibid.)

**Strategy 2: Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)**

The exaggerated intonation, stress, and other aspects of prosodics, as well as with intensifying modifiers are other features of positive politeness as illustrated below: (ibid.)

Example: (6)

What a fantástic gárden you have!

Example: (7)

How absolutely márvelous / extraórdinary/ incrédible! (ibid.)

**Strategy 3: intensify interest to H**

S can share with H some of his wants to intensify the interest of his won (S's) contributions to the conversation, by making a good story. This may be done by using simple present tense: for example the following conversation shows the positive politeness as it pulls the H right into the interest of S: (ibid.: 106)

Example: (8)

I come down the stairs, and what do you think I see? A huge mess all over the place, the phone's off the hook and clothes are scattered all over... (ibid.)

Furthermore, the use of quoted direct speech, and not indirect reported speech, the use of tag questions or expressions that draw H as participant into the conversation, such as 'you know?', 'see what I mean?', 'isn't it?' are another features of this strategy.

The exaggeration technique is to exaggerate facts and to overstate:

Example: (9)

There were a *million* people in the Co-op tonight!

Example: (10)

I'll be done in one second. (ibid.: 107)

The exaggeration in these examples may redress an FTA simply by stressing the sincerity of S's good intentions. (ibid.)

**Strategy 4: Use in-group identity markers**

"By using any innumerable ways to convey in-group membership, S can implicitly claim the common ground with H that is carried by that definition of the group. These include in-group usages of address forms, of language or dialect, of jargon or slang, and of ellipsis." (ibid.: 107)

**Address forms:** The second person plural pronoun of address is used as an honorific form to singular as means of respecting others. Such usage is called T/V system after the French *tu* and *vous*. Other address forms are: dear, honey, brother, sister, son, mate, sweetheart... etc. such forms may be used to soften FTAs: (ibid.: 108)

Example: (11)

Here mate, I was keeping that seat for a friend of mine.

Example: (12)

Help me with this bag here, will you son / buddy/ honey.(ibid.)

### Use of in-group language or dialect:

The phenomenon of code-switching involves any switch from one language or dialect to another in communities that have two or more such codes. (ibid.: 101) The switch is between two varieties or dialects of a language, one is considered 'high' and prestigious, the other 'low' and domestic. We may expect a switch into the code associated with in-group and domestic values as a way of encoding positive politeness when redress is required by an FTA.

Example: (13)

First call: Come here, Johnny.

Second call: John Henry Smith, you come here right away.

This is a switch in English, from nick name to full name. (Gumperz, 1970: 133) (Cited in Brown and Levinson, 1987: 110)

### Use of jargon or slang:

By referring to an object with a slang term, S may evoke all the shared associations and attitudes that he and H both have toward that object. This then may be used as FTA redress. (ibid.)

Example: (14)

Lend us two *quid* then, wouldja mate? (British English)

Example: (15)

Lend us two *bucks* then, wouldja Mac? (American English) (ibid.:111)

### Contraction and ellipsis

There is an inevitable association between the use of ellipsis and the existence of in-group shared knowledge. The use of ellipsis and contraction is associated with positive politeness. For example: S and H are building a house, in order for the utterance 'Nails' to be interpretable, S and H must share some knowledge about the context that makes the utterance understandable. (ibid.)

Example: (16)

Mind if I smoke

Example: (17)

What about a drink?

Many nicknames in English are contracted forms of the full name: Liz, Jenny, Joe...etc. It seems that to contract is to endear, perhaps because of the association with smallness. The full name is considered as negative politeness because one tries to increase the metaphorical size of it on contrast with contraction. (ibid.: 112)

**Strategy 5: Seek agreement**

**Safe topics:** It allows S to stress his agreement with H and therefore to satisfy H's desire to be 'right', or to be corroborated in his opinions. Examples of safe topic is weather, the beauty of gardens,...etc. The more S knows about H the more close to home will be the safe topics he can pursue with H in order to show that S has interest in maintaining a relationship with him.

Another aspect of seeking agreement is to find aspects of topics to agree and stick to them. For example: "if your neighbour comes home with anew car and you think it hideously huge pollution-producing, you might still be able to say sincerely: 'Isn't your new car a beautiful colour!'" (ibid.)

**Repetition:** it is the process of repeating part or all of what the preceding speaker has said, in a conversation. It is used to stress emotional agreement with the utterance (or to stress interest or surprise). (ibid.: 113)

Example: (18)

A: John went to London this weekend

B: To Lõndon!

Example: (19)

A: I had a flat tyre on the way home.

B: Oh God, a flat tyre! (ibid.: 113)

**Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement**

**Token agreement:** The desire to agree or appear to agree with H leads for pretending to agree, instances of 'token' agreement. The H may agree or hide his disagreement by twisting his utterances so as to appear to agree - instead of saying 'no', H responds with 'yes' to a preceding utterance. (ibid.: 114)

Example: (20)

A: That's where you live, Florida?

B: That's where I was born.

Example: (21)

A: Can you here me?

B: Barely

(Sacks: 1973)

(Ibid.) states a parallel strategy which is involved in the "Rule of Contiguity". It states that "answers should follow the questions but are displaced to soften disagreement", as in the following:

Example: (22)

A: Yuh comin down early?

B: Well, I got a lot of things to do. I don't know. It won't be too early.

Another strategy is the use of irony that may indicate superficially agreeing with the preceding utterance.

Example: (23)

Beautiful weather, isn't it? ( to postman drenched in rainstorm)

(Brown and Levinson, 1987: 222)

**Pseudo-agreement:** The use of *then* is another example in English to indicate pseudo-agreement as a conclusory marker to indicate that S is drawing a conclusion to a line of reasoning carried out cooperatively with the addressee. (ibid.: 115)

Example: (24)

I'll meet you in front of the theatre just before 8.0, then.

*Then* here works as a conclusion of an actual agreement between S and H.

*So* also has a similar function:

Example: (25)

So when are you coming to see us?

**White lies:** are "Where S, when confronted with the necessity to state an opinion, wants to lie ('Yes I do like your new hat!') rather than damage H's positive face. (ibid.: 116)

**Hedging opinions:** "S may choose to be vague about his own opinions, so as not to be seen to disagree". (ibid.)

A shown in strategy (2), in which S uses words of extremes like (marvelous, fantastic, wonderful, incredible... etc.) as well as intensifying modifiers such as (absolutely, completely...etc.) to show one's opinion is risky unless S is certain of H's opinion on the subject. Therefore, it is recommended to hedge these extremes, so as to make one's own opinion safely vague by using: *sort of, kind of, like, in a way*:

Example: (26)

It's really beautiful, in a way.

These hedges may be used to soften FTAs of suggesting or criticizing or complaining, by blurring the S's intent:

Example: (27)

You really should sort of try harder. (ibid.: 117)

The use of these hedges assumes the existence of common ground between S and H, so that H uses his common knowledge to interpret S's intention.

### ***Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground***

**Gossip, small talk:** The friendship existed between S and H is considered as a mark for the valuable time and effort that have been spent by them discussing general shared interests. It gives rise to the strategy of redressing an FTA by talking for a while about unrelated topics. Thereby,

S can show his interest in H, and show that he hasn't come to see H simply to do the FTA (e.g. a request), even though his intent is obvious by bringing a gift. This strategy is for softening requests, at least request for favours. Therefore, by discussing general shared interests with H, S has the opportunity to stress the common ground, common concerns and common attitudes with H towards interesting events. (ibid.: 117)

The possible departures from the normal usage, sometimes called 'switching into the addressee's point of view' means 'taking the role of the other' methods. These methods are the basic politeness phenomena; positive and negative. The characteristics of positive politeness include: a. attempt to bring together or, b. merge the points of view of speaker from the addressee. (ibid.: 119)

Here below some examples of possible departures from the normal usage used as techniques for reducing the distance between S's and H's points of view:

**Personal-centre switch: S to H.** This is:

a. where S speaks as if H were S, or H's knowledge were equal to S's knowledge. An example is the use of tag questions with falling intonation in some local dialects of British English:

Example: (28)

I had a really hard time learning to drive, didn't I.

b. where H couldn't possibly know, having just met S; or when giving directions to a stranger, unfamiliar with the town:

Example: (29)

It's at the far end of the street, the last house on the left, isn't it.

c. where in giving empathy, one asserts what only H can know:

Example: (30)

A: Oh this cut hurts awfully, Mum.

B: Yes dear, it hurts terribly, I know.

These utterances can be carried in prosodics as well. Both A's and B's utterances could be expressed with 'creaky voice' (very low pitch and a constricted glottis)

d. by merging the 'I' and 'you' into an inclusive 'we', although it is only H who is really being referred to:

Example: (31)

Ok now, let's stop the chatter and get on with our little essays.

Example: (32)

Now, have we taken our medicine? (doctor to patient) (ibid.)

e. the use of 'you know', where H couldn't possibly 'know', this parallels the use of tag question in (28) and (29) above:

Example: (33)

I really had a hard time learning to drive, you know. (ibid.: 120)

**Time switch:** The use of the 'vivid present', a tense shift from past to present tense, seems in English to be a distinctly positive-politeness device:

Example: (34)

John says he really loves your roses.

The vivid present functions to increase the immediacy and therefore the interest of a story.

**Place switch:** "The use of proximal rather than distal demonstratives (*here, this*, rather than *there, that*), where either proximal or distal would be acceptable, seems to convey increased involvement or empathy." (ibid. 121)

Example: (35)

(on saying goodbye): This / That was a lovely party.

Example: (36)

(in reference): This / Here is a man I could trust.

(versus) That / There is a man I could trust.

These spatial metaphors of closeness have their FTA uses, both impolite:

Example: (37)

(look) Here! How dare you! Get out of the refrigerator!

And polite:

Example: (38)

Here! You must come in and have some tea.

Another aspect of this occurs in the use of verbs of movement to and from, *take* versus *bring* or *go* versus *come*. English seems to encode a basic positive-politeness 'taking the role of the other' point of view in the usage of *come*.

Example: (39)

Come / Go and meet me at my favourite restaurant in Conduit Street. (ibid. : 121)

**Avoidance of adjustment of reports to H's point of view:** "Where S is trying to stress common ground that he shares with H, we would expect him to make only the minimal adjustment in point of view when reporting; we would expect him to assume that H's point of view is his or his is H's." (ibid.: 122)

**Presupposition manipulations:** S presupposes something when he presumes that it is mutually taken for granted. S speaks as *if* something is mutually assumed where it is not. It can be turned to positive-face redress, as illustrated in the following four sets of examples:

1- Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes: "Negative questions, which presume 'yes' as an answer, are widely used as a way to indicate that S knows H's wants, tastes, habits, etc. and thus partially to redress the imposition of FTAs." (ibid.: 122)

Example: (40)

Wouldn't you like a drink? (for offers)

Example: (41)

Don't you think it's marvelous? (for opinion)

2- Presupposes H's values are the same as S's values: The use of scales such as tall-short, good-bad, beautiful-ugly, interesting-boring, etc. which S and H share to place people or things on such scales. Furthermore, the sequencing of statements conjoined with *and* or *but* may reveal shared values and stress them. (ibid.: 123)

3- Presupposes familiarity in S-H relationship: "The use of familiar address forms like *honey* or *darling* presupposes that the addresser is 'familiar'." (ibid.)

4- Presuppose H's knowledge: "The use of any term presupposes (in some senses) that the referents are known to the address." (ibid.: 124)

The use of language, dialect, jargon, local terminology as a group codes assumes that H understands these codes. This assumption may be exploited as a positive-politeness device:

Example: (42)

Well I was watching *High Life* last night and...

Assuming that S and H share common ground and both know that *High Life* is a TV programme.

The other case is when using the pronoun where the referent has not been made explicit is typical of positive politeness:

Example: (43)

Oh, this is lovely! (when walking into a house) (ibid.)

### **Strategy 8: Joke**

"Since jokes are based on mutual shared background knowledge and values, jokes may be used to stress that shared background or those shared values." Joking is a technique for putting H 'at ease': (ibid. 124)

Example: (44)

How about lending me this old heap of junk? (H's new Cadillac)

### **Second: Convey that S and H are cooperative**

Brown and Levinson (1987: 125) say that this is the second major class of positive-politeness strategies. It is:

"the want to convey that the speaker and the addressee are cooperatively involved in the relative activity. If S and H are cooperating, then they

share goals in some domain and thus to convey that they are cooperators can serve to redress H's positive-face want." (ibid.: 125)

It is done by claiming some kind of flexibility between S's and H's wants, either by:

- a. S wants what H wants for H, (strategy: 9) or
- b. (by a point-of-view flip) that H wants what S wants for himself, (strategies: 10, 11, 12, and 13) or
- c. S may convey his cooperation with H by indicating that he believes reciprocity to be prevailing between H and himself. (strategy: 14) (ibid.)

***Strategy 9: Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants***

"To put pressure on H to cooperate with S, is to assert or imply knowledge of H's wants and willingness to fit one's own wants in with them." (ibid.)

Example: (45)

Look, I know you want the car back by 5.0, so should(n't) I go to town now? (request)

Example: (46)

I know you can't bear parties, but this one will really be good – do come! (request/offer)

Example: (47)

I know you have roses but the florist didn't have any more, so I brought you geranium instead. (offer + apology)

***Strategy 10: Offer, promise***

"In order to redress the potential threat of some FTAs, S may choose to stress his cooperation with H in another way. He may, that is, claim that (within a certain sphere of relevance) whatever H wants, S wants for him and will help to obtain." (ibid. 125)

S shows his good intention in satisfying H's positive-face wants by using offers and promises strategy even if they are false.

Example: (48)

I'll drop by sometimes next week. (ibid.)

***Strategy 11: Be optimistic***

S assumes that H wants S's wants for S (or for S and H) and will help him to obtain them. S will cooperate H, or at least tacit claim that H will cooperate with S because it will be in their mutual interest. (ibid.: 126)

Example: (49)

Wait a minute, you haven't brushed your hair! (as husband goes out of the door)

The wife wants the husband to brush his hair before going out in terms that the husband wants it too. She puts pressure on him to cooperate with her wants. (ibid.)

To be optimistic is the outcome of this strategy. The following 'optimistic' expressions of FTAs seem to work by minimizing the size of the face threat:

Example: (50)

You'll lend me your lawnmower for the weekend. I hope / won't you / I imagine. (ibid.)

"This minimizing may be literally stated with expressions like *a little, a bit, for a second*.

Example: (51)

I'm borrowing your scissors for a sec- Ok?

Example: (52)

You don't have any objections to me helping myself to a bit of cake, do you?

### ***Strategy 12: Include both S and H in the activity***

"By using an inclusive 'we' form, when S really means 'you' or 'me', he can call upon the cooperative assumptions and thereby redress FTAs." (ibid.: 127)

*Let's* in English is considered as an inclusive 'we' form.

Example: (53)

Let's have a cookie, then. (ibid.)

### ***Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons***

"by including H thus in his practical reasoning, and assuming reflexivity (H wants S's wants), H is thereby led to see the reasonableness of S's FTA (or so S hopes)." (ibid.: 128)

Example: (54)

We will shut the door, ma'am. The wind's coming in. (ibid.)

The indirect suggestions which indicate demand rather than give reasons are conventionally considered as positive-politeness in English.

Example: (55)

Why not lend me your cottage for the weekend?

Why don't we go to the seashore?

Why don't I help you with that suitcase? (ibid.: 127)

Similarly when using the past tense asking about past actions. If H is asked to give reasons why he did or did not do something, and he has no good reasons, the FTA of criticizing may hereby be accomplished:

Example: (56)

Why didn't you do the dishes? (ibid.: 128)

**Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity**

S and H may urge or claim the cooperation existed between them by giving evidence of reciprocal rights or obligations. "Thus S may say, in effect, 'I'll do X for you if you do Y for me', or 'I did X for you last week, so you do Y for me this week' (or vice versa)" (ibid.: 129)

**Third: Fulfil H's want for some X**

This is the last mechanism of positive-politeness. It involves the strategy of. Brown and Levinson (1987: 129) says that:

S deciding to redress H's face directly by fulfilling some of H's wants, thereby indicating that he (s) wants H's wants *for H*, in some particular respects.

This mechanism includes the following last strategy:

**Strategy 15: Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)**

"S may satisfy H's positive-face want (that S want H's wants, to some degree) by actually satisfying some of H's wants." (ibid.)

The gift-giving (as a tangible way) and human-relations: such as the wants to be liked, admired, cared about, understood, listened to (which demonstrate that S knows some of H's wants and wants them to be fulfilled) are both represent the positive-politeness actions. (ibid.)

**Conclusion:**

Politeness refers to the common notion of the term, that is the way politeness manifests itself in communicative interaction: politeness-as-practice in everyday interaction. Brown and Levinson initially proposed a universal model of linguistic politeness and claimed that politeness is realized linguistically by means of various strategies (positive and negative) across cultures. They use a Model Person in their examples, one whose characteristics are *face* and *rationality* who will always select the politeness choice according to a rational assessment of the situation.

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## تحقيق ستراتيجيات الكلام المهذب الايجابي في اللغة: نظرية الكلام المهذب لبراون و لفسون

المدرس رفيدة كمال عبد المجيد  
قسم اللغة الانكليزية - كلية التربية للبنات - جامعة بغداد

### الخلاصة:

حصلت نظرية "الكلام المهذب" على اهتمام كبير في السنوات الخمس والعشرين الماضية. فقد تناولها الكتاب ودرسوا مبادئها باسهاب. اما نظرية "الكلام المهذب" التي اطلقها لاول مرة براون و لفسون عام ١٩٧٨ واعدوا طباعتها مرة ثانية على شكل كتاب عام ١٩٨٧ تحت عنوان : *الكلام المهذب: سمة عالمية في الاستعمال اللغوي* فتعتبر من اهم النظريات التي اعتمدها اغلب اللغويون كأساس لعملهم في هذا الموضوع. يتألف كتاب براون و لفسون من جزئين: الأول هو عبارة عن استعراض نظري لطبيعة نظرية التأدب اما الجزء الثاني فهو عبارة عن قائمة تحتوي ستراتيجيات التأدب (سلباً او ايجاباً) مع امثلة من ثلاثة لغات: الانكليزية ولغة تزيلتال واللغة التاميلية.

الهدف من هذا البحث هو اظهار كيفية تحقيق ستراتيجيات الكلام المهذب الايجابي في اللغة الانكليزية فقط وهو استعراض لما كتبه براون و لفسون في كتابهم.