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*Speech Function,
Politeness and cross-cultural Communication*

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Module: Sociolinguistics

Level: Master 01

Academic Year: 2022/2023

INTRODACTION

Language is one of the most important thing that human need to interact with other people. Language cannot be separated from the human being, it is a media to say anything and express the ideas, by using language, people can interact well, exchanging their ideas and also to fulfill their needs. Halliday (1994:69) states that when exchanging and expressing ideas, human being perform two roles namely giving and demanding, for the commodity such as information and goods or services. In systemic functional linguistic (SFL), it is named speech function. Speech function is a way of someone delivers ideas in communication to make listeners understand the ideas well.

We adapt our talk to suit our audience and talk differently to children, customers and colleagues. We use language differently in formal and casual contexts. The purpose of talk will also affect its form. One relevant factor is politeness.

Polite is often a matter of selecting linguistic form which express the appropriate degree of social distance or which recognize relevant status or power differences. Rules of polite behavior differ from one speech community to another linguistic politeness is culturally determined.

I/ Functions of speech

Ye (2006:36) states that speech functions is an action or performance done by language users such as asking, commanding and answering in order to fulfill the intention of the speakers and listeners. Speech functions are used as the medium exchanging experiences in order to fulfill their needs.

Sulistyowati (2010:71) states that to communicate effectively, we should clearly organize the messages that we want to convey through conversation. The organization of messages involves giving and demanding and this exchange might be more complicated than it seems. If we are demanding something, it means we are inviting to give, and if we are giving something, it means we are inviting to receive. Halliday (1994: 68) states that the most fundamental types of speech functions, which lie behind all the more specific types, are just two (1) giving and (2) demanding. Either the speaker is giving something to the listener or he is demanding something from him. Even these elementary categories already involve complex notions i.e. giving means 'inviting to receive', and demanding means 'inviting to give'. The speaker is not only doing something himself, but she also requiring something of the listener.

Functions of speech are different ways of communicating. The differences among the speech functions have to do with the intention of the communication. Different intention or goal leads to the use of a different function of speech.

There are number of ways of categorising the functions of speech. The following list has Proved a useful one in sociolinguistic research wihch are :

I/ Expressive utterances: *express speaker's feelings*

Eg:

Good morning sue

Lovely day

Yes, it's beautiful

Makes see you wonder what we are doing here, doesn't it

That's right

Thanks that's great

No problem

I feel great today

2/Directive utterances: *attempt to get someone to do something.*

Eg:

- ✓ *Look I wonder if you could possibly sort this lot out by ten*
- ✓ *Clean up your room*
- ✓ *Clear the table*

Directives are concerned with getting people to do things. There are three ways to expressing the directive, such as: The interrogative, declarative and the imperative.

Eg:

<u>Interrogative</u>	<i>could you sit down?</i>
<u>Declarative</u>	<i>I want you to sit down</i>
<u>Imperative</u>	<i>sit down</i>

The social factor why speakers choice of the directive, the reason are:

- *The social distance between participants,*
- *Their relatives status and*
- *The formality of the context event.*

People who are close friends or untimed use more imperatives, for instance within a family

Eg:

- wash your hand for milk, children*
- shut up you fool*

Teachers often use imperative to pupils

Eg:

- *Open your book at page 45*
- *Stop talking please.*

3/Referential utterances: Referential speech provides information.

Eg:

- A person might share the time with someone (“its five o’clock”).
- Referential speech can often provide information to a question (“what time is it?”)
- I need them for a meeting
- The apples are on the table
- At the third stroke it’ll be three o’clock precisely

4/Metalinguistic utterances: Metalinguistic speech is communication about language. (Comments on language itself)

Eg:

- This entire blog post would be considered by many to be metalinguistic because I am talking about language and not really using language as described in the other functions of speech.
- ‘Hegemony’ is not a common word
- Nouns can be mass or count

5/Poetic utterances: speech is speech that is highly aesthetic. Songs and poetry are examples of language that is poetic in nature. An example would be the famous nursery rhyme “Roses are red, violets are blue.....). Poetic speech often has a powerful emotional effect as well. (Focus on aesthetic features of language as: poems, an ear catching motto and a rhyme).

Eg:

- Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
- A stitch in time saves nine.

6/Phatic utterances: Phatic speech is closely related to expressive speech. However, the main difference is that phatic speech is focused on the well-being of others while expressive speech focuses on the feelings of the person speaking. (Language for solidarity and empathy with others).

Eg:

- *An example of phatic speech is saying “how are you?” This is clearly a question but it is focusing on how the person is doing. Another phrase might be “I hope you get well soon.” Again the focus on is on the welfare of someone else.*
- *Hi, how are you, lovely day isn't it!*

N.B: *There are many more categories than the ones presented. In addition, the categories presented are not mutually exclusive (Exceptions). Many phrases can be correctly classified into many different categories. For example, if someone says “I love you” you could argue that it's expressive, poetic, and or even phatic. What is missing is the context in which such a statement is made.*

II/Politeness and address forms

1/ Definition and Eg of Politeness and address forms:

Being polite is a complicated business in any language. It's difficult to learn because it involves understanding not just the language, but all so the social and cultural values of the community. We often do not appreciate just how complicated it is, because we tend to think of politeness simply as a matter of saying “please and Thank you” in the right place.

Take the word “please” for example, children are told to say please when they are making request, as a way of expressing themselves politely. But adult uses please far less than want might suppose, and when they do, it often has the effect of making a directive sound less polite and more peremptory.

Eg:

- F1 : Could you give me the tea”?*
- F2 : Could you give me the tea, please”!*
- F3 : Answer the phone Jo”*
- F4 : Please answer the phone Jo.*

2/Types of politeness.

❖ Positive politeness

Positive politeness is solidarity oriented. It emphasizes shares attitudes and values. When the boss suggests that a subordinate should use first name (FN) to her, this is a positive politeness move, expressing solidarity and minimizing status differences.

❖ Negative politeness

Negative politeness pays people respect and avoids intruding on them. Negative politeness involves expressing oneself appropriately in terms of social distance and respecting status differences. For example, using title and last name to your superior and to older people that you don't know well are further examples of the expression of negative politeness.

III/Linguistic Politeness in Different Cultures

Anyone who has travelled outside their own speech community is likely to have had some experience of miscommunication base on cultural differences. For example: when Rebecca arrived in New Zealand from Nottingham, she and her family were invited to a Christmas party at a neighbor's house. Bring a plate she was told, and, thinking her host must be having a very big party if they expected to run out of plates, she obligingly brought four. Empty ones! When she arrived she was embraced to discover that bring a plate meant bring contribution to the food. Fortunately she had some flowers with her to cover her confusion.

1/Greetings

In different culture each of these questions is perfectly acceptable as part of a normal greetings routine. They are formulas, and the expected answer is ritualistic. Just as a detailed blow-by blow description of the state of your cold would be unexpected and inappropriate in response to how are you? So the south East Asian questioner does not expect a minute and specific account of your intended journey and destination. Just as fine is enough of an answer to the first question, so along the way or just a short distance is an appropriate and polite response to the second. Greeting formulas universally serve an affective function of establishing non-threatening contact and rapport, but their precise content is clearly culture specific.

The sociolinguistic rules governing more formal meetings are usually equally culturally prescribed. The Maori ritual of encounter, for instance, is a complex procedure. The bare structure of the ritual is represented by the following sequence of speech events.

Eg:

- *How are you?*
- *Where are you going?*
- *Where do you come from?*

2/Expressive: *Expressive speech shares a person's feelings. An example would be "I feel happy today!" Expressive communication can at times provide clear evidence of how someone is doing.*

Conclusion:

The ways in which we communicated have been briefly explained here. Understanding how people communicate will help others to better understand those around us and improve our style of communicating.

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