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## A DISCOURSIVE TURN IN THE THEORY OF LINGUISTIC POLITENESS: TO THE FORMATION OF THE THEORY OF LINGUISTIC IMPOLITENESS

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### ABSTRACT

As Barbara Pizziconi notes, numerous studies in the field of linguistic politeness, starting from the mid-70s of the 20th century, i.e. since the birth of the later famous theories of R. Lakoff, J. Leach, as well as the universal theory of linguistic politeness by P. Brown and S. Levinson, play a very important role in modern pragmatic works. Nevertheless, although the number of publications on this issue is steadily growing, there is no single, generally accepted definition of the social and communicative phenomenon of politeness. There is also no unity among scientists in understanding the very nature of linguistic politeness (Pizziconi 2006: 706).

### KEYWORDS

Linguistic politeness, Nevertheless, generally.

### INTRODUCTION

Moreover, all these theories have been and are at the center of criticism. In particular, the universal theory of politeness by P. Brown and S. Levinson, created more than 30 years ago, almost immediately after its appearance came under fire from many linguists and

sociologists representing both European and non-European countries.

The general scheme of the universal theory of politeness, also called the face-saving theory, in addition to the concept of power, is based on the abstract concept of a social face (face), and developed

by the American sociologist E. Hoffman. The theory is also based on the idea of P. Grice that the nature of the communicative process should be understood as a special kind of intentions of the addressers that need to be recognized by the addressees.

P. Brown and S. Levinson understand politeness as a rational, expedient aspect of communication that obeys certain rules. The authors agree with the idea of P. Grice that the entire process of communication is based on the Principle of Cooperation. The main goal of politeness in terms of P. Brown and S. Levinson is to maintain social unity by preserving the social faces of communicants (Brown P., Levinson 1987: 3-7).

The focus of the universal theory of politeness is the so-called. “model person” (model person), having the ability to logically substantiate their communicative goals and the most optimal means of achieving them. The social face of an abstract, devoid of any national specificity model personality, according to the authors, should be a combination of two different desires that are constantly present in her mind: a) positive face (desire (to some extent) to receive approval from others), b) negative face (the desire to be free in one's actions, not to allow interference from another) (Brown P., Levinson 1987: 13). That is, a face is “an image of oneself described in terms of personal qualities approved by society. It is an image that other people can share, as in the case when a person, by making a good impression of himself, makes a good impression of his profession or religion” (Goffman 1967: 5).

The claim to the universality of the theory of P. Brown and S. Levinson, as well as the author's interpretation of the concept of a social person, which is central for them, coupled with a clearly European understanding

of the cornerstone categories of “politeness” and “threat to a social person (face threat)”, turned out to be at the center of the most serious theoretical objections (Kasper 2001: 189).

The object of criticism is often the addresser-centricity inherent in this theory, because the authors pay excessive attention to the social faces of the addressers, but not the addressees of statements that remain out of sight. It also criticizes the incorrect, from the point of view of representatives of collectivist Asian cultures (China, Japan, Korea) understanding by the authors of a number of speech acts.

The impossibility of applying a universal model in the study of politeness in modern Chinese society is noted by Gu Zhanguo, who emphasizes the differences in the concepts of the Chinese negative face and the negative face in the theory of P. Brown and S. Levinson. Unlike European individualistic cultures, in Chinese culture, speech acts (hereinafter referred to as RA), offers, invitations and promises are not considered statements that threaten the negative face of the communicant. A feature of the Chinese mentality and Chinese cultural traditions is that any native Chinese associates the function of politeness with the need to be restrained in monologue and dialogic speech (Gu 1990: 242).

The primitive, from the point of view of the Chinese, understanding of many RAs by P. Brown and S. Levinson, such as compliments, is drawn to the attention of R. Mao LuMing, who believes that it is incorrect to consider them only as RAs that threaten the negative face of the addressee, because their verbalization is mutually beneficial for both communicants (LuMing 1994: 455-456).

The concept of a social person in terms of P. Brown and S. Levinson is criticized by the Japanese scientist Y. Matsumoto. She notes the importance for the Japanese of the concept of “social identity”, which is manifested not so much in their awareness of the concept of personal space, but in their awareness of how they are treated by other members of society or a social group (Matsumoto 1988. - cited in: Spenser-Oatey 2008: 13).

Criticism of the concept of a negative person in terms of P. Brown and S. Levinson is also characteristic of representatives of African cultures. The Nigerian linguist O. Nwoye, analyzing the concept of a person in the egalitarian society of the Igbo people, notes that for representatives of this culture, concern for group rather than personal interests is considered to be expected behavior (Nwoye 1992. - cited in: Watts 2003: 102-103).

The British linguist Sarah Mills, recognizing the importance of the universal theory of politeness for the further development of linguistic pragmatics, notes its limited nature. In her opinion, a significant disadvantage of this theory is that it focuses on a very narrow, simplified model of what, in terms of P. Brown and S. Levinson, is politeness. From the point of view of S. Mills, politeness is a much more complex phenomenon than shown by P. Brown and S. Levinson (Mills 2003: 57-58).

The French sociolinguist K. Kerbra-Orecchioni criticizes the universal theory of politeness, also noting the limitations of many of its provisions and disagreeing with them. In her terms, the point of view of P. Brown and S. Levinson on politeness and on the mechanism of interaction between communicants is negative, pessimistic, and “paranoid, because communicants are

presented as individuals who are under constant threat of all kinds of RA, which pose a danger to their faces, and who spend their time guarding their territory and their faces” (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1997: 13).

Interpreting linguistic politeness differently than P. Brown and S. Levinson, in order to correct a number of shortcomings in their theory of politeness, C. Kerbra-Orecchioni introduces the concept of “Face-Enhancing Act” (an act that enhances a face, flattering a face) to designate RAs “positive analogues” of RA, threatening the social faces of the communicants. The author refers to this category of statements, for example, compliments, thanks, apologies and RA expressions of consent (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1997: 13).

Recognizing the importance of the universal theory of politeness, M. Locher and R. Watts emphasize that it “rises above most other theories, being a guiding star for scientists who are looking for the phenomenon of politeness in examples of interaction between communicants and differing in the breadth of penetration into the essence of human behavior” (Locher , Watts 2005: 9-10). However, they consider it the weakest point of ignoring situations of aggressive, offensive or rude communicative behavior.

The above criticisms of the universal theory of politeness have forced linguists and sociologists to significantly expand the "horizons of linguistic politeness."

Among a number of post-classical approaches in the analysis of linguistic politeness (impoliteness), the most widespread is the so-called. “postmodern approach” (otherwise referred to as the discursive approach), represented by the works of J. Yilen, M. Locher, R. Watts, A. Langlotz, D.Z. Kadar, S. Mills, S.

Harris, H. Cesar Felix-Brasdefer, N. Geyer and many others.

The “postmodern approach” questions many of the classical views on the phenomenon of politeness in language and speech. Theorists of the analyzed approach, firstly, incorporate into their works the socio-theoretical views of the sociology of language of Pierre Bourdieu with his central concept of habitus. Habitus is understood as “a personified history, internalized as a person’s second nature and no longer recognized as history, but being an active manifestation of the present, summing up the entire past of a person” (Bourdieu 1990. - cited in: Karasik 2007: 355). In Latin, “habitus” means “manner of conduct” or “style in clothes, costumes”. In terms of R. Watts, this concept is closely related to the concept of prudent behavior (Watts 2003: 149).

Secondly, and most importantly, in this approach it is customary to distinguish between two ideologies of politeness: Politeness<sub>1</sub> and Politeness<sub>2</sub> a special term in the theoretical research of scientists (Eelen 1999: 163-164).

“Postmodernists” abandoned in their works the classical model of cooperation by P. Grice, the weak point of which, in their opinion, is the excessive focus on the intentions of the addressers and the almost complete disregard for the intentions of the addressees. With regard to the theory of speech acts, its most serious shortcoming for “postmodernists” is the fact that it analyzes isolated, often self-created sentences considered out of context (Mills 2003: 38).

Proponents of a discursive (“postmodernist”) approach to the study of politeness (impoliteness) emphasize the need to consider a conversation as a

process, interpreting politeness/impoliteness as a kind of dynamic phenomenon (Mills 2003: 38, Watts 2003: 222-246). In contrast to the traditional understanding of politeness, “postmodernists” do not consider it as something deterministically related to certain linguistic forms and functions, but define it only through the subjective perception of these forms and functions by communicants (Pizziconi 2006: 709). Therefore, a distinctive aspect of the activity of “postmodernists” is their analysis of fragments of authentic minute-to-minute interaction of communicants, much larger than sentences or individual utterances, called “relational work” (activity to create and improve relationships between communicators) (Locher, Watts 2005).

In terms of the British linguist H. Spencer-Oatey, who represents a socio-psychological approach to the study of politeness (impoliteness), this type of daily interaction of communicants is called the closely related term “rapport management” (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 3-17).

The discursiveness of the “postmodernist” approach is manifested in the fact that politeness is considered as a relatively small part of the entire spectrum of interpersonal activities of communicants and is analyzed only in interaction with other types of this activity. The most important thing, according to M. Locher and R. Watts, is that the activity of communicants to create and improve their relationships covers the entire spectrum of their verbal and non-verbal behavior (from direct, i.e. rude, aggressive verbal behavior up to polite speech behavior). Therefore, M. Locher and R. Watts prefer the term “relational work” rather than “facework” (actions to preserve the social face of communicants), which P. Brown and S. Levinson used to designate only the RA of appropriate and polite behavior.



The authors rightly believe that only taking into account the impolite behavior of communicants can help in the most accurate definition of specific communicative behavior as belonging to one of the categories: a) impolite (impolite), b) in no way related to the category of politeness (non-polite), c) polite (polite), d) overly polite (over-polite). At the same time, only polite behavior should be positively evaluated, behavior that is not related to the category of politeness should not be evaluated in any way, and impolite and excessively polite behavior should be negatively evaluated. An interesting idea is that polite behavior is always prudent (politic), while prudent behavior can be outside the category of politeness (non-polite). The central fundamental concept for the theory of “relational work” is the concept of a person in terms of E. Hoffmann, and not P. Brown and S. Levinson (Locher, Watts 2005: 11-13).

The discursive nature of the concept of “relational work” is also manifested in the fact that all forms of verbal and non-verbal behavior of any communicant, carried out in real time, are open to interpretation by other communicators. At the same time, this concept is cognitive in its essence, since the activity it denotes is carried out through the continuous creation and “dismantling” of changing, intermingling cognitive spaces in the minds of two or more communicants (Watts 2008: 313).

Proponents of the “postmodern” (discursive) approach to the study of impoliteness in speech behavior are J. Eilen, R. Watts, M. Loher, S. Mills. In this approach (also called the Impoliteness1-approach), researchers focus on their own awareness of the discourse by its ordinary participants (i.e., non-specialists) as impolite.

The starting point in the second approach (Impoliteness2-approach) is the analytical opinions of discourse specialists based on pragmatic theory. Unlike the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson, which can be seen as an example of the manifestation of Politeness2, one of the main provisions of the analytical Impoliteness2 approach (also called the universalist or context-sensitive approach) is the contextuality of statements. The supporters of this approach in the study of the phenomenon of impoliteness include D. Bousfield, M. Terkurafi and M. Huff.

The theoretical position of the English linguist Jonathan Culpeper plays a huge role in understanding the complexity of the phenomenon of communicative impoliteness. His taxonomy of impolite behavior strategies is highly cited, although it is considered to be modeled after a universal theory of politeness and therefore not escaping from “Anglo-centricity” (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2010: 536).

Noting that the phenomenon of impoliteness is related to how insult (offense) is communicated and perceived, J. Culpeper believes that “impoliteness arises when: 1) the addresser deliberately attacks the addressee's face, and 2) the addressee realizes and / or recreates this behavior as a person deliberately attacking him, or as a simultaneous manifestation of the first and second actions. The key aspect of this definition is that it becomes clear that impoliteness, like politeness, is manifested in the interaction of the speaker and the listener” (Culpeper 2005: 38).

Among the discourses “forcing communicants to be impolite”, the author refers to the discourses of the army training camp and the courtroom. Based on the provisions of the universal theory of politeness by P.

Brown and S. Levinson, J. Culpeper developed a paradigm of 5 super-strategies of impoliteness aimed at causing a certain moral damage to the addressee of the statement, i.e., at undermining his social face: 1) bald on record impoliteness (obvious, unequivocal impoliteness, i.e. threatening the person of the addressee of the RA, carried out in an obvious way); 2) positive impoliteness (impoliteness towards the positive person of the addressee); 3) negative impoliteness (impoliteness towards the addressee's negative face); 4) sarcasm or mock politeness (sarcasm or mock politeness, when threatening the face of RA are carried out with the help of clearly insincere politeness strategies and therefore are implemented only at a superficial level); 5) withhold politeness (complete lack of politeness if one of the communicants expects it) (Culpeper 1996: 356-357). Each of these super-strategies is implemented in speech behavior by separate strategies. The author identifies ten strategies of impoliteness aimed at the positive face of the addressee and five strategies aimed at the negative face of the addressee (ibid: 357-358).

The study of linguistic impoliteness is taking its very first steps. It started just over 15 years ago. And researchers need to remember that to achieve the greatest success, this promising area of pragmatolinguistic research must be open to multiple research models. At the same time, it is necessary to ensure that “impoliteness is understood in different cultural and linguistic contexts, and the reliability of the applied methodology is tested at the intercultural and interlingual level” (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2010: 536).

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