AN INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATIC STUDY OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN TURKISH AND ENGLISH

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Politeness models are based on the notion of "face". "Face" is "something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 66). "Face" refers to two basic wants: to be approved and acknowledged by the others (positive face) and to have one's own actions unhindered by the others (negative face). Brown and Levinson's Politeness Model regards apologies as "negative politeness strategies in that they convey respect, deference, and distance rather than friendliness and involvement. Negative politeness is an avoidance-based, on-record strategy of self-effacement and restraint" (Wagner, 2004:23). On the other hand, requests are seen as a positive politeness strategy as every speaker has the necessity to be appreciated by others and to feel that nobody is interfering with him (Renkema, 1999).

But do non-native speakers know and apply those strategies when speaking? How aware are non-native speakers of linguistic realizations in requests and apologies? To discover whether apology and request patterns have the same face in the mother tongue and foreign language of the speakers, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 60 teacher trainees whose L1 is Turkish. Based upon the theoretical framework of politeness and face-threatening acts by Brown and Levinson (1987), an ethnographic investigation of naturally occurring apologies and requests was conducted where the participants were asked to respond to the situations where they have to apologize or make a request both in Turkish, their mother tongue and English, their foreign language. Then, the politeness strategies used in Turkish and English by the university students were listed and the items were analysed to see primarily whether there was a transfer from the participants' L1 to L2.

Keywords: *apology, request, negative face, positive face, politeness strategies.*

1. *INTRODUCTION*

The politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) is widely accepted and utilized as the basis for research not only in the field of pragmatics and sociolinguistics but also in psychology, business, and so on. 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. They define "face" as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" and claim that "people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in

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maintaining face in interaction" (ibid: 61). They then divide the "face" into two; negative face, the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, and positive face, the positive consistency of self-image or personality (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (ibid: 61).

Two different types of politeness are used in interaction; "negative politeness" and "positive politeness". Brown and Levinson defined negative politeness as "a redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded (ibid: 129), and state that negative politeness is "the most elaborate and the most conventionalized set of linguistic strategies" (ibid: 130). Typical examples of negative politeness strategies are conventionally indirect ways to request or to use honorifics. Positive politeness is defined as "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" (ibid: 101). Positive politeness strategies include somewhat exaggerated elements or 'element of insincerity', and that separates a positive politeness strategy from ordinary daily conversation. Some of the typical examples of positive politeness strategies are complimenting, joking, responding emphatically, and using nicknames.

The acts that are thought to primarily threaten the addressee's, i.e. the hearer's (H's) negative-face want, by indicating (potentially) that the speaker (S) does not intend to avoid impeding H's freedom of action, include (Brown & Levinson, 1999: 313):

1. Those acts that predicate some future act A of H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) the act A:
   a) orders and requests
   b) suggestions, advice
   c) remindings
   d) threats, warnings, dares.
2. The second type of acts predicate some positive future act of S toward H, and in so doing enforce some pressure on H to accept or reject them, and possibly to incur a debt:
   a) offers
   b) promises
3. Those acts that predicate some desire of S toward H or H's goods, giving H reason to think that he may have to take action to protect the object of S's desire, or give it to S.

Those acts that are believed to threaten the positive-face want, by indicating (potentially) that the speaker does not care about the addressee's feelings, wants, etc. - that in some important respect he does not want H's wants (Brown & Levinson, 1999: 314):

1. S has a negative evaluation of some aspect of H's positive face
   a) expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations, insults
   b) contradictions or disagreements, challenges
2. The acts that show that S does not care about (or is indifferent to) H's positive face:
   a) expressions of violent (out-of-control) emotions
   b) irreverence, mention of taboo topics, including those that are inappropriate in the context
   c) bringing of bad news about H, or good news (boasting) about S
   d) raising of dangerously emotional or divisive topics, e.g., politics, race, religion, women's liberation
   e) blatant non-cooperation in an activity - e.g., disruptively interrupting H's talk, making non-sequiturs or showing non-attention
   f) use of address terms and other status-marked identifications in initial encounters

The culture in the United States is described as that where "impositions are thought of as small, social distance as no insuperable boundary to easy-going interaction, and relative power as never very great" (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 245), and it is considered as a positive politeness culture. This difference in the strategies between the cultures of the western and eastern societies, such as the USA and Japan may cause communication failure when the interlocutors use politeness strategies which are appropriate in their native culture but inappropriate in the other interlocutors' native culture (Yuka, 2009).

Ide (1989) claims that in English, 'politeness' and 'friendliness' are two concepts at the same level, but in Japanese, they are totally different from each other as the Japanese honorifics represent a system to express only politeness, and not friendliness. In a study by Ide, Hill, Carnes, Ogino, and Kawasaki (1992), American and Japanese college students give their own evaluations on 5 speech acts by using ten adjectives. One of the most interesting findings is that 'friendly' and 'polite' are quite close concepts for the American people but not for the Japanese people. Another example can be given from Wagner's study (2010) in which the basic strategies and sub-strategies used by members of the Cuernavaca speech community to apologize for a wide range of offences were identified and discussed. Both positive and negative politeness strategies within the apology acts were listed and the findings from this sample were compared with the findings of previously conducted studies on apologizing and politeness in other varieties of Spanish. Results from this investigation dispel Brown and Levinson's claim that negative politeness is the universally preferred approach for doing facework, and it is advocated that additional investigations of politeness strategies using

culturally sensitive models of interaction should be employed. In Turkey, there is also a growing interest in pragmatic studies (Atamturk & Atamturk, 2016; Aydin, 2013; Bayat, 2013; Tuncel, 2011) which maintain that Turkish speakers use more patterned drills and that IFIDs[1] are quite common among the users.

2. *THE STUDY*

2.1. *The aims and the method*

60 teacher trainees studying at the department of English language education participated in the study to see whether they have the same positive and negative face in the target language and mother tongue.

The participants were given a semi-structured interview where there were 4 situations (2 requests and 2 apologies) in four different social contexts (a close friend, a teacher, a stranger and a family member) in two languages. The first request was given in this way: Suppose you do not have a pen to write in class, how would you ask for it from

a. your close friend
b. your teacher
c. a person you are not familiar with
d. a family member?

The second request was asking about what time it was and the addressees were the same.

The first apology was about what to say when students were late to class and the second apology was about what to say when they broke a priceless item. The social contexts remained the same for all these situations.

2.2. *Results*

A corpus of 160 requests and 176 apologies was collected in the target language (English) and 181 requests and 211 apologies in Turkish.

The apologies offered by the participants were in relation to two events but eight situations:

    a) being late to a meeting and apologizing to a friend, a teacher, a family member and an unfamiliar person,
    b) breaking an invaluable object that belongs to a close friend, an unfamiliar student, a family member and a teacher.

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[1] IFIDs are elements or aspects of linguistic devices which indicate either that the utterance is made with a certain illocutionary force, or else that it constitutes the performance of a certain illocutionary act. In English, for example, the interrogative mood is supposed to indicate that the utterance is a question, the directive mood indicates that the utterance is a directive illocutionary act (an order to a request, etc.) https://ronaldojuwandi.wordpress.com/2017/01/06/introduction-to-pragmatics-and-speech-act/

Their responses included accepting the situation, explanations for not attending, avoiding disagreement with the host.

The corpus of apologies was coded using a modified version of the apology strategy typology outlined in the CCSARP Coding Manual for Apologies (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 289-294).

Table 1. Apologies

Strategy/Substrategy	Example	N Eng	%	N Tr	%
1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) a. Direct IFIDs: Performatives	I apologize/Özür dilerim/ Kusura bakma/ afedersin	8	**4.5**	56	**26.5**
b. Indirect IFIDs: Formulaic Expressions	I am sorry/üzgünüm	128	**72.7**	87	**41.2**
2.Taking Responsibility (+agency) a. Explicit Self-Blame	It was my fault/benim hatam değil	6	**3.4**	4	**1.9**
b. Lack of intent	It wasn't my intention/ kazaydı	11	**6.2**	21	**10**
c. Hearer justification	You have a right to be angry	-	**-**	-	**-**
d. Expression of embarrassment	I'm so embarrassed/çok üzgünüm	3	**1.7**	1	**0.47**
3. Explanation or account	There was a lot of traffic/ Çok trafik vardı	2	**1.13**	7	**3.3**
4. Offer of Repair	I'll pay for it. / Öderim	12	**6.8**	27	**12.8**
5. Promise of Forbearance	It won't happen again/bir daha olmayacak	3	**1.7**	6	2.8
6. No Taking Responsibility (-agency) a. Unplanned occurrence b. Speaker as victim c. 3rd person plural form, - referent	It fell /kendisi düştü It fell (on me) They made me wait	3 - -	**1.7** - -	- - -	- - -
7. Denial	I did not break it/ben kırmadım	-	**-**	2	**0.95**
Total		**176**	**100**	**211**	**100**

When apologizing in English for breaking an invaluable object, the participants used "I am sorry" more frequently, whereas in Turkish for most cases it was "pardon", a very informal way of apologizing showing lack of interest for friends and family members in the mother tongue[2]. Two participants even denied that they broke the item. When apologizing for being late, the participants preferred to apologize without giving any explanations for their being late and even played on the fact that they were late by adding "it is not late, is it?"

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[2] "pardon" is used in Turkish in the same spelling but with a different register type.

When the percentages are compared, it is obvious that pre-service teachers prefer to use indirect expressions in the target language (72.7 %) and this score is lower in the mother tongue (41.2 %). The direct expressions are fewer in the target language (4.5 %) than in the mother tongue (26.5 %). The fact that their use of indirect expressions in L2 is more frequent than in L1 shows that they prefer structured items in L2.

In relation to the requests, the participants were asked to produce how to request a pen in class from a close friend, an unfamiliar student, a teacher and the family. The other request was asking a close friend, an unfamiliar student, a teacher and a family member what time it was.

Coding framework for requests was based on the request strategy typology outlined in the CCSARP Coding Manual for Requests (Blum-Kulka et al.,1989: 289-294).

Table 2. Requests

Strategy/Substrategy	Example	N Eng	%	N Tr	%
I. Direct Expressions 1. Imperatives	Please lend me a pen/Kalem versene	3	**1.8**	5	**2.76**
2. Performatives	I'm requesting you to lend me a pen/ kalemini ödünç vermeni rica ediyorum.	2	**1.25**	1	**0.55**
3. Implicit performatives	I want to ask you to lend me a pen/ Kalem vermeni istiyorum.	-	**-**	4	**2.2**
4. Obligation Statements	You should lend me a pen.	-	**-**	-	**-**
5. Want Statements	I want you to lend me a pen.	-	**-**	-	**-**
Question	Kalem? / Pencil?	52	**32.5**	103	**56.9**
II. Indirect Expressions II.A.Conventional indirect 6. Preparatory questions	Could you lend me a pen?/ Kalem verebilir misin?	70	**43.75**	29	**16**
7. Suggestions	How about lending me a pen?/Kalem versene?	-	**-**	-	**-**
8. Permissions	May I borrow a pen?/Kalemini kullanabilir miyim?	21	**13.1**	34	**18.78**
9. Mitigated Preparatory	I'm wondering if you could lend me a pen/Kalem verir misin?	4	**2.5**	2	**1.1**
10. Mitigated Wants	I'd appreciate it if you could lend me a pen/Kalem verirsen sevinirim.	8	**5**	3	**1.65**
II.B.Non-conventional indirect 11. Strong hint	My pen just quit. I need a pen.	-	**-**	-	**-**
12. Mild hint	Can you guess what I want?	-	**-**	-	**-**
Total		**160**	**100**	**181**	**100**

In Turkish, the participants express a very high frequency of slang expressions such as "ya, be, kanka, pardon ya, uff, off…" even with the teachers and the people they are not familiar with. They ask questions directly such as

"saatin var mı? (do you have a watch?)" or "kalemin var mı) (do you have a pen?)". With interlocutors who are in social power, when speaking Turkish, the participants preferred using the strategy of asking for permission "may I" but with their classmates whether they knew them or not, they preferred "could I borrow….?". There is a new variation (kalem/pencil?) for employing request strategies in Turkish, which is not listed by Blum-Kulka. They ask for the target item directly without having any verb conjugations but with the rising intonation pattern. The prevalence of the use of the target item in requests indicates that there might be a cross-cultural systematic use and not all cultures fit in the same pattern of typology (Leech, 1980).

The analysis clearly reveals the idea that non-native speakers of English are unable to apply all variety of negative politeness strategies in English, at least the ones a native speaker would use in those contexts. They have no "implicit, obligation and want statements" of requests in English. Moreover, when pre service language teachers apply a negative politeness strategy in their mother tongue, they fail to diversify it and they use the same strategy in the majority of contexts such as "kalem versene, kalem verir misin?, kalem verirsen sevinirim", without taking into account the differences between the different situations, power-face and solidarity-face. Many items are not even used such as suggestion, strong hint, mild hint (can you guess what I want?). However, they seem to be more polite when they speak in the target language as they use indirect expressions more (up to 64 %), whereas the direct expressions reach 63 % in the mother tongue (see Table 2).

4. *CONCLUSION*

Brown and Levinson's list of politeness strategies (1987) mainly covers a great amount of types of interaction ranging from direct to indirect with a lot of subcategories. The examples they give consist mainly of single utterances which either have or presuppose clear communicative goals, such as asking to borrow a book or giving advice. Hence, in this study all the interactions are based on single statements following the footsteps of Brown and Levinson.

Pre-service teachers in this study utilize different strategies in requests and apologies in the target language (English) and the mother tongue (Turkish). The fact that they employ different strategies show that they learned such strategies in the process of acquiring languages and that they did not transfer the strategies from their mother tongue to the target language. Their preference in the target language is the use of more indirect strategies, whereas they have a penchant for direct strategy use in their mother tongue.

These results suggest that there are cultural pragmatic differences of negative and positive value in requests and apologies and speakers do not transfer their mother tongue pragmatic knowledge to the target language. The implication is that the necessary pragmatic knowledge about positive

and negative politeness structures/expressions/collocations comes through exposure and immersion (Holtgraves & Joong-nam, 1990; Juvandi, 2017; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Tannen, 1984; Usami, 1998). Hence, it is vital, when teaching the L2/LF, to exemplify and model them in order to achieve one of the main goals of language learning, that is to foster these strategies in the communication appropriately. Moreover, it is crucial to help students to come to grips with the way pragmatic principles operate in other cultures, urge them to look for the different pragmatic or discoursal norms which may underlie national and ethnic stereotyping, help them overcome simplistic and ungenerous interpretations of people whose linguistic behaviour is different from their own.

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MEĐUJEZIČNA PRAGMATIČKA STUDIJA O STRATEGIJAMA ULJUDNOSTI U TURSKOM I ENGLESKOM

Modeli uljudnosti temelje se na pojmu "lica". "Lice" je „nešto u što se emocionalo ulaže i što se može izgubiti, zadržati ili poboljšati te mu se u interakciji stalno mora posvećivati" (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 66). "Lice" se odnosi na dva temeljna htijenja: da budemo priznati i prihvaćeni od drugih (pozitivno lice) i da nam drugi ne onemogućavaju vlastite radnje (negativno lice). Brown i Levinsonov Model uljudnosti (engl. Politness Model) gleda na isprike kao na "negativne strategije uljudnosti na način da one prije izražavaju poštovanje, popustljivost i distancu nego prijateljstvo i uključenost. Negativna se uljudnost temelji na izbjegavanju, izravnoj strategiji suzdržavanja i obuzdavanja" (Wagner, 2004:23). S druge strane, zahtjevi se smatraju pozitivnom strategijom, budući da svaki govornik ima potrebu da ga drugi cijene i da osjeća da ga nitko ne sprječava u nečemu (Renkema, 1999).

Poznaju li neizvorni govornici te strategije i znaju li ih primijeniti u govoru? U kojoj su mjeri neizvorni govornici svjesni jezičnih ostvarenja zahtjeva i isprika? Da bi se otkrilo imaju li jezični obrasci za isprike i zahtjeve isto lice u materinskom i stranom jeziku govornika, provedeni su polustrukturirani intervjui sa 60 budućih nastavnika engleskog jezika kojima je turski prvi jezik. Polazeći od Brown i Levinsonova (1987.) teorijskog okvira uljudnosti i činova koji prijete licu, provedeno je etnografsko istraživanje isprika i zahtjeva koji se prirodno pojavljuju. U istraživanju se od sudionika tražilo da odgovore na situacije u kojima su se trebali ispričati ili su trebali nešto zahtijevati na turskom, svom materinskom jeziku, i engleskom koji im je strani jezik. Nakon toga su se popisale strategije uljudnosti kojima su se koristili sveučilišni studenti u turskom i engleskom jeziku te analizirale s primarnim ciljem utvrđivanja postojanja prijenosa iz sudionikova prvog u drugi jezik.

Ključne riječi: *isprika, zahtjev, negativno lice, pozitivno lice, strategije uljudnosti*