

We speak language not only to transmit information, but also to establish the appropriate interactional relationship between the speaker, the hearer, a bystander, and the referent. In speaking, we think of the content of what is to be conveyed, and at the same time of the linguistic expressions that will make the utterance appropriate to the given situational context. Appropriate speech establishes smooth communication, on the one hand through the speaker's use of intentional strategies to allow his utterances to be received favorably by the addressee and on the other by the speaker's expression of the expected and prescribed norms of speech. The language use associated with smooth communication is what is here referred to as linguistic politeness.

A number of papers bearing on the topic of linguistic politeness have been published in the last fifteen years. Following the pioneering studies of linguistic politeness by Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), and Leech (1983), there has been a surge of interest in this area of pragmatics. Although these three works were developed independently, they nevertheless share the common goal of investigating universal principles of language use. They presume some principles which control the verbal strategies the speaker chooses. The principles are formulated so as to categorize verbal strategies according to the speaker's intention of achieving smooth communication. The strategies are realized for example, in 'give options' (by Lakoff), 'don't coerce H (the hearer)' (by Brown and Levinson) and 'minimize cost of other' (by Leech). These points were made, to some extent, in reference to Grice's maxims of conversation (Grice 1975) and Searle's speech act theory (Searle 1968). Grice and Searle, in turn, based their work on Western philosophical traditions.

Interest in linguistic politeness was, of course, in evidence before these pathbreaking studies were published. Such issues as the choice of pronouns in European languages and terms of address (Brown and Gilman 1960, Brown

and Ford 1961) are in fact discussions of linguistic politeness. Honorific systems elaborated in some non-Western languages also fall into the area of linguistic politeness, since they can be understood as the grammaticalization of politeness. The analyses and descriptions of honorific systems give us a wealth of examples of how specific linguistic forms are chosen according to the social rules of politeness in each society (Geertz 1960, Martin 1964, Harada 1976, Sohn 1981, Ide 1982, Koshal 1987. Beside these, there is a large body of work in Japanese, Korean and other languages.). The use of honorific systems is basically motivated in the same way as the choice of pronouns and address terms, for it is primarily a matter of the choice among linguistic forms. The only difference is that the forms one is choosing between are more complicated than pronouns and address terms. The linguistic politeness realized by the choices of such linguistic forms as honorifics, pronouns, and address terms demonstrates the speaker's 'sense of place' in the interactional setting in order that appropriate smooth communication be achieved.

Given the existence of Western and non-Western traditions in the study of linguistic politeness, we might well consider how they are related in the context of hypothetical universals of linguistic politeness. If such universals of linguistic politeness exist, how can we account for the differences in different languages, and how might we describe the interrelationship between these two different traditions of approaches?

It is in this context that this special issue on linguistic politeness must be seen. Our goal is to combine in one issue papers which will enable all of us concerned with this topic to perceive the diversity of perspectives, and the diversity of problems that are of interest to scholars in pragmatics and sociolinguistics.

This collection will be the first in a series of special issues on this topic. The papers assembled demonstrate a variety of descriptive approaches to the issue. Jucker examines Grice's cooperative principle and Leech's politeness principle in the light of Sperber and Wilson's principle of relevance, and argues that the shortcomings of the former two may be balanced by the strengths of the latter. He further discusses and clarifies some of the theoretical issues involved in Brown and Levinson's framework with reference to Leech's theory and Sperber and Wilson's theory. Haverkate proposes looking at linguistic politeness from the standpoint of the typological distinction between functional and formal strategies. These are further subdivided into several categories according to the types of speech acts at various levels. Berk-Seligson's empirical work from legal discourse deals with the listener's subjective evaluation of politeness markers in witnesses' speech. Her work

shows the relevance of linguistic politeness to the studies of speech level and its social evaluation as well as discourse analysis. Mufwene describes and analyzes the use of kinship terms in Kituba, a Bantu-based creole spoken in Zaire and the Republic of the Congo. His analysis of kinship terms used as honorifics and terms of endearment provides evidence for some of the general questions of sociolinguistics and pragmatics such as the relationship between the variables of deference, formality, and social distance.

Our collection contrasts with an earlier collection (Walters 1981), which contained papers dealing only with politeness phenomena as they occur within the limited scope of Western languages and in Western theoretical terms. In this special issue we stake out a broader territory in aspects of linguistic politeness, in approaches, and in the languages themselves. The key point to be raised in this series of special issues is that linguistic politeness is an exceedingly diverse and complex phenomenon. Our pursuit of the universals of linguistic politeness must contribute to our inquiry into the basic notion of our knowledge of language use. For this reason it is especially important that our perspective be broadened beyond the Western linguistic tradition.

We have only begun. It is hoped that forthcoming special issues in this series will continue to contribute to our understanding of questions such as what 'politeness' is in various cultures, whether it is truly possible to hypothesize a uniform concept of politeness, and what social and cultural variables are relevant in linguistic politeness. This series of special issues will lead us toward a broader perspective, because of the contributors' different orientations and academic traditions.

Lastly, it must be noted that this enterprise would not have been possible without the dedication of a linguist and editor-in-chief who believes that the role of international academic journals is to make the world smaller by providing a vehicle through which scholars of the world may communicate. This editor-in-chief has served as a go-between for such researchers in Switzerland and in Japan, who had doubts about earlier works on the universals of linguistic politeness. Her work has given us new hope that an enlarged perspective might emerge from a broader exchange of views.

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*Abstract*

*Grice's cooperative principle and Leech's politeness principle are both not general enough in their applicability and not restricted enough in their methodology. Sperber and Wilson's principle of relevance subsumes the cooperative principle. This paper argues that it also subsumes the politeness principle. Utterances make manifest an infinite set of assumptions, some of them strongly, others only weakly. As there is no difference between content level assumptions and relationship level assumptions, relevance theory can account for both. Whether utterances are polite or not is assessed on the basis of Brown and Levinson's weightiness formula. Relevance theory explains why some assumptions are made more or less manifest by a given utterance, but it does not make any claims as to whether polite or impolite behavior is more likely.*

When Grice first formulated his cooperative principle, he split it up into the four Kantian maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner. These maxims were further subdivided into a total of nine submaxims. He recognized that there were probably other maxims which are observed in conversations, maxims of esthetics or of socially and morally acceptable behavior, but he argued that the four maxims of his cooperative principle were particularly important for the purpose of talk exchanges (Grice 1975: 47).

Since the publication of his theory in the two articles 'Logic and conversation' and 'Further notes on logic and conversation' (Grice 1975, 1979), one of the key issues in this field has been the question of whether its further refinement would indeed lead to additional maxims, as he predicted, or rather to a reduction of the number of maxims, or whether the number of maxims should remain invariant.