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THE COURTESY CALL: STUDY ON POLITENESS OF FICTION CHARACTERS

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Abstract
This research is an attempt to study politeness issues based on utterances of Osamu Dazai's short story characters entitled "The courtesy Call", the English translation from Japanese "Shinyu Kokan" by Ivan Morris. By using politeness maxim theory proposed by Leech, it is found that the antagonist often violates 6 politeness maxims which tend to obey by the protagonist and his wife. The violation and the obedience of politeness maxims constitute a reflection of character differences intended by the writer. Utterances expressed by Fiction's characters are a rich source to exploit for studying politeness for pragmatic studies as their creation is based on careful observations of the author toward the world realities.

Keywords: politeness, maxim, and fiction

Introduction

Matter factually, speech act constitutes one of the most important aspects of the study of pragmatics. In a line with this statement, Leech (1983, 14), in trying to describe context which he called "speech situation", proposes that every utterance produced by the speakers is a product of verbal act. Accordingly, human beings can perform various kinds of speech acts in order to communicate their, thoughts, ideas, and emotions with other interlocutors. From those unlimited number of speech acts, experts then classify them into five big categories, those are representative, directive, expressive, commisive, and declaration (Leech, 1983, 105-106; Dardjowidjojo, 2003. 101-107). Meanwhile, Searle added with one more category, i.e question (Searle, 1976, 1-24; Parker and Riley, 2014, 32-33). Each speech act category can also be expressed through various strategies, the choice of each is determined by various sociopragmatic factors which in many cases is not always easy to explain. No matter what kind of strategy the speaker chooses, the choice is mostly underlined by his/her intention to create a comfortable speech situation to whom (s)he communicates with. For achieving speech convenience, all conversation participants should be cooperative and polite to one another (Allan, 1986, 10-12). Therefore, politeness matter plays a very central role in any communicative interlocution. However, studies on politeness

and mainly impoliteness in language use are not always easy to carry out. Researchers often face a lot of difficulties to find primary materials that can authentically describe the use of impoliteness between two or more conversants. The concrete situations of people using language impolite utterances, such as usually found when they quarrel with each other, express indecent or swearing expressions are very difficult to gather. For overcoming all these conditions, the politeness study in this paper will try to use data that clearly, though imaginatively, describe such speech situations in literary work. This kind of data is considered quite representative to describe the situations because in creating their works, fiction writers usually have carried out long and careful observations toward any life reality for enable them describing it vividly in their works.

The use of imaginative works in linguistic studies has been done by many researchers, such as Kramer (Wardaugh, 1986, 308-309) in order to investigate the differences between male and female languages. Basing his research on cartoon characters found in The New Yorker magazine published between February 17 and May 12, 1973, he finds that in spite of the choice of conversation topics, in which men choose ones related to business, politics, legal issues, taxes, and sports, and women rather do one's concern with social life, books, food and drink, life troubles, and lifestyle, men and women languages are also clearly shown in their various linguistic habits, such as in the frequency use of swearing words, empty adjectives, and the bluntness of the utterances. Men's languages are more forceful, use more indecent words, and blunter than those of women. Basing his research paper on the negative and positive theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson, Wijana (2014, 197-219) tries to describe the politeness differences of utterance expressed by the protagonist and antagonist characters in Oka Rusmini's short story entitled "Harga Seorang Perempuan" (Woman Dignity). In this paper I will try to describe with a different theory, the politeness differences of expressions of protagonist and antagonist characters of short story entitled The Courtesy Call written by Javanese writer Osamu Dazai. The politeness theory I use to approach is one proposed by Leech (1983, 132-133).

Theoretical Framework

Politeness, according to Folley (2001, 270), is a buttery of social skills whose goal is to ensure everyone feels affirmed in social interaction. To Achieve this mutual satisfaction, different from Brown & Levinson (1987) which based their theory on positive and negative face-saving, Leech (1983, 132-133) proposes his politeness theory based on cost and benefit scale of self and other. According to this theory, politeness in verbal interaction can be attained by maximizing and minimalizing cost and benefit of self (addreser) and other (adressee) of six conversational maxims, i.e tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and symphaty maxim. For each maxims, every speech participant should obey these following rules:

1. Tact maxim: Every participant must minimize the cost to others, and maximize the benefit of others.
2. Generosity maxim: Every participant must minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self.

3. Approbation maxim: Every participant must minimize the dispraise of others and maximize prise of others.
4. Modesty maxim: Every participant must minimize prise to self and maximize dispraise to self.
5. Agreement maxim: Every participant must minimize disagreement and maximize agreement between self and other.
6. Sympathy maxim: Every participant must minimize antiphaty and maximize symphaty between self and other.

From the six rules outlined above, it can be stated that the first four maxims (tact, generosity, approbation, and modesty maxim) are bipolar scaled maxims, while the rest (agreement and sympathy maxim) are unipolar scaled maxims. To enable bipolar scaled maxims to work properly in order to achieve polite utterances, every participant should apply a pragmatic paradox. If one participant try to maximize the benefit of others, the addressee (person) whom s/he speaks with must also paradoxically minimize the benefit or maximize the cost of him/herself. If one participant try to maximize the prise of others, the addressee (person) whom he/she communicates to, should also minimize the praise or maximize the dispraise of him/herself. For example, I will try to describe this phenomenon by using a dialog between the two characters Santiago (the old man) and the boy found in Ernest Hemingway "The Old Man and The Sea" (1) below":

(1) + "What do you have to eat?" the boy asked.
- " A pot of yellow rice with fish, Do you want some?"
+ " No, I will eat at home. Do you want me to make the fire?
- **"**No I will make it later on. Or I may eat the rice cold."
+ **"**May I take the cast net?"
- "Of course**"**

There was no cast net and the boy remembered when they had sold it. But they went through this fiction every day. There was no pot of yellow rice and fish and the boy knew this too (page 16).

To maintain the mutual respect that has been tied in between the old man and the boy, both characters always try to maximize the benefit and minimize the cost of others as outlined by the first (tact) and the second (approbation) maxim. The old man offers something to the boy, and in turn, the boy politely refuses the offer. Conversely, when the boy offers some help to take the cast net using the polite question "*May I take the cast net*?", the old man gives him permission. With regard to adherence of the third (approbation) and forth maxim, Quoting Miller (1967, 289-290) Leech exemplifies the following (2):

(2) + My what a splendid garden you have here the lawn is so nice and big, it's certainly wonderful, isn't it.
- Oh, no, not at all, we don't take care of it at all anymore, so it simply doesn't always look as nice as we would like it to.
+ Oh no, I don't think so at all- but since such a big garden, of course, it must be quite a tremendous task to take care of it all by your self; but

> even so, you certainly do manage to make it look nice all the time: it certainly is nice and pretty any time one sees it.
- No, I am afraid, not at all.

In (2) it is clearly shown that (+) always tries to maximize the praise in admiring the beauty of the interlocutor's garden. Meanwhile, the garden's owner (-) paradoxically responds it by mitigating such admiration (see also Wijana, 2005, 6-7). Based on this politeness theory, it can be hypothesized that in order to strengthen the characterization of the protagonist and antagonist of fiction, the obedience and disobedience of politeness maxims are not difficult to find. The protagonists in order to show good manners, tend to obey the politeness maxims, but the antagonists incline to flout them. These matters are explicitly described in "The Courtesy Call".

Synopsis

"The Courtesy Call", the title of Dazai's short story ironically refers to the informal and annoying visit of two friends who have not met for years with each other. The host (Osamu, protagonist) who acts as a protagonist living with his wife receives a guest (the antagonist), his playmate in primary school. Their meeting is full of boasting and empty impolite talks of the antagonist concerning many things about his life in Tokyo. No matter how disgusting and impolite the guest is, the hosts (Osamu and his wife) must serve him with full of their good manner. Everything which concerns the impoliteness of the guest and politeness of the hosts in association with the obedience and violation Leech's politeness theory will be described in the following sections.

The Antagonist's Verbal Acts

The bad or wicked behavior of the antagonist is described by Osamu's narration in the opening of the short story as quoted below in which the guest without any adequate evidence always tries to slender and insult the protagonist's life in Tokyo.

> "Until my death, I shall not forget the man who came to my house that afternoon last September.[.....]. For me, these men foretold a new species of humanity. During my years in Tokyo, I had frequented the lowest class of drinking house and mixed with some quite appealing rouges. But this man was in a category all his own: he was far and the way the most disagreeable, the most loathsome I had ever met; there was not a jot of goodness in him (page 467)"

After years of separation, there would be no intimacy left between the antagonist and protagonist, and this condition obliges both hands to respect each other. In fact, because of his bad character, the antagonist often violates Leech's tact and generosity maxim. He frequently forces or imposes the protagonist for the benefit of himself. In fact, as stated by Fraser (1990), to achieve politeness, every speaker should not impose, give options, and always make the interlocutor feel good (See also Watts, Ide & Ehlich, 1988, 5). For this matter see the imposition

done by the antagonist in forcing Osamu to take some drink, and asking Osamu to call his wife to pour the drink in spite of some indecent expressions, such as *little woman*, *damned stingy,* and *your stinginess,* and *book worm* he uses to insult the protagonist and his wife.

(3) "Come on" he said, "you needn't look as if you'd never heard of the stuff. Theey tell me you've always got a good supply put away. Let's have a little drink together! Call the missus! She can pour for us" (page 469)

(4) Protagonist: I dont have any sake," I said. "I hope you won't some whisky."
Antagonist: "It'll do," he said. But I want your little woman to pour the stuff."
Protagonist: I am sorry but my wife isn't at home," I said.
Antagonist: Of course she'is at home", he said. "Tell her to come and do the pouring" (page 470).

(5) Good gracious, madam, he said, "you shouldn't heve gone to all that trouble. I don't want anything to eat. I come here to drink. But I want you to do the pouring from now on. This husband of yours is too damned stingy for my liking."

(6) Protagonist: You can have this bottle," I said handing it to him.
Antagonist: "Hey, hey", he said. "None of that! I have enough of your stingeness for one day. You've still got another full bottle stored away in that cupboard, haven't you? Let me have it! (page 481)"

Although it is undeniable that sometimes the antagonist constructs utterances which look like obeying tact and generosity maxims, but those utterances are implicatively lowering or offending the protagonist's dignity. For example, in (7) and (8) the antagonist's offers treat the protagonist as a very poor person despite his boasting strategies to maximize the prise of himself and maximize the dispraise of others as manifestations of violation of approbation and modesty maxims.

(7) "If you are ever short of food, you can come to my farm too and I will give you whatever you need. Iam not the sort of fellow who'd drink a man's liquor for nothing. I'll repay you-down to the last penny. We farmers are grateful folk. (page 474)"

(8) "I was just telling Osamu here that if you ever need any food, be sure to come round to my place. I've got plenty of everything: potatoes, vegetables, rice, eggs, chikens. What about some horse meat? I'm a great expert at stripping horsehides, you know. Come a long tomorrow and I'll go out tomorrow morning a whole horse's leg to take home. Do you like pheasant? Of course you do! Well. I'm the most famous famous shot in these parts. (page 476)"

The other examples of approbation and modesty flouting are (9) and (10) below:

(9) Protagonist: "It was very good of you to support my brother," I said with a sardonic smile.
Antagonist: "Don't get me wrong", he said. "I did it out of common humanity-not because I thought he was any good. Your family may have got ahead in the world now, but a couple of generations ago they, common oil sellers. Did you know that. I've been doing a bit of research. Your family use to sell cans of oil and if anyone bought half a pint or more, they gave him a piece of toffee as a premium."

(10) Antagonist: "I my self come from a really old family, though, he continued. "My ancestors move to this village hundred of years ago from Kyoto."

Protagonist: "Really? In that case, I expect you are noble lineage."

Antagonist: "You may not be far wrong," he said wit a nasal laugh. "Of course, you wouldn't think it to see me in this clothes. But both my brothers went to university. The older one's made quite a name for himself in the government. You've probably seen his name in the papers."

Protagonist: "Yes, of course," I said (page 473-474).

In (9) the antagonist dispraises the protagonist's ancestors, while in (10) he praises his own. And, the following (11) is the antagonist insult of Osamu's wife, and the antagonist's praise to his own and family:

(11) Protagonist: "She's no good!" he shouted, as soon as my wife had left the room."
Antagonist: "Your missus is no damned good, I tell you! Now take my old woman, for instance. There's a real wife for you! We've got six lovely kids and we're as happy a family as you'll find anywhere in these parts. Ask anyone in the village if you don't believe me." ...Your missus she can make a fool of me by walking out like that. Well, I'm going to bring her right back to say she'is sorry? In the bed room, I expect. I'll go and drag her out of her bedroom (page 480)."

The antagonist is also shown several times maximizing disagreement with the protagonist. In (12) the antagonist refuses that he had already been separated from the protagonist *for years*, but for him, it was already *for decades.* In fact, these to terms according to the host is not significantly different, and useless to debate. In (13) the protagonist tries to mitigate his disagreement because he doubted it for unable to recall the fight events, but it is rudely rejected by the antagonist.

(12) Antagonist: "Well, well," he said loudly, "It 's been a long time, hasn't it?"
Protagonist: "Yes years and years."
Antagonist: "Years?", he shouted. "Decade, you mean! It mus be over twenty years since I last saw you. I heard some time a go that you'd to move to our village but I've been far too busy on the farm to call (page 468)."

(13) Antagonist: "D'you remember how we used to fight at school?" he said, starting a new tack. "We were always fighting, you and me."
Protagonist: "Were we really?"
Antagonist: Were we really, indeed!" he said, mimicking my intonation. "Of course we were. I've got a scar at the back of my hand to remind me. You gave me this scar (page 468) "

Finally, the antagonist effort to always minimize sympathy to his old friend constitutes evidence of his impolite behavior. In (14) instead of expressing condolence to the interlocutor about the bombing the protagonist experienced in the wartime, he forced to take the blanket of the protagonist's wife. Consider the following conversation.

(14) Antagonist: "Where do you life in Tokyo?"
Protagonist: "I lost my house in the war."
Antagonist: "So, you were bombed out, were you?" That's the first I've heard of it. Well in that case you must have got that special allocation of a blanket that they gave each family of evacuees. [...] Give me the blanket . It's meant to be quite good wool. My wife can make me a jumper with it. I suppose you think it's funny of me to ask you for the blanket like this. But that's the way I do things. If I want something, just ask for it (page 477).

The antagonist seems not knowing how precious is the blanket for the protagonist's family. See the Osamu's narration (15) below:

(15)I still stared at him blankly. This wool blanket, which we had been given as a sort of consolation prize, seem to be my wife's most treasured possesions. When our house was bombed and we moved to the country with our children, like family crabs whose shells have been smashed and who crawl naked and helpless across a hostile beach, she had kept the blanket constantly in sight, as though it were some sort of talisman. The man who now faced me could never know how a family felt who had lost their house in the war, or how close to commiting mass suicide such families often were (page 477).

The Protagonist's Verbal Acts

As the host, Osamu always shows his politeness by continuously respect his old friend, Hirata. No matter how sarcastic the guest insulting him, he keeps trying to contain his feeling for the sake of the guest's comfort. For example, in (16) he pretends for not forgetting the friend, and invite him respectedly to come in.

(16)Antagonist: Don't say you've forgotten me! I'm Hirata your old friend from primary school."
From the dim recesses of my memory there emerged some vague recollection of the face. We may indeed have known each other in scholl, but as for being old friend I am not so sure.
Protagonist: "Of course I remember you," I said with a great show of urbanity. "Do come in, Mr. Hirata (:page 468).

Being aware of his position as a new resident, he did not dare to ask the guest to leave, instead, he offers some fruit to him. Consider (17) below:

(17) I suddenly wanted to ask him to leave. Yet the fact was that I did not dare to. Our position in this village was far from secure and I could not risk offending someone who appeared to be an old and well established inhabitant. Besides, I was afraid that if I asked him to go, he might think that I looked down on him for being an educated farmer. I went to the living room and come back with a plate of fruit.

"Have a pear", I said. "It'll do you good (page 472)."

Osamu's Wife Verbal Act

Osamu's wife takes the smallest part of this short story. There only two verbal acts expressed by this character. One when she was introduced to the guest (18), and the other when she asked permission to leave the guest and her husband because her baby was crying (19). All of her utterances and gestures are intended to please and respect the guest and their reunion.

(18)Protagonist: "Let me Introduce Mr. Hirata," I said, "my old friend from primary school. We were always fig hting when we were kids. He's got mark on the back of his hand where I scratched him. To day he's come to get his revenge." Protagonist's wife: How terrifying!, she said, laughing. Anyhow, Iam glad to meet you." She bowed in his direction (page 476)."

(19) My wife laughed good-naturedly and stood up. "I am afraid I'll have to leave you," she said. "I hear the baby crying (page 480)."

Conclusion

In line with the language function for creating harmony between speech participants, politeness and impoliteness are important topics discussed in the study of pragmatics. However, the study on them is often not easy to carry out. The researchers are often faced with the difficulties of data recording which representatively describe politeness and moreover impoliteness locution of human language use. As such, this paper recommends the use of utterances expressed by imaginative characters abundantly found in various kinds of fiction, such as cartoons, novels, short stories and the like. The writers of such works are commonly based their creations on careful observations for enabling them to mimic as close as to the world realities.

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