

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11175381>

COHESION AND PRAGMATICS: INVESTIGATING (IM)POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Khayrieva Madina Ilhomovna

a teacher at the Department of Translation Theory and Practice, Samarkand State
Institute of Foreign Languages, Uzbekistan

Akhmedova Shakhnoza Farkhod qizi

a student of MA program of Comparative Linguistics, Linguistic Translation Studies,
Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This study found that '(im)politeness' is not a stable notion. Interactions are constantly renegotiated based on contextual cues. The purposes and (im)politeness meanings of speech acts vary depending on the situation. Interactants' assessments of an act might be influenced by previous interactions, including norms interpersonal relationships, and background knowledge. The verbal meaning of an act may differ from its context-specific meaning. This study reveals that computer-mediated paralanguages, such as emoticons and written laughing, have a significant role in determining (im)politeness and building intercultural understanding in emails.

The article concludes with suggestions for using email in language teaching and learning. Email correspondences with individuals from diverse backgrounds can help language learners build pragmatic language skills and intercultural understanding. This thesis recommends additional study on the pragmatic functions of paralinguistic cues in computer-mediated communication.

Keywords:*(im)politeness, verbal meaning, Email correspondences, computer-mediated communication, speech acts, positive politeness tactics, intercultural communication via computer networks.*

INTRODUCTION

The Internet has enabled global communication and interaction. Computer-mediated communication has overcome geographical and time barriers, allowing people from other nations to engage and converse with little or no difficulty. Computer-mediated communication has had a tremendous impact on the modern world. Online chat rooms, email, and online games connect people from all over the world for friendship, commerce, and entertainment. Online activities have become an integral part of our daily lives.

This study examines how interactants negotiate meaning using speech acts and (im)politeness techniques in their email correspondence. The discursive study of meaning negotiation considers topics, conventions, relationships, backgrounds, and interrelationships among interactants. This thesis is interdisciplinary, combining ethnography, intercultural communication, and computer-mediated communication with speech act and politeness theory to analyze language and discourse.

Speech acts are regarded as the fundamental unit of study into a communication. The linguistic analysis of speech acts may provide opportunities for patterns, if any, to emerge during encounters. More crucially, it is envisaged that by studying the speech acts performed in a specific environment, more contextualised explanations of the functions of speech acts would be supplied. The contextualised comprehension of speech acts may disclose language function(s) in a specific context. The answer to this question may thus help to clarify the aspects that can impact or even change the purpose of speech acts. Second, since participants will engage on email, it's important to consider the computer-mediated characteristics of email that impact the writer's language performance. Email conversation differs from face-to-face interactions as it lacks nonverbal clues such as facial expression, tone, and gestures. Thus, I'm curious about how the interactants negotiate their (im)politeness meanings with one another in their email conversations. I'd like to learn about the computer-mediated aspects used in email conversations to foster international understanding.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

This study examines speech acts in email correspondence, taking into account aspects that influence meaning creation (despite limitations of classic studies). Examining the linguistic and pragmatic components of email language uncovers hidden meanings and the circumstances that drove interactions. Hymes (1974) emphasizes the need for contextualized examinations of speech activities. Speech act theory could benefit from considering contextual aspects such cultural values, contexts, and interaction sequences. According to Hymes, the interplay of language and social life should consider the various relationships between linguistic means and social meaning. Hymes suggests that describing the relationships within a community or personal repertoire requires an anthropological and linguistic approach, viewing ways of speaking as one of the community's symbolic forms. According to Hymes, 'speech' encompasses more than just language performance; it also discloses social norms, values, and other aspects of the speech event.

Although Lakoff has not specifically defined what she considers 'politeness' to be, the recommended principles of her politeness model suggest that 'be polite' means 'think what is good for others and avoid doing those things may be destructive to others'. Brown (1976) criticizes Lakoff's study of politeness for its rigidity in defining what defines politeness. Tannen (1984) contends that Lakoff's politeness rules cannot adequately explain the complicated politeness phenomena, particularly since some of the categories employed in the politeness rules are not well defined. Watts categorizes pragmatic norms as politeness rules.

Brown and Levinson proposed the most widely known politeness theory. They were the first to formalize the politeness theory based on their observations of the commonalities in linguistic techniques utilized by persons from various language backgrounds. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is based on the concept of face. They think that politeness is motivated by one's face. Goffman's (1967) foundational study of 'face' has had a special influence on their civility. To comprehend the use of

'face' in Brown & Levinson's politeness theory, a brief overview of Erving Goffman's concept of face work is necessary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Positive politeness tactics aim to reduce distance between speakers by displaying kindness. The following strategies are used: notice, exaggeration, intensified interest, in-group identity markers, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, assuming common ground, jokes, concern for the hearer's wants, promises, optimism, including the hearer in the activity, giving reasons, hedging, assuming reciprocity, and offering sympathy. Some instances are provided below.

Attending to the listener:

"You must be exhausted."

"Why don't you take some rest?"

Avoiding disagreements:

A: *"you must be angry about this."*

B: *"Yes, um, not that angry but certainly not very happy about it."*

Joke:

"Let me tackle the steak first and then I can go on to deal with the ice cream."

Hedge an opinion:

"It's kind of hard for me to do."

Negative politeness suggests that your discourse may be imposing or intrusive to the listener. Thus, measures are used to save the other's face. According to Brown and Levinson, negative politeness is closest to what individuals mean when they say they are nice. Negative politeness strategies include being indirect, questioning, pessimistic, limiting imposition, showing deference, apologizing, impersonalizing, describing the threatening conduct as a general rule, nominalizing, and incurring a debt.

For example:

Indirect:

"It's quite cold in here." (You indirectly hope that the listener will close the window or switch on the heat for you.)

Minimize the imposition by asking,

"Could I borrow your notebook?"

Apologising: *"I am sorry but I don't think I can attend your wedding".*

According to Sproull & Kiesler (1986), computer-mediated communication (CMC) lacks social context clues such as the physical surroundings and nonverbal behaviors, unlike face-to-face communication (FTF). Ma (1996) claims that CMC "has changed the traditional view of communication environments" (p.175). Email communication lacks the ability to express nonverbal cues, but there are alternative methods available. Some scholars suggest that writers can employ different themes, punctuation marks, and words as relationship cues to convey meaning. Emotic icons, also described as "electronic paralanguage" by other researchers (Metz, 1994; Gumperz, 1990), play a significant role.

Emoticons are widely used to emphasise written material.

For example:

"I am just kidding. Hehehe~";

"This is funny. Hahaha!";

"I am getting married. XD", etc.

Advancements in technology, such as email, instant messaging, the Bulletin Board System (BBS), and web conferences, have made it possible for individuals worldwide to communicate and share ideas anytime, anywhere. A cartoon in *The New Yorker* depicted a dog sitting in front of a computer, stating, "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog". This cartoon, intended as a joke, represents the Internet's obscurity, which prevents users' identities and backgrounds from being easily identified. This research focuses on email communication between individuals from diverse national origins, making this trait especially relevant. Online interactions should be analyzed independently, without visual aids. Ma notes that "[i]ntercultural communication via computer networks, however, seems to have modified, if not drastically changed, some previously identified characteristics of FTF intercultural communication" (Ma, 1996:174).

Virtual interactions have altered people's perceptions of space, time, and physical contact.

Email, or electronic mail, is a computer-based communication tool between chosen receivers. Asynchronous communication allows writers to compose and edit their messages before transmitting them to receivers. The email can be sent to one or several recipients. Recipients of emails can choose to respond to specific or all persons on their list. Email can serve multiple social roles, like sending holiday greetings, scheduling business meetings, and connecting with new people, despite its text-based format. The understanding of each email is negotiated between the sender and the recipient. Email's interactive nature resembles face-to-face conversation, but it remains asynchronous, allowing writers to compose, revise, and send at their convenience.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the two levels of analysis were summarized based on relevant elements to analyze the communication event. The conversation covers topics such as gender, interpersonal relationships, civility, email features, and other email-related aspects. Contextual factors can lead to (mis)understandings about what constitutes (im)polite behavior during interactions. Examining the factors that drive meaning formation in emails can provide a more comprehensive picture of how individuals from diverse backgrounds negotiate mutual understanding.

REFERENCES:

1. Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2. Gumperz, J.J. (1990). Contextualization and Understanding. In: A. Duranti and C. Goodwin (eds.), *Rethinking Context*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
3. Hymes, D. (1974c). The Ethnography of Speaking. In B. Blount (Ed.) *Language, Culture and Society*. Mass.: Winthrop, Cambridge. 189-223.
4. Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. London: Cambridge University Press.
5. Ma, R. (1996). Computer-mediated conversations as a new dimension of intercultural communication between East Asian and North American college students. In S.C. Herring (Ed.), *Computer-Mediated Communication: Linguistic, Social, and Cross- Cultural Perspectives* (pp. 173-185). Amsterda
6. Khayrieva M.I. THE PROBLEM OF INTERFERENCE IN LEARNING AND TEACHING LANGUAGES // *Web of Teachers: Inderscience Research* 1 (8), 126
7. Sproull, L, & Kiesler, S. (1991). *Connections: New ways of working in the networked organizations*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
8. Metz, M. J. (1994). *Computer-Mediated Communication: Literature Review Of A New Context*.