

Politeness

Speech
accommodation

Speech accommodation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT-JIJTSpF0>

Speech accommodation

You change the way you speak depending on who you are talking to.

Speech accommodation

Thanks for your last letter and the subsequent postcards from exotic resorts. We were all green with envy over your trip to Rio with all expenses paid! How do you get to be so lucky!

Thank you very much for the letter you sent me. It was beautifully written and I enjoyed reading it. I liked the postcards you sent me from your holidays too. What a lovely time you had swimming and surfing. I wished I was there too.

(from p.241 of the textbook)

Speech accommodation

念願の運動会もこのように晴天にめぐまれて、本当に感謝でいっぱいでございます。日頃、みなさまにはたいへんご協力いただきまして、えー、

今日は、何でしょう？ そうです。みんな楽しみにしていました運動会を、今からはじめます。いっしょうけんめい、がんばりますか？ うーん、よし。

(Excerpt from 東 (1997) 社会言語学入門 p.112)

Extreme cases of speech accommodation

Foreigner talk

You change the way you speak when (you believe) you are talking to someone who is not good at the language.

Baby talk / Motherese

Politeness

What is politeness? Why do we need to be polite?

Social norm?

Respect to others?

Social norm?

In some societies like Aboriginal societies in Australia, it is automatically determined by kinship etc. whether you are in an *avoidance relationship* or in a *joking relationship* with someone

Most modern societies are more flexible about relationship, but we have distinctions between friends and strangers or superiors, too

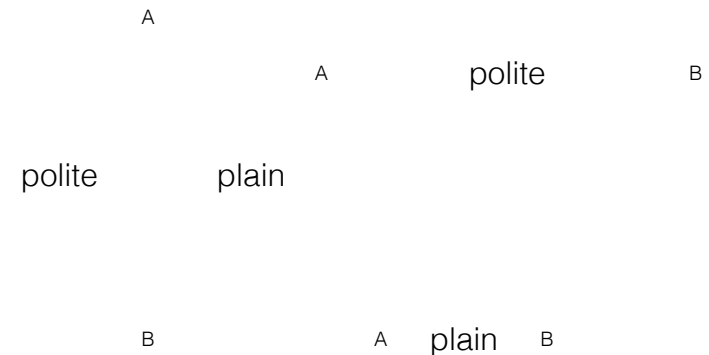
When you need to be polite: Three factors

Distance: Social distance between the speaker and the hearer

Power: The power the hearer has against the speaker

Rating of imposition: The degree of the burden of your request/promise/etc. in your culture

Two social dimensions



How would you say?

Distance	You want to borrow an eraser from a friend You want to borrow an eraser from a student next to you, but you have never talked with him/her before
Power	You want to borrow an eraser from a friend You want to borrow an eraser from a professor
Imposition	You want to borrow an eraser from a friend You want to borrow 10,000 yen from a friend

Degree of intruding in interactions

non-verbal	greetings	vocative
bowing	それじゃ	あのー すみません
hand-shaking	<i>Good morning</i>	先生
hug	<i>See you later.</i>	<i>Sir</i>
kiss	<i>Have you eaten?</i>	<i>John</i>

Second-person pronouns

	T (friendly)	V (polite)
French	<i>tu</i>	<i>vous</i>
German	<i>du</i>	<i>Sie</i>
Chinese	你 (<i>nǐ</i>)	您 (<i>nín</i>)
English	<i>thou</i>	<i>you</i>

Second-person pronouns

In some languages (such as Japanese and Korean), the use of second-person pronouns is avoided altogether

Then how to call or refer to them?

君の発表良かったよ。(Your presentation was good.)

大変勉強になりました。(I learned a lot.)

Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

Basic idea of Politeness Theory

The most well-known theory of politeness

While *politeness* tends to remind us of conventional systems like *keigo*, their concept of *politeness* has much wider sense: it is about all discourse strategies to maintain relationships

Basic idea of Politeness Theory

We have two desires in communication:

Positive face: We want to be sympathized or praised by others.

Negative face: We do not want to be interrupted or bothered by others.

Communication often has a risk to *threaten* these desires

Face threatening act (FTA)

For example..

Making a request can threaten the hearer's *negative face*.

Criticizing can threaten the hearer's *positive face*.

Three factors

$$Wx = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + Rx$$

Distance: Social distance between the speaker and the hearer

Power: The power the hearer has against the speaker

Rating of imposition: The degree of the burden of your request/promise/etc. in your culture

What to do if your behavior is potentially an FTA?

- *Bald on record* Less risky
- On record with politeness strategy
 - *Positive politeness strategy*
 - *Negative politeness strategy*
- *Off record:* Indirectly give hints
- giving up to do the act More risky

Bald-on record

I'll take this.

Do your homework first.

Fire! / Help!

Positive politeness strategies

Strategies that satisfy your hearer's desires to be interested in, praised, or sympathized.

Positive politeness strategies

(1) Notice, attend to the hearer's interests, wants, needs, goods

You must be hungry.

「あ、髪切ったんだー」 (“You have hair cut.”)

Positive politeness strategies

(4) Use in-group identity markers

Bring me your dirty clothes to wash, honey.

「かおりん、おはよ～！ 2限なに？」 (“Good morning, Kaorin! What's your second period?”)

Positive politeness strategies

(6) Avoid disagreement.

A: Have you got friends?

B: I have friends. So-called friends. I had friends. Let me put it that way.

A: 「高校テニス部だったんだよね」 (*You were in a tennis club in high school, right?*)

B: 「あ、うん。中学んときね。」 (*Uh, yes. In junior high school.*)

Negative politeness strategies

Strategies that satisfy your hearer's desires *not* to be bothered or interrupted.

Keigo is a part of negative politeness strategies.

Negative politeness strategies

(1) Be conventionally indirect.

Can you pass me the salt?

「ご連絡をいただければと思います」 (*I wonder if you let me know.*)

Negative politeness strategies

(3) Be pessimistic.

I don't suppose there'd be any chance of you ..

「今日はちょっと無理そうですかね」 (*It seems a bit difficult today*)

Negative politeness strategies

(4) Minimize the imposition

I just want to ask if I can borrow a tiny bit of paper.

ほんの一分ほどでよろしいんですが (*it would be fine with just a minute.*)

Negative politeness strategies

(8) State the FTA as a general rule

Passengers will please refrain from smoking.

「すみません、こちらは事前にご予約いただくことになっておりまして…」 (“We are sorry, but this is supposed to need an appointment in advance”)

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Reaction paper

Go back to your “borrowing an eraser” requests. Did you use positive or negative politeness strategies in each case? Explain.

Politeness examples taken from:

Brown and Levinson (1987) *Politeness*

滝浦 (2008) ポライトネス入門

福田 (2013) 対人関係の言語学