

Contrastive Analysis of Politeness in Jordanian Arabic and Turkish

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Abstract—Languages have different expressions that reflect their societies and cultures. Jordanian Arabic and Turkish are very rich in this area. Jordanian and Turkish people use specific expressions to convey the message of politeness in their communication even though some of the Turkish expressions do not have equivalents in Arabic. What is polite is based on cultures and contexts. Politeness is defined by Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary as "showing or characterized by correct social usages". Politeness expressions are used in different contexts in Jordanian and Turkish societies. They convey the message of respect and love.

Index Terms—politeness, politeness and culture, contrastive analysis, pragmatics, silence and compliments

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication among people implies the exchange of idea and it shapes the interpersonal relationship among them. The forms of communication can be classified as verbal or non-verbal. Non-verbal communication is used among the people as the process of communication through body language or facial expressions to show politeness, anger, shyness, surprise, etc. politeness is also expressed as verbal and non-verbal. It is a topic of discussion among the researchers to know what is polite and what is not. Politeness is based on society and culture of its language. Accordingly, what is considered as polite in specific culture may be impolite in another or it may refer to something else. Each society has its own norms and expressions to show politeness and respect. In Turkish society, a kiss in public among some people regardless the sex is a sign of politeness and greeting. This is a taboo in Jordanian culture where a kiss in public is allowed among males only. This is a proof that there is a cultural gap between Jordanian culture and Turkish one.

Politeness is defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) as an attempt by the speaker to keep the self-esteem, or face, of both the speaker and the hearer. Politeness is essential phenomenon in a language and society. It is based on speech act, so politeness has per-locutionary effect on the receiver of the speech. The receiver may react positively as a result of politeness. Elen (2001) emphasizes that the norms of the society are based on the culture and they are part of the sociolinguistic system whereas politeness is a subsystem. The norms and characteristics of a culture are shown in its language. The students who learn a foreign language ought to be acquainted with its culture, because some gestures and facial expressions may express different hints from their own culture. Turkish and Jordanian people use their faces to express politeness. They usually use smiles to express politeness during the conversation. They also greet the elder by taking right hand kissing and place it on one's forehead. This is used for the highly respected elder. The most important characteristic of Turkish and Jordanian cultures is their high degree of hospitality. Accordingly, polite expressions and gestures are needed in both cultures. Mills (2003) considers politeness as "the expression of the speakers' intention to mitigate face threat carried by certain face threatening acts toward another" (p.6).

To conclude, polite speech is the use of verbal and non-verbal communication among the receivers and producers that take the receivers' feeling into consideration by expressing respect for them.

II. SPEECH ACTS AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse Analysis is the study of the relationship between language and its use in context. Austin (1962) focuses on the producer's intention to convey the message to the receiver. He states that in uttering a sentence, a producer is involved in three acts:

1- The locutionary act: The act of uttering a statement with sense and reference and with certain meaning as the following example shows: "stand up, please".

2- The illocutionary act: what communicative function of the statement expresses in specific context. The example stated above "stand up, please" may be considered as an order or a request depending on the context and who says it and to whom.

3- The perlocutionary act: The effect of the statement on the receiver.

Discourse analysis focuses on studying the language above the sentence level. It is also concerned with the language in use and in social contexts. It goes along the speech acts of Austin (1962) because both focus on language use, the intentions of producers and receivers and mainly on contexts. Beaugrande and Dressler (1986) and Brown and Yule (1989) also go along this trend by focusing on the role of producer's intention on the receiver within specific context.

Speech act (Austin, 1962), politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and Discourse Analysis (Brown and Yule, 1989) are concepts that are dealt together in relation to each other within the context of language use because they are related and interrelated. Ellis (2001) assures that when a speaker produces an utterance in specific context, he performs speech acts which involve the use of a locutionary act, an illocutionary act or a perlocutionary act as the example stated above.

In order to bridge the gap between discourse analysis and speech acts, the following elements ought to be taken into consideration when analyzing a text:

- a- The intention of the producer and its effect on the receiver.
- b- The context of the text.
- c- The social distance between the producer and the receiver.

III. POLITENESS IN TURKISH

Each country has its own various norms to express politeness. Politeness is considered as a social concept which is based on society. Brown and Levinson (1987) study the use of language in the service of face management. They study two varieties of face management: positive face and negative face.

1- Negative face: the rights to territories, freedom of action and freedom from imposition-wanting, your actions not to be constrained or inhibited by others (Jasim and Aziz, 2010).

2- Positive face: the positive consistent self- image that people have and their desire to be appreciated and approved of by at least some other people. (Jasim and Aziz, 2010).

Speech act is a strategy which is used to express politeness between the producer of the text and its receiver. Yule (1996) considers politeness as the means employed to show awareness of another person's face. Politeness is derived from facial expressions that are related to the public self-image of a person.

Turkish is spoken by about 75 million people in the Republic of Turkey and about 200,000 people in Northern Cyprus. Turkish is an Ural - Altaic family of languages. It is written left-to-right. Turkish alphabet is stated as follows: a, b, c, ç, d, e, f, g, ğ, h, ı, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, ö, p, r, s, ş, t, u, ü, v, y, z. The Turkish alphabet contains 29 letters. Punctuation is the same as those characters used in English language. Its alphabet contains 29 uppercase and 29 lowercase. Turkish is very rich in using a set of expressions which reflect its culture and society. Some of these expressions are specific to Turkish culture and they do not have exact equivalents in Arabic. Politeness expressions are widely used among Turkish people through communication. Turkish language distinguishes between second person singular pronoun *sen/you* (singular) and second person plural pronoun *siz/siz* / you (plural). **Siz** - you (plural) is used for politeness and show respect whilst **sen**-you(singular) is used for friends and family as the following examples show:

a- *Siz Öğretmenimiz / siz öğretmenimiz /*

you (plural) + teacher + *miz* (our)

you (plural) are our teacher.

b- *Sen arkadaşım / sen arkadaşım /*

you (singular) + friend + *my* (- im)

you (singular) are my friend.

Friends and relatives greet and respect each other with two kisses on the cheek whereas the young respect elders by kissing their right hands and placing them on their foreheads. The young also try not to say "No" for elders. "No" is considered as a kind of impoliteness for them. Brothers and sisters also respect each other in their family. The young call the elder sister "abla" /æblæ/ and elder brother as *abi/æbɔ* / whereas elder ones in the family have the right to call the members of the family by their first name. It is also impolite for the young to call elders by their first names. They address them as follows: Uncle (*Amca /æmdzæ* /), grandmother (*Nine /nine/*, *buyuk anne /bujuk æne/*, *baba anne /bæbæ æne*) and grandfather (*Dede / dede /*, *buyuk baba / bujuk bæbæ* /).

Many expressions are used to welcome dialogues. One may be welcomed to a home or country. The following expressions are mainly used in Turkish society to welcome someone:

a- *Hoş geldiniz / hoş geldiniz /*

you are welcome or it is nice you are here. The response to this expression is (*hoş bulduk*) / hoş bulduk / which means "it is nice to meet you, too".

b- *Merhaba / merhaba /*

It has the meaning of Hello!/Hi!

The reply of Merhaba is Merhaba.

c- *Buyurun / buyurun /*

please, come

It is used if one asks you if you have time or invites you for something. Your positive answer is (*Teşekkür ederim/teşekkür ederim/* which is equivalent to (Thank you).

d- *Maşallah /maşallah /*This expression is used to express how wonderful and great. It is said when one hears or sees a surprising positive event such as one winning a prize, or hearing a great success, so that the receiver is protected against the evil eye. The Turkish usually use a blue bead to be put in prominent place to protect them from evil eye.

The Turkish people also use other polite expressions which one used in different aspects of their life as follows:

a- Allahaismarladık / æləhæsmærlædək / or Hoşcakalın /hɔ:ʃdʒækælən / or Güle güle /gyle gyle/ The one who leaves the place says Allahaismarladık or Hoşcakalın whereas the one who stays responds by saying “Güle güle”. All of these polite expressions mean “Goodbye”.

b- Elline sağlık /eline sælək / This expression is used to a woman who has prepared the food or it is used to anything that is made by hands .It has the meaning “health to your hands”.

c- Kolay gelsin /kɔ:læj gelsɪn/. It has the meaning of “may it come easy”. It is used when the speaker appreciates someone working hard, so the speaker wishes that everything done by the hearer may be easy for him. The reply for this expression is (Teşekkür ederim) /teʃekyr ederım/ Thank you.

d- Afedersiniz /æfedersɪnɪz/. It has the meaning of “Excuse me” as the following example shows:

Afedersiniz! Okula nasıl gidebilirim? /æfedersɪnɪz ɔ:kulæ nəşəl gıdebilırım/ Excuse me + school + to (-a) + how + go + can (bilir) + personal suffix (I) (-im).

Excuse me! How can I go to the school?

e- Afiyet olsun /æfiyet ɔ:lsun/ It has the meaning of “may there be good appetite” or “enjoy your food”. It is used at any time during the meal.

IV. COMPLIMENTS IN TURKISH

Compliments are strategies and expressions that are used to praise, congratulate or encourage someone. Compliment is defined by Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary as “a formal expression of esteem, respect, affection or admiration.”

Turkish people pay compliments for different reasons. They start their dialogue with compliments. They also foster the positive emotion with people whom they are speaking to. Wolfson and Manes (1980) relate compliments with the speech acts of Austin (1962). They state that compliments as speech acts consist of thanking, starting a conversation, giving approval and motivating specific behaviors. Brown and Levinson (1978) stress that compliments are considered as strategy to facilitate the conversation among people and they soften a face-threatening act such as criticism, apologies and requests.

The prominent characteristic of Turkish culture is hospitality. Those who visit Turkey will be treated well and will be received polite expressions. A German person who studies Turkish literature in Turkey visits his Turkish friend in his house. Look at the following dialogue.

A- Mehmet (Turkish person): Buyurun efendim, hoş geldiniz /bujurun efendım hɔ:ʃ geldɪnɪz / (coming please, you are welcome).

B- Peter (German guest): Hoş bulduk /hɔ:ʃ bulduk / (It is nice to meet you).

A- Mehmet: Memnun oldum, efendim / memnun ɔ:ldum efendım / (I am pleased to see you, gentleman)

B- Peter: Ben de memnun oldum / ben de memnun ɔ:ldum / (I am pleased to see you, too).

A- Mehmet: Siz, ne içersiniz, Peter Bey? / sız ne içfersınız peter bej / what do you want to drink, Mr. Peter? (The guest is addressed by second person plural (siz) (you) to show respect).

B- Peter: Lütfen, Kahve /lytfen kəhve/ coffee, please

A- Mehmet: Kahveniz nasıl olsun? /kəhvenız nəşəl ɔ:lsun / How is your coffee (your (-niz) is used as plural to show respect)

B- Peter: Az şekerli, Lütfen /æz ʃekerlı lytfen/ Little sugar, please

A- Mehmet: Afiyet olsun /æfiyet ɔ:lsun/ may it be good for you

B- Peter: Teşekkür ederim /teʃekyr ederım/ Thank you.

The members of Turkish family interact with each other every day by using polite expressions to respect each other’s. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that every day people give and receive compliments on appearance, ability and possession.

The following dialogue shows how Turkish members of family use the polite expressions and compliments in their conversations: Father, mother and their daughter go to train station to say good-bye to their son who wants to travel to Ankara from Istanbul by train for study. They perform the following dialogue before the time of the departure of the train:

Mother: Hadı, yavrum, vakit tamam. /hædə, jævrum vəkıt tæmæm/

Come on! my son, the time is over (it is time for the train to depart)

Son: beş dakika var, anneciğim /beʃ dækıkæ vər ænedzıyım / five minutes more, dear mother.

Father: Annen haklı, oğlum /ænen hæklə ɔ:lum / your mother is right, dear son.

Son: peki baba, allahaismarladık, anneciğim /pekı bæbæ æləhæsmærlædək ænedzıyım/

All right father Good-bye, my mother.

Mother: sağol yavrum / sæɔ:l jævrum /

Thank you, my son.

Son: allahaismarladık, baba / æləhæsmærlædək bæbæ /

Good-bye, my father.

Father: Güle güle, oğlum /gyle gyle ɔ:lum /

Good-bye, my son.

Daughter: Güle güle ağabey / gyle gyle əyæbej /

Good-bye my brother

("ağabey" is used for an older brother as a polite address).

V. POLITENESS AND COMPLIMENTS IN JORDANIAN CULTURE

Some politeness expressions are universal because all people in different communities greet each other any time they are met. They use politeness formulas such as good morning, hello, etc. Watts et al (2005) assure that politeness is realized in different cultures and societies, so it is related and interrelated with other fields like sociolinguistics, sociology and social psychology.

Arabic is a Semitic language and it is used in Arab countries as a native language. The Jordanian Arabic alphabet is sorted as follows: 'alif (?), baa' (b), taa' (t), θaa' (θ), jeem (dʒ), haa' (h), xaa' (x), daa' (d), ðaa' (ð), raa' (r), zayn (z), seen (s), jeen (j), sʿaad (sʿ), dʿaad (dʿ), tʿaa (tʿ), ðʿaa' (ðʿ) ḥyn (ḥ), yaayn (y), faa'(f), qaaf (q), kaaf (k), laam (l), meem (m), noon (n), haa' (h), waaw (w), jaa' (j).

Khalil (2010) states that Arabic has three major varieties. Classical Arabic is the language of the Holy Quran and pre-Islamic literature. Colloquial dialects which are spoken in different countries of the Arab world. In addition to these two varieties, there is modern standard Arabic which is used in publication, the media and in academic institution. Regardless of religion and ethnicity, all Jordanians speak Arabic as their native language. Because of the mixture of people in Jordan, there are different dialects, but they are not different from the main language which is Arabic. All Jordanians use politeness expressions regardless the dialects.

The social use of the language consists cultural customs and idioms. The receivers of Arabic have to be familiar with the expressions which may be polite, impolite, acceptable, etc. Jordanians do not like to say "No" to any request even if the event is not fulfilled. They answer in the positive way by saying certain polite expressions:

ان شاء الله / inʃaʔalah/ if Allah wills

ينشوف / binʃuf / we will see

خير / xajr/ It's Ok.

Jordanians use the following polite expressions to greet each other's according to the time of the day as follows:

السلام عليكم / ʔasalam ʔalajkum/ peace be upon you.

صباح الخير / sabah ʔalxajr/ Good morning

مساء الخير / masaʔ ʔalxajr/ Good evening.

صباح الورد / sabah ʔalward/ morning of rose.

مرحبا / Merħaba/ Hello

صباح الفل / Sabah ʔalful/ morning of Jasmine.

After the greetings, Jordanians shake hands and each touches his heart as a kind of respect and sincere. Jordanian men mostly greet each other with kisses on each other's cheeks, left and right. How many you kiss depends on how much you like the person. It is polite and respect if the young kiss the right hand of the old people. Jordanians ask each other about their health, families, works, etc. as follows:

كيف حالك / kajf ħalak/ How are you?

كيف الاولاد / Kajf ʔalʔawlad/ How are your sons and daughters?

كيف العائلة / Kajf ʔalʔaila/ how is your family?

بخير الحمد لله / Bixajr ʔalħamdulilah/ Fine, thank Allah

شو اخبارك / ʃu ʔaxbarak/ what's up?

كويس الحمد لله / kwajes, ʔalħamdulilah/ Good, thank Allah

Polite expressions of blessing and congratulation are used in Jordanian society as follows:

مبارك / mubarak/ congratulation

الف مبروك / ʔalf mabruk/ A thousand of congratulations

Such expressions are used when someone succeeds in study, work or when one moves to a higher position or a new house. The response for these expressions is:

الله يبارك فيك / ʔalah jibarik fiik/ Allah blesses you.

عقبال عندك / ʔuqbal ʔindak / May the success touch you.

Death is unpleasant occasion, so Jordanians use expressions of condolence as follows:

عظم الله اجرکم / ʔaḏʿama ʔalahu ʔadʒrakum/ Allah multiplies your merits

شكر الله سعيكم / ʃakara ʔalahu saʔjakum/ Allah is pleased because of your coming

البقية في حياتك / ʔalbaqija fii ħajatak/ May his/ her spirit remain in your life

حياتك الباقية / ħajatak ʔalbaqija/ May his/her spirit remain in your life, too

البقاء لله / ʔalbaqaʔ lillah/ Only Allah is eternal

شد حيلك / ʃid ħalak/ Be strong

Jordanians use their face during conversation in order to be polite. They usually use smiles to show respect and politeness. Smiles are used as social communication. A smile in Jordanian society mostly refers to satisfaction, acceptance and respect.

Initiating greetings and smiles are due to socio-religious customs in Jordan. The most prominent greeting is السلام (السلام / ʔasalamu ʕalajkum/ (peace be upon you). It can be used any time of the day. Jordanians follow the tradition of the prophet “peace be upon him” who urges us to greet each other by السلام عليكم (السلام عليكم) (peace be upon you). Adam (peace be upon him) greeted the angels by السلام عليكم (السلام عليكم) (peace be upon you). The angels replied by the same expression. Our prophet also advises us to smile before our brothers and sisters in religion and humanity by saying: تبسمك في وجه أخيك صدقة/tabasumuka fii wadzhi ʔaxika sʕadaqa/ smile before the face of your brother in religion and humanity is a merit.

VI. GENERAL PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Cultural knowledge of the foreign language is an essential part of learning process. Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1994) assure that “the ignorance of cultural features would create misunderstanding between a listener and a speaker or a writer and a reader.” Accordingly, the receivers of the text may understand some polite expressions differently and this will change the core of the text. Facial expressions are essential in learning process. A smile may express the teacher’s attitude whether he accepts the answer of the students or not. It may be used as a stimulus to stir up the students to answer. Elhadj Said (2011) states that “face is an important cultural concept in social life; it is the social standing of a person that refers to the identity or image each person wants to claim in interactions.” (P. 20). Karimnia and Afghari (2011) state that “failure to grasp the fine politeness differences between first language and target language can lead to serious misunderstandings.” (p. 28). They add that a contrastive analysis of politeness formulas may help learners improve their communicative competence and develop a deeper understanding of the foreign culture. Contrastive analysis is beneficial in teaching foreign languages. Lado states that “the teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide for teaching them. The origins of contrastive analysis, therefore, were pedagogic.” (Ellis, 1985 ,p. 23). It is also recommended that textbooks everywhere ought to focus on information about language use and the culture of the target language. Textbook designers ought to state dialogue texts which include polite expressions used in the target language to avoid misunderstanding and to facilitate learning. Learning a foreign language includes the learning of the culture of the speakers who speak it in order to understand what is beyond the text and to get the cultural differences between the native language and the target language. Understanding cultural differences help learners of foreign language acquire the exact meaning of the text. Teachers of foreign languages ought to prepare exercises and activities in order to bridge the gap between native and foreign cultures, so the learners can understand the areas of differences between both languages. Teachers themselves must be familiar with cultural differences between the native and target language so that they can transfer them to their students by using wall pictures, maps, class magazine, role-play, short dialogue, group work, etc. The teachers ought to urge their students to listen to music and to see films which focus on the target culture.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is possible that people who speak different languages will face different polite expressions from their cultures. They may misunderstand such expressions which are due to the contact among each other. Foreign language learners have to interpret the target expressions correctly and to know the full meaning as they are in the target language. Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1994) assure that “the understanding of cultural allusion will help pupils grasp the full meaning or function of the linguistic form of the foreign language because they are often associated with the situation (i.e. social context in which they occur).” (p. 89).

The paper has revealed the polite expressions used in Jordanian Arabic and Turkish. Turkish polite expressions has been realized in Arabic but in different way and connotation like ان شاء الله ʔinʕaʔlah/ (if Allah wills) which refers to a negative sense in Arabic. (I will see) whereas in Turkish it refers to affirmative answer (yes). Such expressions may mislead the learners who study the target language or the speakers who use the target language in its society. Şakırgil (2011) states that learners need to develop communicative and pragmatic competence in order to use the target language effectively.

The acquisition of the conventions and the effective usage of the target language are crucial for learners of the foreign language.

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