
**A STUDY OF VIOLATION OF POLITENESS PRINCIPAL IN PINTER'S
THE CARETAKER**

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ABSTRACT:

Various linguists have said different views on the use of language and have put forward the innovative theories to illustrate the complicated network of meaning. Language is a means of communication and is an essential matter of fact to study the nature of it by the various angles developed by the various scholars of language and literature across the world. Therefore, an attempt is made in this paper to study some of the selected pieces of conversation in Pinter's well-known play *The Caretaker*, by the pragmatic point of view in general and Leech's Politeness Principles in particular, to dig-out the implied meanings of it. However, the research in this field has already proved that pragmatics is really a significant branch of linguistics to understand the human nature. As the meanings of the utterances vary as the context gets changed; therefore, the pragmatic approach helps to study the deeper levels of meaning more logically.

INTRODUCTION:

The scope of pragmatics as an area of language studies is a wide one. According to Levinson (1983) because its scope covers both context dependent aspects of language structure, and principle of language usage and understanding that have little to do with linguistic structure, it may be difficult to forge a definition that will cover both of these aspects. Despite this, however, scholars in the area generally explain that pragmatics accounts for the specific meanings of utterances in particular social and situational contexts, In particular, Leech and Short (1981:290) write:

The pragmatic analysis of language can be broadly understood to be the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words and constructions, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered.

POLITENESS PRINCIPLE

Leech's (1983) politeness theory takes conversational principle as its departure and considers politeness as a deviation from the ideal norm of communication's rational efficiency. Leech takes the position that speakers always have social goals of establishing and maintaining harmonious relationships with hearers, but they sometimes clash with communicative goals or illocutionary acts. In order to pursue this social goal, speakers often avoid conflict in interpersonal relationships by employing various linguistic strategies. For Leech, politeness is a means for maintaining harmonious relationships or avoiding conflict, and he places it within a framework of

interpersonal rhetoric. Leech locates the Politeness Principle along with conversational principle in order to account for conversational principle's deviations. The Politeness Principle proposed is categorised into the following six subcategories: (1) Tact Maxim; (2) Generosity Maxim; (3) Approbation Maxim; (4) Modesty Maxim; (5) Agreement Maxim; and (6) Sympathy Maxim (Leech, 1983: 132).

The Tact maxim

The tact maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other.' The first part of this maxim fits in with Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategy of minimising the imposition, and the second part reflects the positive politeness strategy of attending to the hearer's interests, wants, and needs:

The Generosity maxim

Leech's Generosity maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of benefit to self; maximize the expression of cost to self.' Unlike the tact maxim, the maxim of generosity focuses on the speaker, and says that others should be put first instead of the self.

The Approbation maxim

The Approbation maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other; maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of other.' It is preferred to praise others and if this is impossible, to sidestep the issue, to give some sort of minimal response (possibly through the use of euphemisms), or to remain silent. The first part of the maxim avoids disagreement; the second part intends to make other people feel good by showing solidarity.

The Modesty maxim

The Modesty maxim states: 'Minimize the expression of praise of self; maximize the expression of dispraise of self.'

The Agreement maxim

The Agreement maxim runs as follows: 'Minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other; maximize the expression of agreement between self and other.' It is in line with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategies of 'seek agreement' and 'avoid disagreement,' to which they attach great importance. However, it is not being claimed that people totally avoid disagreement. It is simply observed that they are much more direct in expressing agreement, rather than disagreement.

The Sympathy maxim

The sympathy maxim states: 'minimize antipathy between self and other; maximize sympathy between self and other.' This includes a small group of speech acts such as congratulation, commiseration, and expressing condolences - all of which is in accordance with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategy of attending to the hearer's interests, wants, and needs.

Study of Politeness Principle in Pinter's *The Caretaker* ACT - I

The analysis of characters' conversational behaviour on the basis of Leech's theory of Politeness Principle shows that characters are following the politeness principle from the beginning of the play till its end. In the first utterance, for example, Aston brought Davies at his home and offers Davies a sit three times, in which he follows the sympathy maxim. Aston has sympathy towards Aston so he brought Davies to his home and offers a sit to him. Though Davies's response towards Aston is irrelevant and he violates politeness maxims without noticing what Aston says.

ASTON: Sit down.

DAVIES: Thanks. (*Looking about.*) Uuh...

ASTON: Just a minute. *ASTON looks around for a chair, sees one lying on its side by the rolled carpet at the fireplace, and starts to get it out.*

DAVIES: Sit down? Huh... I haven't had a good sit down... I haven't had a proper sit down... well, I couldn't tell you...

ASTON: (*placing the chair.*) Here you are.

(Pinter: 7-8)

Along with the sympathy maxim, we can find the generosity maxim in the above utterance. Here, Davies offers a sit to Aston first instead of himself. He gives preference to others first by offering a sit to Davies. Thus, in the above utterance Aston has followed both the sympathy maxim and generosity maxim.

The first extract between Aston and Davies puts a model of interaction for the rest of the conversations in which the characters alternately are following the politeness maxims. Through the following example Davies follows the approbation maxim. Here Davis thanks to Aston for bringing to his home, when he has thrown out from his previous job and ill treatment given to him. Here Davies praises to Aston and thanks for letting him rest, as he has not rested for so many days.

DAVIES: (To ASTON) Anyway, I'm obliged to you, letting me... letting me have a bit of a rest, like... for a few minutes.

(Pinter: 10-11)

Another conversation between Aston and Davis shows the use of generosity maxim and tact maxim. Though Davies always behaves rudely with Aston, but Aston has some kind of sympathy towards Davies.

ASTON: (*holding out the shoes*). See if these are any good.

DAVIES: You know what that bastard monk said to me? (*He looks over to the shoes.*) I think those'd be a bit small.

ASTON: Would they?

DAVIES: No, don't look the right size.

ASTON: Not bad trim.

DAVIES: Can't wear shoes that don't fit...

(Pinter: 14)

In the above extract, Aston offers shoes to Davies, as Davies doesn't have shoes if he has to go out anywhere. Thus, by offering shoes Aston follows the generosity maxim where Aston offers his shoes to Davies. But Davies's utterances are impolite towards Aston. He doesn't take it happily

but finds some doubts about the shoes and its size. He behaves arrogantly when he says that he can't wear shoes which are not in the right size. Here, Aston also follows the tact maxims giving benefit to other that is Davies. But Davies's response shows rudeness in his character. In the next conversation between Davies and Aston, Davies follows the modesty maxim, where he praises the shoes and its leather, which Aston has offered to him. Davies has followed indirectly the modesty maxim by praising it.

DAVIES: Not a bad pair of shoes. (*He trudges round the room.*) They're strong, all right. Yes. Not a bad shape of shoe. This leather's hardy, en't? Very hardy. Some bloke tried to flog me some suede the other day. I wouldn't wear them. Can't beat leather, for wear. Suede goes off, it creases, it strains for life in five minutes. You can't beat leather. Yes. Good shoe this.

ASTON: Good.

(Pinter: 15)

At first Davies's behaviour was impolite towards Aston but suddenly he changes his mind and praises the shoes given by Aston. He also praises the leather of the shoes and comfortness of it. Here Davies doesn't have any other option by taking those shoes as he doesn't have shoes. The contradiction in the character of Davies can see here, where Davies violates politeness maxim at first and then quickly follows the politeness maxim.

Aston has followed the politeness maxim most of time throughout the play. Aston has some kind of sympathy towards Davies. That's what he has brought Davies to his home and allowed him sleep there as well. Aston's use of sympathy maxim can also find in the following conversation.

ASTON: You can sleep here if you like.

DAVIES: Here? Oh, I don't know about that.

Pause.

How long for?

ASTON: Till you... get yourself fixed up.

DAVIES: (*sitting*). Ay-well, that...

(Pinter: 16)

The above conversation shows the polite behaviour of Aston, who has brought Davies to his home and also offered him place to take rest. When Davies asks his doubts that for how long he can sleep there. Aston replies following the politeness till you get relaxed. Here, we can find the tenderness in Aston towards Davies. He feels sympathy about Davies because he has thrown away from the job and ill treatment which he got there.

CONCLUSION:

In this paper, discussion and analysis of Conversational exchanges in the Pinter's *The Caretaker* Act I was presented from the perspective of the Politeness Principle proposed by Geoffrey Leech. It is also observed that most of characters in the play follow the politeness maxims as laid down by Leech. Especially the maxims of the sympathy, generosity and approbation are commonly observed through utterances said by the characters in the play. Maxims of tact, agreement and modesty are less observed in these plays.

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