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Theories on Politeness by Focusing on Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

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Abstract – In recent years, communicative competence has received special attention in the field of second/foreign language teaching and learning. Hymes (1972, cited in Al-Tayib Umar, 2006) asserts that to achieve communicative goals, second language learners must learn to speak not only accurately but also appropriately. Acquisition and learning politeness strategies as a part of learning L2 pragmatics have attracted a lot of attention in the second language acquisition (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Karatepe (1998, cited in Kılıçkaya, 2010) suggests that even high proficiency EFL learners of English have difficulty in performing some speech acts appropriately. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) claim that despite having linguistic competence, second and foreign language learners may not always be successful in communicating effectively and even they may make pragmatic mistakes. It is most likely that non-native speakers deviate from native speaker form of speech act realizations (Cohen & Olshtain, 1993). Due to misunderstanding among people from different cultures, people often fail to have successful communications. Although being polite is a universally acceptable concept, the meaning of politeness might vary across culture, gender, and power relations (Guodong & Jing, 2005). For that reason, researchers need to investigate the denotation of politeness in different cultures and try to identify the different patterns and discourse strategies. According to the Kılıçkaya (2010), social, cultural, situational, and personal factors, which shape the eventual linguistic output of the L2 learners, complicate the situation for language learners in selecting and using certain kinds of speech acts.

***Keywords*:** politeness, pragmatics, pragmatic proficiency

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching English usually focuses on grammar and reading. In real-life situation, EFL learners may often fail to communicative effectively with foreigners. Although it seems logical to assume that a higher lexico-grammatical proficiency facilitates pragmatic proficiency (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999), it cannot be assumed that the former automatically gives rise to the latter. Rather, the data at hand confirm the assumption that explicit instruction may be necessary for the acquisition of pragmatic features in the target language and that "learners who are not instructed at all will have difficulty in acquiring appropriate language use patterns" (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996, p. 160). L2 learners may have access to the same range of speech acts and realizations as do native speakers, but they differ from native speakers in the strategies they choose. This may result from the lack of enough linguist proficiency.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistic which includes various concepts such as, speech act theory, talk in interaction, and conversational implicature and studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. Pragmatic language skills are important for developing relationships with others, and for communicating with a range of interlocutors in a variety of contexts. Pragmatic studies how the transmission of meaning depends not only on the linguistic knowledge (e.g. grammar, lexicon etc.) of the speaker and listener, but also on the context of the utterance, knowledge about the status of those involved, the inferred intention of the speaker, and so on. In this respect, pragmatics explains how language users are able to overcome apparent ambiguity, since meaning relies on the manner, place, time etc. of an utterance (Wikipedia).

Yule (1996, p. 4) describes pragmatics as "the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms". While syntax is the study of how linguistic forms are arranged in sequence, and semantics examines the relationship between linguistic forms and entities of the world, pragmatics is concerned with the notion of implicature, i.e. implied meaning as opposed to the mere lexical meaning expressed (Grice, 1967, cited in Schmit, 2002). There are times when we say (or write) exactly what we mean, but much more frequently we are not totally explicit.

2.1.1. Pragmatic Proficiency

Bardovi-Harlig (1991) asserts that language learners interacting with speakers of a target language must be exposed to language samples which are pragmatically appropriate-follow social, cultural, and discourse conventions. According to Bardovi-Harlig, this is particularly true of advanced learners whose high linguistic proficiency leads other speakers to expect high pragmatic competence. This does not mean, however, that classroom activities designed to increase pragmatic awareness are appropriate only for advanced learners. Pragmatic competence is indispensable in face-to-face interactions in a foreign language. The ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning is called pragmatic competence that is a part of communicative competence which involves being able to use language in interpersonal relationships, taking into account such complexities as social distance and indirectness (Wikipedia).

Pragmatic awareness is regarded as one of the most challenging aspects of language learning, and comes only through experience. Children acquire pragmatic competence in their native language through interaction with their caretakers or older children. They receive continuous feedback from parents and peers who model appropriate routines and this feedback contributes to the acquisition of the pragmatic skills required to function in their community (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999). In contrast, most adult foreign language learners lack that type of input. Consequently, the classroom becomes the most important, and perhaps the only, source of relevant input for the development of their pragmatic competence. Thus, language programs must provide ample opportunities to develop those skills. Research into

pragmatic competence has repeatedly proven that even proficient speakers of English often lack necessary pragmatic competence; that is, they are not aware of the social, cultural, and discourse conventions that have to be followed in various situations (Bardovi-Harlig, 1999).

As well as knowing the structure of a language, we have to know how to use it. According to Al-Tayib Umar (2006), acquisition of socio-cultural rules, which is widely known as pragmatic competence, is crucial to second language learners. Tanck (2002) claims that speakers who due to their linguistic competence seem fluent in a foreign language may still lack pragmatic competence, and as a result they may not be able to produce language that is socially and culturally appropriate. Scollon and Scollon (1995) also assure that violation of pragmatic rules is bound to lead to communication breakdowns. Kasper (1999) states that, competences, whether linguistic or pragmatic, should be developed and learned systematically.

2.2. Politeness

Politeness has become one of the most active areas of research in language use by increasing interest in Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principles (Chen, 2007). Acquisition and learning of politeness strategies is a part of learning L2 pragmatics, which has attracted a lot of attention in second and foreign language acquisition. Studies from Brown and Levinson (1987) and Scollon and Scollon (1995) have aroused increased attention in the study of politeness. A working definition of politeness in language study could be "(a) how languages express the social distance between speakers and their different role relationships; (b) how face-work, that is, the attempt to establish, maintain and save face during conversation is carried out in a speech community" (Richards & Schmidts, 2002, p. 405). Politeness in English is personified by "someone who is polite, has good manners and behaves in a way that is socially correct and not rude to other people" (COBUILD English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, 2001).

2.2.1. Types of politeness

A large number of theoretical and empirical books and articles concerning politeness and/or the notion of face have been published in the last decades. In most of the studies, the politeness has been conceptualized especially as strategic conflict-avoidance or as strategic construction of cooperative social interaction (Watts, 2003). Watts (2003) suggests the term politic behavior (i.e., second-order politeness), which he contrasts with polite behavior (i.e., first-order politeness). He defines politic behavior as socio-culturally determined behavior with the aim of establishing and/or maintaining the personal relationships between the interlocutors. Fraser (1990) presents four main ways of viewing politeness: the social-norm view, the conversational-maxim view, the face-saving view and the conversational-contract view.

2.2.1.1. *The social norm view*

In different cultures, politeness can be manifested and understood in different ways through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors. The social norm view refers to the normative view of politeness seen as the social standards of behavior in any society. The social-norm view assumes social standards similar to discernment politeness in that it refers to the use of the standard in a social setting (Watts, 2003). This approach assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that recommend certain behavior, state of affairs, or way of thinking in a context. Politeness arises when an action is in accordance with the norm, impoliteness arises when an action is to the contrary (Fraser, 1990).

According to FeritKılıçkaya (2010), every utterance communicates social information about the relationship between the participants in the context in which it is articulated. Since every utterance is usually located in a social context, the resulting linguistic form is predictably influenced. The issue of politeness is concerned with this affective or social function of language.

2.2.1.2. *The conversational-maxim view*

The conversational-maxim perspective relies principally on the work of Grice (1975). He claimed that interactants are intelligent individuals who are, all other things being equal, primarily interested in the efficient conveying of messages. He proposed the Cooperative Principle (CP) which assumes that one should say what he/she has to say, when he/she has to say it, and the way he/she has to say it. The cooperative principle is a principle of conversation which states that participants, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange, expect that each will make a conversational contribution such as is required.

The use of cooperative principle, along with the conversational maxims, partly accounts for conversational implicatures. Participants assume that a speaker is being cooperative, and thus they make conversational implicatures about what is said (Richards & Schmidts, 2002).

2.2.1.3 *The face-saving view*

In the face-saving view of politeness the greatest emphasis is on the wants of the participants involved in a given interaction rather than on the interaction itself or the social norms. Face is "something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 66). Brown and Levinson built their theory of politeness on the assumption that many speech acts are intrinsically threatening to face. Speech acts are threatening in that they do not support the face wants of the speaker and those of the addressee.

Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 65) defined face-threatening acts (FTAs) according to two basic parameters: "(1) Whose face is being threatened (the speaker's or the addressee's), and (2) Which type of face is being threatened (positive- or negative- face)". Acts that

threaten an addressee's positive face include those acts in which a speaker demonstrates that he/she does not support the addressee's positive face or self image (e.g., complaints, criticisms, accusations, mention of taboo topics, interruptions). Acts that threaten an addressee's negative face include instances in which the addressee is pressured to accept or to reject a future act of the speaker (e.g., offers, promises), or when the addressee has reason to believe that his/her goods are being coveted by the speaker. Examples of FTAs to the speaker's positive face include confessions, apologies, acceptance of a compliment, and self-humiliations. Some of the FTAs that are threatening to the speaker's negative face include expressing gratitude, accepting a thank-you, an apology or an offer, and making promises.

In his classification of approaches to politeness, Fraser (1990) also distinguishes between the social-norm view and the conversational contract view, i.e., first-order politeness, and the conversational-maxim view and the face-saving view, i.e., second-order politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.1) asserts that,

> The idea that politeness should be understood as strategic conflict-avoidance can be found, for example, in the view that the basic social role of politeness is in its ability to function as a way of controlling potential aggression between interactional parties.

The idea that politeness is involved in social indexing may be interpreted as the idea that politeness is socially appropriate behavior and what is socially appropriate depends on the speaker's social position in relation to the hearer.

The politeness principle restricts human communicative behavior, influencing us to avoid communicative discord or offence, and maintain communicative concord. By 'communicative discord', Leech (2005) means a situation in which two people can be assumed, on the basis of what meanings have been communicated, to entertain mutually opposed goals.

Leech's theory distinguishes between a speaker's illocutionary goals (what speech act(s) the speaker intends to be conveyed by the utterance) and the speaker's social goals (what position the speaker is taking on being truthful, polite, and the like). He claims there are two sets of conversational principles – Interpersonal Rhetoric and Textual Rhetoric, each comprised of a set of maxims, which socially constrain communicative behavior in specific ways.

Scollon and Scollon (1995) observe three politeness systems: the deference politeness system, the solidarity politeness system and the hierarchical politeness system. The distinction of the three systems is mainly based on whether there exists power difference and on the social distance between the interlocutors. The deference politeness system is one in which participants are considered to be equals or near equals but treat each other at a distance (e.g. classmates). In a solidarity politeness system, the speakers may not feel power difference social distance between them (e.g. friends). The hierarchical politeness system may be recognized among educational organizations, companies, government and, in which the speakers use different politeness strategies.

Goffman (1955) introduced a concept of face, which he defined as; “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.” (p. 213). He uses the term, face-work to describe the actions people take to save their own face (defensive orientation) and that of others (protective orientation). According to Goffman, there are two face-saving processes involved in face work: The “avoidance process” that is, avoiding threats to face, and the “corrective process” that is, resolving the threat to face by participants.

2.2.1.4. *Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory*

The face theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) serves as the most influential theory on politeness. It plays an important role in the study of speech acts (Hobbs, 2003; Ji, 2000). Brown and Levinson's face theory contains three basic notions: face, face threatening acts (FTAs) and politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) argue that the concept of face is “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself”. This public self-image comprises two desires. They argue that everyone in the society has two kinds of face wants. One is negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preservers, rights to non-distraction -- i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition. The other is the positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants. Every utterance is potentially a face threatening act (FTA), either to the negative face or to the positive face.

Brown and Levinsons’ (1987) theory assumes that most speech acts, for example requests, offers, disagreement and compliments, inherently threaten either the hearer’s or the speakers’ face-wants and that politeness is involved in redressing those face threatening acts (FTA). On the basis of these assumptions, three main strategies for performing speech acts are distinguished: positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record politeness. Positive politeness aims at supporting or enhancing the addressee’s positive face, whereas negative politeness aims at softening the encroachment on the addressee’s freedom of action or freedom from imposition. The third strategy, off-record politeness, means flouting one of the Gricean (1975) maxims on the assumption that the addressee is able to infer the intended meaning. What the Cooperative Principle states is to “make your contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grice, 1975, p.45). As Grice (1975, p.42) points out:

> The proper course is to conceive and begin to construct an ideal language, incorporating the formal devices, the sentences of which will be clear, determinate in truth value, and certifiably free from metaphysical implications; the foundations of science will now be philosophically secure, since the statements of the scientist will be expressible … within this ideal language.

Schmitt (2002, p.79) classifies Off-record Politeness based on violating Grice's maxims as follows:

1. Trustfulness (communicators should do their best to make contributions which are true).
2. Informativeness (communicators should do their best to be adequately informative).
3. Relevance (communicators should do their best to make contributions which are relevant).
4. Style (communicators should do their best to make contributions which are appropriately short and clearly expressed). (Schmitt, 2002, p.79)

In order to explain the maxims, Grice (1975, p.47) gives the illustrations as follow:

> 1) Quantity. If you are assisting me to mend me a car, I expect your contribution to be neither more or less than is required; if, for example, at a particular stage I need four screws, I expect you to hand me four, rather than two or six.
>
> 2) Quality. I expect your contributions to be genuine and not spurious. If I need sugar as an ingredient in the cake you are asking me to make, I do not expect you to hand me salt; if I need a spoon, I do not expect a trick spoon made of rubber.
>
> 3) Relation. I expect a partner's contribution to be appropriate to immediate needs at each stage of the transaction; if I am mixing ingredients for a cake, I do not expect to be handed a good book, or even an oven cloth (though it might be an appropriate contribution at a later stage.)
>
> 4) Manner. I expect a partner to make it clear what contribution he is making, and to execute his performance with reasonable dispatch.

In the real world, people do not always follow the cooperative principle. People often try not to give information which is unfavorable to themselves or to the hearers. When they are questioned about the information which they do not want to release, their face is at risk.

On a more general level, Gricean model of Cooperative Principle is another building block in Brown & Levinson's theory. While Brown and Levinson (1987) believed the notion of face to be universal, they explained "in any particular society we would expect [face] to be the subject of much cultural elaboration" (p. 13). It is claimed that "face could be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction." (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Hence, each individual must closely observe his/her behavior in order to mitigate face-threatening acts. Kenny (1966, cited in Brown & Levinson 1987, p. 64) states that

> just like standard logics have a consequence relation that will take us from one proposition to another while preserving truth, a system of practical reasoning must allow one to pass from ends to means and further means while preserving the satisfactoriness of those means.

The kind and amount of politeness that the speaker applies to a certain speech act is determined by the weightiness of this speech act. Speakers calculate the weight of their speech acts from three social variables: the perceived social distance between the hearer and the speaker, the perceived power difference between them, and the cultural ranking of the speech act (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The latter is defined as the degree to which the FTA is perceived to be threatening within a specific culture. By recognizing the social identity of the listener in terms of power relations, the relative social status and the level of acquaintance between participants, the appropriateness of language use can be realized (Moon, 2001).

When a face-threatening act is involved in our interaction, we make a decision whether or not we should perform it. If we decide to do it, we can either do it directly, i.e. 'on record' by Brown and Levinson's term, or do it 'off record', which means it is done indirectly. If we do it without paying any consideration to the hearer, we do it 'baldly'. If we try to reduce the face-threatening effect to the hearer, we use either positive politeness or negative politeness. Positive politeness means that the speaker tries to save the hearer's positive face by reducing the distance between them. By negative politeness, on the other hand, the speaker tries to keep the hearer's negative face by valuing the hearer's personal territory (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, disagreements are Face Threatening Acts (FTAs); since a speaker is imposing her/his will on the hearer. The strategy an individual chooses to employ in performing a face threatening act depends upon the weightiness or seriousness of FTA. Weightiness is an assessment of the social situation calculated by the speaker. The speaker considers three variables when assessing weightiness. First, the speaker appraises the degree of imposition associated with the FTA. Brown and Levinson (1987) define the degree of imposition as "a culturally and situationally defined ranking of impositions by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or of approval" (p. 77). Second, the speaker considers the relative power of the hearer, defined as "the degree to which the hearer can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of the speaker's plans and self-evaluation" (p. 77).

A conversation, in which the interactants negotiate social relations and identities, is not only an exchange of information but also it is a social event in which the participants perceive themselves as individuals and as a group. Thus, every linguistic act can be seen as a social act (Si liu, 2005). Third, the speaker evaluates the social distance between the speaker and the hearer which Brown and Levinson (1987) call the "symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which" the speaker and hearer "stand for the purpose" of an act and the kinds of goods exchanged between them (p. 76). Brown and Levinson (1987), claim that social distance is assessed by means of the interlocutors' frequency of interaction. The theory assumes that regular interaction displays a sign of social closeness. In cases of social closeness, Brown and Levinson claim that positive politeness is likely to be used as it is recognized as an intimate address form that signifies reciprocity (1987).

In Brown and Levinson (1987), "Face Threatening Act" applies to any speech act which may threaten either negative or positive face.

These acts may be threats to the addressee;

> Orders, suggestions, requests, warnings, etc. (negative face threats)
>
> Disapproval, criticism, contradiction (positive face threats) or threats to the speaker; Thanking, minimizing hearers debt, transgression (negative face threats). Apology, acceptance of compliment, confession etc, (positive face threats) (p. 65-8).

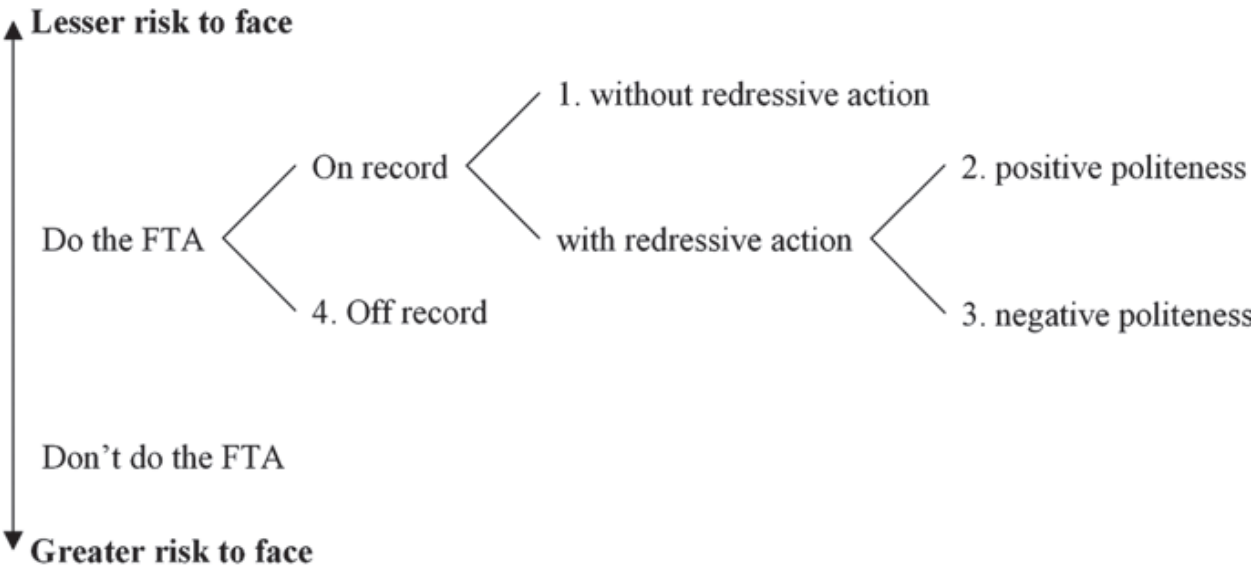

Fig.1. Brown and Levinson's strategies for doing an FTA (1987, p. 69)

They arranged the strategies hierarchically based on the extent to which they threaten the hearer's face. The most threatening strategy is performing the act bald on record (e.g., wash the clothes), and the least threatening linguistic strategy is performing the FTA off record, i.e., indirectly as a hint (e.g., I wonder if we have any clean clothes.). Falling in between these two extremes are on record FTAs, which adopt either of two kinds of redressive action: positive politeness, emphasizing positive face wants, or negative politeness, emphasizing negative face wants. Positive politeness strategies emphasize solidarity with the hearer (e.g., How about washing the clothes for us?), while negative politeness strategies emphasize distance by accentuating the hearer's right to freedom from imposition (e.g., Could you wash the clothes?). Negative politeness is assumed to be less threatening than positive politeness due to the fact that the latter is based on the assumption of closeness between speaker and hearer.

Brown and Levinson (1987, p.66) explain that some acts could threat both positive and negative face at times, as follow: "Note that there is an overlap in this classification of FTA, because some FTA's intrinsically threaten both negative and positive face (e.g.

complaints, interruptions, threats, strong expressions of emotion, requests for personal information)."

According to Leech (1983), there is a politeness principle with conversational maxims besides cooperative principle that is needed in an interaction. Leech (p.119) divides the PP into six interpersonal maxims, each consisting of two sub-maxims:

(1) Tact Maxim (in impositives and commissives)
  a. Minimize cost to others;
  b. Maximize benefit to others.
(2) Generosity Maxim (in impositives and commissives)
  a. Minimize benefit to self;
  b. Maximize cost to self.
(3) Approbation Maxim (in expressives and assertives)
  a. Minimize dispraise of others;
  b. Maximize praise of others.
(4)Modesty Maxim (in expressives and assertives)
  a. Minimize praise of self;
  b. Maximize dispraise of self.
(5) Agreement Maxim (in assertives)
  a. Minimize disagreement between self and others;
  b. Maximize agreement between self and others.
(6) Sympathy Maxim (in assertives)
  a. Minimize antipathy between self and others;
  b. Maximize sympathy between self and others.”

Watts (1992, cited in Vera, 2010) distinguishes between social politeness and interpersonal politeness – tact. Both types of politeness are culturally acquired, and mutually connected in speech. Social politeness is originated in people’s need for smoothly organized interaction with other members of their group. The difference between tact and social politeness is that whereas the function of social politeness is essentially to coordinate social interaction; the function of tact is to preserve face and regulate interpersonal relationships. In fact, it is probably not social politeness that enables people to avoid most everyday interpersonal conflicts, but tact. Linguistic politeness, in turn, is based on interpersonal politeness (Vera, 2010).

Watts (2003) states that the terms polite and politeness and their precise lexical equivalents in other languages may vary in the meanings and connotations associated with them from one group of speakers to the next. According to him, some examples of interpretations of polite language usage are ‘the language a person uses to avoid being too direct’, ‘language which displays respect towards or consideration for others’, or ‘language that displays certain “polite” formulaic utterances like please, thank you, excuse me or sorry’. On the other hand, some people may consider the polite use of language as, for example, ‘hypocritical’, ‘dishonest’ or ‘distant’. In situations in which one participant needs to take particular care not to damage another participant’s face, that participant will do everything to

avoid face-threatening. This kind of face work is supportive. On the other hand, some situations approve the display of face-threatening. Both the supportive face work and the sanctioned aggressive face work lie inside the boundaries of behavior, linguistic or otherwise, that Watts (2003) calls politic behavior.

Politeness strategies try to repair or compensate in some way the threat to positive and negative public self-image when performing a specific act. Positive politeness strategies are based on the sharing of the audience's wants and show "the writer's acceptance of the wants of rival researchers, or of the scientific community as a whole" (Myers 1989, p. 7). Negative politeness, on the other hand, is realised through strategies assuring the reader that the writer avoids impositions on her/his wants and her/his freedom to act. The function of negative politeness is that of softening the commitment of the writer to the truth of the proposition being stated. As Myers points out, most of the features that are considered conventional in scientific discourse, such as hedging or impersonal constructions, can be reinterpreted as negative politeness devices when they reflect the appropriate attitude for offering a claim to the community. Such devices mark claims, or other statements, "as being provisional, pending acceptance in the literature, acceptance by the community, in other words, acceptance by the readers" (Myers, 1989, p.12).

The most general findings from previous studies reveal that in particular, high proficiency learners, because of their linguistic competence, employ desirable feature which, according to Krentel (2007), are assumed to be native like features more frequently than low proficiency learners. It means that they use different strategies such as partial agreement, uncertainty markers like maybe, I don't know (Pearson, 1986), and giving explanation to be more polite.

3. CONCLUSION

Many studies have suggested a mutual relation between the uses of particular kind of politeness strategies to people with different power. Learners are more sensitive to the use of more politeness strategies to the high status people than low status people.

EFL learners may have access to the range of speech acts and they may have enough pragmatic competence, but they may use just limited number of these strategies due to the lack of linguistic competence. More importantly, even in the high proficiency levels, EFL learners fail to act out different functions of speech appropriately, so EFL learners must be aware of foreign language pragmatic rules and socio-cultural constraints on speech acts as well as grammatical rules in order to have a successful communication. Although EFL learners are highly context-sensitive in selecting pragmatic strategies in their own language, they may not pay attention to such variables as social distance and social power in L2 (Rose and Kasper, 2001).

It is important to note that, as predicted by politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987), power relationship, social distance, and degree of imposition constrain communicative action universally, but the value of these factors vary from context to context. So, in order to have successful communication, it's important that each community provide enough

knowledge for their people about politeness strategies. Furthermore, language learning/ teaching textbooks provide very little help for learners to develop pragmatic competence for everyday situations such as making disagreement. Kasper (1990) found that the language of EFL textbooks is another factor in learners' adopting ineffective pragmatic strategies and lack of the appropriate materials and input can be seen the main cause of the under-representation of pragmatics. This problem can be solved through creating opportunities for ELT teacher trainees to develop pragmatic competence in L2 with different speech act sets in the materials in their curriculum.

Finally, it is hoped that research in the second and foreign language politeness strategies, will enable us to improve our understanding of pragmatic development in speech act realization and of the nature of strategies and incorporate effective methods of teaching politeness strategies in the EFL classrooms.

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