

Olena Tarasova

ON LANGUAGE AND SPEECH BEHAVIOR

The paper highlights some topical issues of language pragmatics with a special emphasis on those pertaining to Grice's Cooperative Principle and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory. The latter are viewed as the two key methodological tools of describing the complex nature of communication and language interaction. The author touches upon some aspects of the evolution and further development of the above theories, including the cooperative maxims formulated by Grice, and the possible consequences of their violation. A special credit is given to Hofmann's contribution which consists in differentiating between positive and negative politeness on the basis of his "paradox of face" and the subsequent identification of the so-called "face-honoring" and "face-threatening" communicative strategies. Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory is referred to as an example of creative application of this methodology to studying the regularities of speech behavior. Also stressed is considerable variation of the Cooperative and Politeness Principles in different linguocultures which makes it a fascinating subject of research from the point of view of comparative cultural studies.

Key words: cooperation maxims, communication strategies, discourse management, speech activity, positive and negative politeness.

Тарасова Е. В. Язык и речевое поведение

В статье, выполненной в русле современной лингвопрагматики, освещаются проблемы, связанные с действием Принципа Кооперации Грайса и Принципом Вежливости Браун и Левинсона. Последние представлены как два основных методологических инструмента описания сложного характера взаимодействия языка и речевой деятельности. Соответственно, речевая коммуникация рассматривается как форма рационального поведения, основанная на принципе кооперации, т.е. как *совместная* деятельность, в которой каждый их общающихся преследует собственные коммуникативные цели. Автор рассматривает некоторые аспекты эволюции и дальнейшего совершенствования указанных теорий, в частности, сформулированные Грайсом максимы сотрудничества и возможные последствия нарушения этих максим. Автор утверждает, что указанные максимы представляют собой идеализированные нормы, регулярное нарушение которых является по сути коммуникативными стратегиями управления (манипуляции) дискурсом, и

отмечает наличие контекстов и ситуаций, к которым принцип Кооперции не применим. К последним относятся так называемые асимметричные ситуации, участники которых разделены дистанцией статуса и власти, имеют противоположные цели, а потому не склонны к сотрудничеству. Анализируется вклад в развитие Теории Вежливости Гоффмана, заключающийся в разграничении понятий положительной и отрицательной вежливости на основе открытого им «парадокса лица» и, соответственного, выделения так называемых ликоповышающих и ликопонижающих коммуникативных стратегий. В статье упоминается также Теория Невежливости Кальпеппера как пример творческого применения данной методологии к описанию закономерностей речевого взаимодействия. Подчеркивается существенная вариативность принципов Кооперации и Вежливости в различных лингвокультурах, что определяет актуальность их изучения с точки зрения сравнительной типологии культур.

Ключевые слова: максимы сотрудничества, коммуникативные стратегии, управление дискурсом, речевая деятельность, положительная и отрицательная вежливость.

Тарасова О. В. Мова та мовленнєва поведінка

В статті, що виконана в руслі сучасної лінгвопрагматики, висвітлюються проблеми, пов'язані із дією Принципу Кооперації Грайса та Принципу Ввічливості Браун та Левінсона. Останні подані як два провідні методологічні інструменти опису складного характеру взаємодії комунікації та мови. Відповідно, мовленнєва комунікація розглядається як форма раціональної поведінки мовця, що базується на принципі кооперації, тобто як *сумісна* діяльність, в якій кожний комунікант має власну комунікативну мету. Авторка розглядає деякі аспекти еволюції та подальшого удосконалення зазначених теорій, зокрема, сформульовані Грайсом максими співробітництва та можливі наслідки порушення мовцями цих максимум. Авторка стверджує, що вказані максими – це ідеалізовані норми, регулярне порушення яких є по суті комунікативними стратегіями управління (маніпуляції) дискурсом, і констатує наявність контекстів та ситуацій, в яких принцип Кооперації не діє. До останніх належать так-звані асиметричні ситуації, учасники яких розділені дистанцією статусу та влади, мають протилежні цілі і тому не прагнуть до співробітництва. Аналізується внесок в розвиток Теорії Ввічливості Гоффмана, що полягає в розмежуванні понять позитивної та негативної ввічливості на підставі сформульованого ним «парадоксу лица» та виокремлення так званих ликопідвищуючих та ликознижучих комунікативних стратегій. В статті

згадується також Теорія Неввічливості Кальпеппера як приклад творчого використання вказаної методології для опису закономірностей мовленнєвої взаємодії. Підкреслюється суттєва варіативність принципів Кооперації та Ввічливості в різних лінгвокультурах, що визначає актуальність їх вивчення з боку порівняльної типології культур.

Ключові слова: максими співпраці, комунікативні стратегії, управління дискурсом, мовна діяльність, позитивна і негативна ввічливість.

Any attempt to understand the mechanisms regulating discourse would be a fruitless scholastic effort, unless we have at our disposal some methodological tool, a descriptive framework to guide us through all the paradoxes and intricacies of the relationship between language and communication. What emerges as our primary consideration in this respect is awareness of two breakthrough theories that have been born to the world of linguistics and communication studies in recent decades and revolutionized these two areas.

The first of these has been the now classical **Cooperative Principle** (CP) developed by the communication theorist H.P. Grice [5], and further elaborated on in his later works, as well as by his co-author G. Leech [6].

Speech or communication, in Grice's term, is a form of rational behavior. It is based on the principle of cooperation – accordingly speech communication is defined as essentially a cooperative activity. The CP, according to Grice, constitutes the logical foundation of verbal communication which prescribes communicators what to say (and what not to say) in any communicative encounter. The principle is so powerful because it is based on **rationality** inherent in human nature. So, the speaker, because he/she is a rational human being, will say things logically appropriate at every point of the interaction. Grice illustrates how this principle works by the following example: *Scream: Help! My house is on fire!* – and you respond: *OK, don't panic, I'll call the fire brigade right away.* In this case your reaction will be logical, rational and in full conformity with the Principle of Cooperation. If, however, you say: *oh, do you think my lawn needs cutting?* – such a reaction would violate the CP being illogical and irrational. To sum up: our speech behavior is a kind of cooperative activity, in which each and every participant pursues his/her

own communicative goals. Your individual goal may or may not coincide with the aim of your conversation partner(s), but one way or other, apart from his/her own communicative goal, each communicator is forced to admit the ultimate, shared, invariant goal, pursued by all those involved in the communicative episode. This ultimate goal is forever present and consists in the achievement of **mutual understanding** – a consensus or a compromise. For the sake of this common goal, each of the participants has to be prepared to make sacrifices in order not only to achieve what he/she wants but also to ensure a certain degree of comfort for “the other party”, otherwise, your own individual goal will remain unachieved. In simple terms, if you want to socialize, you have to cooperate.

In response to the criticism his theory provoked from communication theorists, Grice decided to further refine the CP by proposing a number of **conversational maxims** which, he claimed, guided interaction in any type of discourse or situation. As a result, we have the famous Gricean maxims, of which there are four.

1. The maxim of quality – the “truth maxim” that prescribes: be well-informed about the subject of the talk, tell the truth, take/bear responsibility for what you say, don’t say anything you consider false and don’t talk about things you are ignorant of.

2. The maxim of quantity, which reads: be sufficiently informative but provide only the absolutely necessary amount of information; don’t waste your interlocutor’s time; be considerate, be laconic.

3. The maxim of relevance, which says: speak to the point and only about what is directly connected with the subject of the conversation; don’t mystify or confuse the interlocutor; don’t deviate from the subject.

4. The maxim of manner, which is a maxim of clarity and order. It dictates: be clear and orderly in your expressions; avoid obscurity and ambiguity; express your ideas in a few but well-chosen words.

Gricean CP is a solid methodology which has also been vigorously studied from the point of view of its cultural variation, and that energetic research has yielded a perplexing discovery, namely, that individuals *routinely violate* the specific maxims, yet, paradoxically, despite such violations, they still assume each other’s cooperative intent. So, it appears that the maxims are idealized norms whose routine violations are in fact *strategies*, which

allow people to mean more than they say. In other words, people violate the norms of the CP as a means of discourse management to achieve their own communicative goals.

More than that, pragma-linguists have pointed out a number of specific contexts or situations in which the CP is not just violated but simply doesn't work, situations to which it is not at all applicable. Take, for example, the so-called power asymmetrical situations, whose participants are separated by status or conflicting interests, or power distance, and, consequently, have *no motivation to cooperate*. On the contrary, the members of such asymmetrical pairs are often adversaries, opponents, enemies or rivals – such as the accused and his prosecutor, the examiner and the examinee, the convict and his jailor, the terrorist and his captives, etc. In other words, a closer examination of the CP and its violations gave insights into the idea that interpersonal communication is also guided (apart from the CP) by some other stimuli.

Those stimuli were first explicated by E. Goffman in 1967 [4] by introducing his famous concept of Face – a concept that was further elaborated on by P. Brown and S. Levinson in their famous **Theory of Politeness** [1] and was based essentially on the key concept of Face developed earlier by Goffman.

E. Goffman, unhappy about what he thought to be the “ineffectiveness of ground-floor pragmatics of speech acts” [4, p. 61], which to him seemed too subjective, inaccurate, unsystematic and, therefore, unscientific, and striving to transform language pragmatics into a more substantial scientific discipline, endeavored to explicate links that exist between the speaker's verbal behavior and his so-called **personhood**. The latter was defined by him as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” [4, p. 69]. It is in the process of investigating into the nature of those links that Goffman introduced his concept of **Face**. He argues that in every communicative situation or event, the speaker pursues his utmost personal aim which consists in protecting, maintaining, and, if possible, consolidating his/her face – that fragile self-esteem, that positive social self-image he/she claims for themselves. Face is being created and maintained in the process of communication by a skillful, careful choice and use of language means and strategies.

In the process of interaction, our own face, as well as those of our interlocutors, are subject to attacks and pressures, as well as “pets and caresses”. In other words, our face is constantly experiencing influences – both positive and negative, pleasant and unpleasant. Goffman shows that all the manipulations we make with language are directed, in the final count, at **maximizing face gains** and **minimizing face losses** for ourselves. This kind of effort, called collectively “facework”, or “face action”, is always present in every act of communication. Faceless communication, according to Leech, is impossible.

Following the introduction of Face by Goffman as the main dimension of social interaction, pragma-linguists plunged into energetic studies of speech acts (SAs) from this new perspective. The result was that all the SAs known by then (those described by Searle, Austin, Pocheptsov and others) were promptly sorted out into two chief categories from the point of view of their impact on Face, namely: **Face honoring** SAs and **Face threatening** SAs. Examples of the former are compliments, praise, flattery, invitations, offers, suggestions, bragging and the like. The latter kind includes impositions commands, orders, threats, requests, refusals, and the like.

Goffman’s concept of Face became the cornerstone of P. Brown and S. Levinson’s **Politeness Theory**, which is now adopted as the main methodological framework for research into practically all language-related areas. P. Brown and S. Levinson built on E. Goffman’s idea, and while doing so, discovered what is now universally recognized as **the Paradox of Face**. They found out that there are two facets to Face which appear to be in eternal conflict – **the Positive Face (+F) and the Negative Face (-F)**.

The Positive Face is the speaker’s want to be thought of as a desirable, attractive human being, it is his/her striving for approval. That is why the Positive Face is understood as the **involvement** aspect of Face.

The Negative Face is our want not to be imposed on by others; it is our desire for autonomy. We want to signal the message: don’t intrude, don’t trespass on my private territory. That is why the Negative Face is also known as the **Independent** aspect of Face.

The paradox is, however, that both aspects of Face must be projected **simultaneously** in any act of communication. That is why some scholars,

such as R. Scollon and S.W. Scollon [7], for example, also call it “solidarity politeness”.

The independence aspect of Face emphasizes the individuality of the participants, their right not to be completely dominated by group or social values, to be free from imposition by others. Independence is shown by such discourse strategies as giving your interlocutor a lead, granting him/her the right to monopolize the conversation by giving him a wide range of options, by using formal names or titles. Independence (-F) is also known as “distancing, deferential” aspect of Face.

The reason why involvement (+F) and independence (-F) are in conflict is that pursuing one of them is a threat to the other. If I show you too much involvement, it may appear too ingratiating and you are likely to feel that your independence is being threatened. On the other hand, if one is granted too much independence, he/she is likely to feel that you do not like them enough, keep you at an offensive distance, limit your involvement. This kind of conflict is a potential ingredient of any interaction simply because social interaction, by its very nature, presupposes an intrusion into another person’s personal domain. Such SAs as orders, requests, insinuations or threats threaten the hearer’s – F, while criticism, disapproval or disagreement among others, are a threat to his/her +F.

Here is the list of linguistic strategies of **Involvement** as summarized by R. Scollon and S.W. Scollon in [7].

- Notice or attend to Hearer’s (H’s) interests, needs and wants by complimenting, showing concern, consideration about him/her, his/her health, etc.
- Exaggerate interest (approval, sympathy with) in H.
- Claim common POVs, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, empathy.
- Claim in-group membership with H., include H. into a joint activity.
- Be optimistic.
- Indicate that you know H’s wants and take them into account.
- Assume or assert reciprocity; avoid disagreement.
- Use first names or nicknames as solidarity (in-group identity) markers.
- Be voluble – offer, promise and joke.
- Use Hearer’s language or dialect (switch to it if you can); be accommodating.

Linguistic strategies of Independence (-P strategies) are all meant to gloss over or minimize imposition on the Hearer. They are as follows:

- Be direct and straight-forward, don't force the Hearer to make intellectual efforts to understand what you're saying – no implications, sub-context, etc.
- Give the Hearer. an option not to do the act, to back out (*I'd love to but I know how busy you are... ;*).
- Minimize threat (*don't worry, any scrap will do*).
- Apologize; use hedges, hesitations or shape your requests as questions (*would you mind... ?*).
- Be pessimistic (*I don't suppose you are free to have dinner with me tonight, are you?*).
- Don't get too personal, dissociate the Hearer from discourse by using passives, "some" or "one".
- State general rules (*Our students don't smoke in the corridors; passengers on my bus usually show me their passes; my riders always give their seats to the elderly*) and use the "uniting" plural "we" pronoun (*we regret to inform...*).
- Use family/formal names and titles.
- Be taciturn (laconic, abrupt) so as not to take much of the Hearer's valuable time.
- Use your own language and dialect, don't bother too much about adopting his/hers.

This, briefly, is how the notion of Face constraints and prescribes our linguistic choices in conversation and also how the abstract underlying principle of face-work guides our speech behavior in everyday discourse.

From there let us now move to the broader pragmatic concept, namely, that of **Politeness**. Politeness is the expression of the speaker's intentions to mitigate threats to Face. Politeness consists in efforts to save Face (your own and your partner's) from attacks and unwelcome pressures. To do that, we employ various verbal devices and strategies. P. Brown and S. Levinson proposed five of what they called "**super-strategies**" embracing all of the above. They listed them in the following order from the most polite to the least so:

- do not do face threatening acts;

- do them off-record;
- use Negative Politeness;
- use Positive Politeness;
- do it badly on-record.

The last one makes no attempt to acknowledge a hearer's face wants and is supposed to be used by competent speakers and only in situations when face threat is irrelevant (*Fire! Get water quick! Don't stand here, give him an injection and call the ambulance! The army: the enemy is advancing – fire!*).

So we can conclude that Politeness is a battery of communicative skills whose goal is to ensure that everyone feels more or less comfortable in an act of social interaction

In accord with the two facets of Face (+F & -F), we find two kinds of Politeness – **Positive (+P)** and **Negative (-P) Politeness**.

+P seeks to soften blows to the hearer's +F. The speaker demonstrates that he/she recognizes the other person's face wants and is willing to honor them. +P strategies include statements of friendship, solidarity, approval, praise and other Face Honoring Acts (FHAs).

-P is oriented to the Hearer's -F, his/her desire for autonomy. Typically, -P strategies emphasize avoidance of imposition: the speaker demonstrates his/her intention to only minimally interfere with the hearer. So, his/her strategies would include apologies, hesitations, hedges, expressions of uncertainty and other distancing, non-imposing styles and techniques.

+P strategies can also be described as **approach-based strategies**, treating the other as a member of an in-group, a friend, or a person whose wants and personality traits are taken into consideration. -P strategies, on the contrary, are **avoidance-based strategies**, and consist in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's -F and will not interfere with his/her freedom of action. In short, +P strategies are supposed to **actively** promote the Hearer's desire for approval, whereas -P strategies are supposed to **passively** promote the Hearer's wish for autonomy.

G. Leech formulated his own six rules of +P, which he preferred to call "categories" [4]:

– the category of Tact: mind, show consideration for your partner's interests,

- don't intrude on his territory, etc. Tact, as you see, is concerned with the avoidance of conflict;
- the category of Gallantry/Unselfishness: relieve your partner of all burdens,
 - make it easier for him/her to communicate, take the hardest part on yourself;
 - the category of Approval: praise and compliment;
 - the category of Modesty: down-tone praise to yourself, don't fish for compliments;
 - the category of Agreement: avoid refusals, objections and arguments, never say "no" directly;
- the category of sympathy: show, demonstrate liking, friendliness, respect for the partner, and smile...

There have been extensions to Brown and Levinson's theory. Thus, J. Culpeper [2, 3] directs his research efforts towards "**an anatomy of impoliteness**". His was a very ingenious attempt to build an impoliteness framework which was parallel but opposite to Brown and Levinson's theory. If other Politeness theories concentrated on communicative strategies to maintain social harmony, J. Culpepper believes that it is as vital to investigate strategies oriented towards **attacking** face – that emotionally sensitive concept of self. Proceeding from his conviction that communication is as more often hostile than cooperative, he examines the features of the so-called **confrontational discourse**, also known as **verbal abuse**, or **verbal aggression**. As a result, he proposes a model which mirrors Brown and Levinson's and in which each positive or negative politeness strategy is paralleled by a counter, impoliteness strategy. Accordingly, we have "bold on-record impoliteness", "+Impoliteness", "-Impoliteness", damaging +Face and -Face respectively.

Not surprisingly, both the Cooperative Principle and the Politeness Principle show *dramatic variation across cultures*. P. Brown and S. Levinson have been only too aware of cultural differences in Face and Politeness and developed their universal double-facet model of Face and the associated strategies of Politeness on the basis of *contrastive language typology*. Their monograph [1] provides copious evidence drawn from a number of widely different languages, such as English, Tzeltal and Tamil, in which they create *a typology of cultures* according to the domineering

type of Politeness. Accordingly, they single out the so-called *egalitarian (small power distance) societies*, in which social distance, status and power gap between interactants are minimal (exemplified by most Western cultures, in which +P strategies are favored), as opposed to *hierarchical (large power distance) societies*. These are more status conscious cultures, in which –P strategies are predominant. P. Brown and S. Levinson cite Japan as the clearest example, and maybe some Oriental cultures like China, Korea or Thailand.

What it all leads to is to say that the cross-cultural perspective on the Cooperative Principle and Politeness Theory is a promising angle of research into cross-cultural pragmatics and discourse management and as such deserves a further in-depth study on the material of diverse languages.

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