The Management University of Africa

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UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF EDUCATION ARTS

ENG 222 : PRAGMATICS

DATE: 1ST AUGUST 2024

DURATION: 2 HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 70

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. **DO NOT** write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains **SIX (6)** questions.
4. Question **ONE** is compulsory.
5. Answer any other **THREE** questions.
6. Question **ONE** carries **25 MARKS** and the rest carry **15 MARKS** each.
7. **Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided.**

QUESTION ONE

Read the Case Study below carefully and answer the questions that follow:

Politeness

Politeness theory works on the assumption that we have two different types of 'face': **Positive face** and **Negative face**.

- **Positive face** is an individual's desire to be liked and appreciated by others. Think of this as a person's self-esteem.

- **Negative face** is an individual's desire to protect their personal rights, such as their freedom of speech and action.

When we are polite to people, we are appealing to one of these two types.

Appealing to a person's Positive Face can mean making the individual feel good about themselves.

Appealing to a person's negative face can mean making the other person feel like they haven't been imposed upon or taken advantage of.

Brown and Levinson suggest that when we are rude to people or impede their personal freedoms, we commit face-threatening acts (these are directed at the person we are talking to). When we admit and apologize for our shortcomings, we commit face-threatening acts (which are directed at ourselves). They also suggest that cooperation is needed between speakers during social interaction. This is to maintain face, both my own and of the person I'm speaking to.

Politeness and face theory

Now that we have a basic understanding of politeness theory and the concept of face, let's take a closer look at the differences between positive and negative 'face'.

Positive face

Brown and Levinson defined positive face as an individual's desire to be liked, admired, ratified, and related to positively. Maintaining a positive face means maintaining and exhibiting a positive self-image to the rest of society.

When we are appealing to someone's positive face, we want to increase their self-esteem and make them feel good about themselves. For example, we might compliment someone's outfit, congratulate someone on their achievements, or agree with something they say. When we wish to protect someone's positive face, we avoid criticisms, insults, and disagreements.

Let's look at ways of appealing to someone's positive face.

"You always wear such lovely clothes! I'd love to borrow something one day."

Here, the speaker makes the listener feel good about themselves by complimenting them and confirming their choice of clothes.

"This piece of work is really fantastic. Well done! "

Here the speaker is congratulating the listener on their work and recognizing their achievements.

The speaker can also protect his/her positive face. We do this by concealing actions that may be damaging to our self-image. In the world of Sociology, this is referred to as '**saving face**'. Saving face is a strategy for avoiding humiliation or embarrassment, maintaining dignity or preserving one's reputation.

Negative face

The concept of negative face is a little trickier to grasp. Brown and Levinson define negative face as an individual's desire *not* to have their basic rights and freedoms impeded by others. Whereas positive face involves a desire to be connected to others, negative face desires autonomy (a person's ability to act on their own interests).

When we appeal to a person's negative face, we want to make them feel like they haven't been taken advantage of.

"*I know it's a real pain, and I hope you don't mind, but could you please print these off for me?*"

Here the speaker has appealed to the listener's negative face by using what Brown and Levinson call Negative Politeness. Here the speaker has used negative politeness strategies, like hedging and indirectness, to avoid feelings of imposition on the listener.

Imposition = "A situation in which someone expects another person to do something that they do not want to do or that is not convenient."

What are face-threatening acts?

A face-threatening act is when communication can damage a person's sense of face or affect the needs and desires of someone's positive or negative face.

Face-threatening acts can be **verbal** (using words or language), **paraverbal** (conveyed in the characteristics of speech such as tone or inflexion), or **non-verbal** (facial expressions or body language).

According to Brown and Levinson, face-threatening acts may threaten either the speaker's or the listener's face (either positive or negative).

Positive face-threatening acts damaging to the listener

Acts that threaten the listener's positive face and self-image include expressions of disapproval, accusations, criticism, and disagreements. Face-threatening acts can also be expressions that show that the speaker does not care about the listener's positive

face, for example mentioning taboo or emotional topics, interruptions, and expressions of violent emotions.

Let's take a look at some face-threatening acts (positive face).

"*I don't like that outfit at all.*"

"*You ate all my cheese, didn't you?!*"

"*I'm definitely better at maths than you.*"

"*Didn't your last partner cheat on you all the time?*"

Positive face-threatening acts are damaging to the speaker

Acts that threaten the speaker's positive face and self-image include apologies (an acceptance of being wrong), confessions, and a loss of emotional control.

"*I'm all over the place right now and haven't done any housework in weeks!*"

Negative face-threatening acts are damaging to the listener

Acts that threaten the listener's negative face and restrict their personal freedoms include utterances that pressurise the listener into doing something in the future, such as giving an order, making a request, giving a reminder, or making a threat. Alternatively, face-threatening acts can involve the speaker expressing a strong emotion towards the listener that typically requires some form of positive reaction. For example, paying a compliment and expecting a compliment in return.

Let's take a look at some face-threatening acts that threaten the listener's negative face.

"*I really like you.*" - In some situations, this would be lovely to hear. However, imagine you don't really like the person but now feel obliged to say something nice in return.

"*Pick that up for me.*"

"*If you don't apologize, I won't speak to you again.*"

Negative face-threatening acts damaging to the speaker

Acts that threaten the speaker's negative face and impede on their personal freedoms include speech acts they feel obliged to perform, such as apologies, excuses, acceptance of compliments or gratitude.

"*Thanks, I like your outfit too.*"

What are the four politeness strategies?

According to Brown and Levinson, there are four main strategies we can use to limit the threat to the listener's face when face-threatening acts are inevitable. We usually use these strategies to avoid embarrassing someone or making them feel

uncomfortable. Brown and Levinson propose four politeness strategies: **Bald on-record, Positive politeness, Negative politeness,** and **Off-record (indirect).**

Required:

a) Assess four politeness strategies. **(8 marks)**

b) Define pragmatics **(2 marks)**

c) Describe the **'face'** as used in politeness theory **(10 marks)**

d) Describe face threatening acts **(5 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

a. Discuss presupposition **(3 marks)**

b. Describe at least 4 forms of presupposition **(12 marks)**

QUESTION THREE

a) pragmatics knowledge is vital in interpreting meaning discuss **(6 marks)**

b) Assess three levels of meaning in pragmatics **(9 marks)**

QUESTION FOUR

a) Context is integral to understanding of speakers intended meaning evaluate **(6 marks)**

b) Discuss at least 3 types of contexts in both communication and writing **(9 marks)**

QUESTION FIVE

a) Discuss the meaning and types of speech act **(10 marks)**

b) Describe the following terms as used in pragmatics, give examples **(5 marks)**

HOMONYMY

POLYSEMY

QUESTION SIX

a) Asses the principles under which pragmatics operates **(10 marks)**

b) Differentiate between utterance meaning and sentence meaning **(5 marks)**