

# POLITENESS AND INTERACTION

Pragmatics 5C

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# Things to discuss:

- Politeness
- Face wants
- Negative and positive face
- Self and other: say nothing
- Say something: off and on record
- Positive and negative politeness
- Strategies
- Pre-sequences

# Why do we need to learn it?

- Linguistic interaction = a social interaction.
- For interaction to be successful (i.e. what is said is understood) the interactants need to consider and (sometimes) negotiate factors related to social distance and closeness.
- External & internal factors
- Social distance → an external factor (determined prior to the interaction (as being known to both interactants).)  
→ power, age, ‘being a Haji/Hajjah’, ‘Ustadz/Ustadzah’?  
e.g. Title + last name
- Closeness → an internal factor (negotiated during the interaction)  
→ degree of friendliness/familiarity  
E.g. First name

# Politeness

- the means employed to show awareness of another person's face.
- Face: the public self-image of a person
- Politeness associated & marked linguistically with the assumption of relative social distance and closeness.
- Face wants: people's expectation concerning their public self-image.
- Face-threatening act:
- Face-saving act:
- E.g.

[2] Him: I'm going to tell him to stop that awful noise right now!

Her: Perhaps you could just ask him if he is going to stop soon because it's getting a bit late and people need to get to sleep.

# Politeness strategies:

## Negative and Positive Faces & Off and On record

- Negative face → the need of to be independent, freedom of action and free of other's imposition → **negative politeness**
- Positive face → the need to be accepted, even to be liked by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know his or her wants are shared by others ('to be connected') → **positive politeness**

- Say or not to say

- **Off record**

[4] a. Uh, I forgot my pen.  
b. Hmm, I wonder where I put my pen.

- **On record**

[8] a. How about letting me use your pen?  
b. Hey, buddy, I'd appreciate it if you'd let me use your pen.

- **Bald on record**

[5] a. Give me a pen.  
b. Lend me your pen.

# Bald on record & mitigating device

- Bald on record → often happen when the speaker assumes to have power/control over the other (military) & can control the other's behavior with words.
- Mitigating devices → to soften 'the bald on record' by using 'please' or 'would you like to'.
- Negative politeness → deference strategy
- Positive politeness → solidarity strategy

# Pre-sequences

- Pre-request

[13] Her: Are you busy? (= pre-request)  
Him: Not really. (= go ahead)  
Her: Check over this memo. (= request)  
Him: Okay. (= accept)

- Pre invitation

[17] Him: What are you doing this Friday? (= pre-invitation)  
Her: Hmm, nothing so far. (= go ahead)  
Him: Come over for dinner. (= invitation)  
Her: Oh, I'd like that. (= accept)

- Pre announcement

[19] Child: Mom, guess what happened? (= pre-announcement)  
Mother: (Silence)  
Child: Mom, you know what? (= pre-announcement)  
Mother: Not right now, Jacy, I'm busy. (= stop)

- Pre sequences project specific next activity and precede a particular base sequence
- • They are used to project actions such as pre invitations, pre offers, pre request sequences
- • Preliminaries: pre-sequences that project first pair part and make relevant a second pair part
- • They have a specific structure
- • Pre-invitations: “are you doing anything tonight?”
- • Pre –requests: “have you got X?”
- 1 Allen: Hello?
- • 2 John: Yeah, is Judy there?
- • 3 Allen: Yeah, just a second.
- • 4 ((silence))
- • 5 Judy: Hello,
- • 6 John: Judy?
- • 7 Judy: Yeah,
- • 8 John: John Smith.
- • 9 Judy: Hi John.
- • 10 John:-> Ha you doin-<say what ‘r you doing.
- • 11 Judy:-> Well, we’re going out.



# Examples

- Pre invitations: **go ahead, blocking or hedging**
- • They are question answer sequences
- • It is done by the inviter to determine availability of invitee
- • They are used to avoid for the invitee having to do a **dispreferred action**
- Prerequisite can sometimes achieve the request
- • Have you got Malboro Lights please?
- • Yes dear (provides)
- • (brand of cigarettes)
- • Prerequisite can be followed by offer
- • A: Do you have a pecan Danish today?
- • B: Yes we do. Would you like one of those?
- • C: Yes please
- • D: okay

# Pre- announcement & pre-offer

- a) they serve as an alert to recipients that what is to follow is built to be an informing or a telling of news;
- • b) they may offer a characterization or assessment of the news (good/bad news) or a permeation of the topic which helps recipient's recognition;
- • c) they may give evidence of the recency of what is to be reported
- • d) they make the actual telling a contingent next step by formulating it as an offer or request to tell (“Y’wanna know who...”) (Schegloff, 1995)
- They are used as go ahead or blocking offers in the same way as invitations
- • N: so:: have you got a lift?
- • J: yeah. I’m going with Jodie.
- • N: Ok