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THE FUNCTIONING OF THE POLITENESS PRINCIPLE IN NETWORK COMMUNICATION OF THE GERMANS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the ways and means of implementing the politeness principle in virtual (network) communication of the German linguocultural community. Network interaction between participants in communication is one of the most widespread forms of communication in the virtual space, especially among young people. This interaction occurs through electronic communication tools and information technologies. Using the example of the German youth corps of SMS messages, to this end, communicative strategies of politeness, realizing the maxim of sympathy of the politeness principle were identified and language tools for expressing strategies of negative and positive politeness were analyzed. Negative politeness strategies are aimed at satisfying the requirements of the first submaxim of the sympathy maxim, which requires the addressee to minimize the degree of antipathy to the interlocutor. Whereas, positive politeness strategies serve the second submaxim of the considered maxim, according to which the addressee should show maximum sympathy and a friendly attitude to the communication partner. Among the identified positive politeness strategies it's possible to distinguish advertence, care and interest, exaggeration of sympathy, demonstration of increased interest, marking of intra-group affiliations, the use of communicative gifts, and the use of comic remarks. The implementation of the sympathy maxim is also facilitated by some strategies of negative politeness, namely the strategy of apology and gratitude, the strategy of minimizing the imposition, the strategy of showing respect.

1. Introduction

At present, such a form of communicative interaction between people as network, which is carried out primarily through electronic means of communication, becomes topical and popular. According to Saenko and Egorov (2015), expansion and development of network forms of communication and interaction between people which are the main indicator of the state of modern society. (See also works on virtual communication (Avdeeva, 2016; Bocharova, 2017; Kryukov, 2016; Shabrova, 2017).

Moreover, the rules and principles of polite and effective communication remain no less topical (see the works (Bragina, 2018; Locher & Larina, 2019; Rudneva, 2016; Ryabova, 2016). Among the basic principles of linguistic pragmatics proposed by the American scientist. Leech (1983) in the work "Principles of Pragmatics", the principle of politeness is of particular importance for interpersonal communication between communication partners, which is aimed at maintaining the communicative balance and the social balance, as well as friendly and hearty relations between communicants in order to achieve mutual understanding and agreement. Thus, the principle of politeness performs a huge regulatory function in both verbal interpersonal and network virtual communication.

2. Problem Statement

The considered principle of linguistic pragmatics includes 6 maxims of verbal communication: tact maxim, sympathy maxim, agreement maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, generosity maxim (Leech, 1983). The study of maxim politeness actualizes the concept of linguistic politeness (cf. linguistic politeness, sprachliche Höflichkeit, verbal politeness), which forms an "ethnocultural system of behavioral strategies aimed at harmonious, conflict-free communication and meeting the expectations of the partner" (Larina, 2018, p. 36), i.e. a system of communication strategies and tactics aimed at preserving the face of both the addressee and the addressant. In the theory of face preservation by Brown and Levinson (1987), the concept of a person is associated with a positive image, a person's social image, with his desire to be loved and sought after (positive face, positives Gesicht), on the one hand, and the desire to be respected and revered (negative face, negatives Gesicht), on the other hand (cf. the concept of image in virtual communication in the work of (Lenets, 2017, p. 194).

Thus, according to the politeness theory of P. Brown and S. Levinson, communicants, when interacting with each other, resort to certain communicative strategies of politeness in order to preserve the positive and negative faces of the recipient vs. addressee. Thus, among the widespread strategies of positive politeness we can distinguish: 1) attention to your interlocutor (his interests, wants, needs, goods), 2) exaggeration of interest, approval and sympathy, 3) demonstration of intensifying interest, 4) the use of in-group identity markers, 5) seek and expression of agreement, 6) avoidance of disagreement, 7) assertion of the common ground, 8) the use of jokes, 9) proposal for a coaction, 10) the offer of help and epy expression of promises, 11) gifts-giving to the listener (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation), etc. (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 102).

In turn, negative politeness forms a combination of the following communication strategies: 1) the use of indirect utterances, 2) apologize, 3) minimization of imposition, i.e. degree of intervention, 4) the

expression of polite pessimism, 5) depersonalization of the speaker and listener, 5) sight of respect, 6) asking questions and avoiding direct answers, etc. (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 131).

3.   Research Questions

The study of ways of linguistic politeness implementation with the help of maxim of verbal communication involves the study of the functioning of the maxim of the politeness principle in certain speech acts. Susov (2009) rightly remarks that maxims of the politeness principle "are successfully implemented in illocutionary acts of certain Searle's types" (p. 198). So, the maxim of a tact is realized in impositives, i.e. incentive speech acts of requests, advice, invitations, maxims of sympathy and approval – in expressive speech acts of greeting, farewell, apology, gratitude, congratulations, wishes, compliments, etc., maxim of nobility – in commissives (speech acts of offers and promises), maxims of consent and modesty – in assertwaysive speech acts of agreement, disagreement and self-criticism. Conversational maxims of politeness are implemented in certain speech acts with the help of certain strategies of positive and negative politeness. Whereas, the means of expressing communicative strategies are the corresponding linguistic and non-linguistic units.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to describe the ways of politeness principle functioning in network communication of the German linguistic and cultural community, in particular in SMS communication, which is a form of communicative interaction of communicating through the technology of reception and transmission of short text messages – SMS (short for English SMS "Short Message Service"). Such interaction is carried out using a mobile phone or computer. Using the maxim of sympathy as an example, the means of expressing positive and negative politeness strategies are identified and described, with the help of which the requirements of the analyzed maxim are observed.

5.   Research Methods

The main research method was a pragmalinguistic analysis of the communicative behavior of the German linguocultural community in the virtual space. In the framework of this study, this method involves the identification and description of expressive speech acts of greeting, congratulations, wishes, apologies, thanks, through which the maxim of sympathy is realized. For pragmalinguistic analysis, a body of SMS messages from schoolchildren and students from Osnabruck and Hanover was selected, numbering approximately 1,500 dialogical units (SMS-Corpus, 2020). In order to describe the functionality of linguistic / non-linguistic units in terms of politeness, a contextual analysis was used, which involves taking into account the components of the communicative situation – participants in the communicative act, communication topics, environment, etc.

6. Findings

As a result of the pragmalinguistic analysis of the politeness principle functioning in SMS communication of the German linguocultural community, we have come to the conclusion that the requirements of the sympathy maxim are met most often. SMS communication partners tend mostly to satisfy them. This maxim consists of the following two submaxims: a) possible antipathy to the interlocutor personality should be minimized; b) sympathy for the interlocutor should be maximum possible (Leech, 1983). The analyzed maxim is realized in such expressives as speech acts of apology, gratitude, greetings, farewells, congratulations, wishes, etc.

6.1. The first submaxim of the sympathy maxim

The first submaxim is aimed at satisfying the needs of the negative face of the interlocutor, i.e. expressing respect, avoiding differences in communication. It is intended to minimize antipathy to the interlocutor by using the speech acts of apology and gratitude.

Thus, among the most common apology formulas used in German network communication, we should note *Tut mir leid* (a) and the English loan *SORRY* (b), cf. the contaminated form of these variants as well: *TUT MIR SORRY* (c):

(a) *Tut mir leid, aber ich kann nicht!* (lit.: *I'm sorry, but I can't*) (the translation here and hereafter is ours – R.G., R.M.).

(b) SORRY, SÜSSE. (lit.: Sorry, my sweet).

(c) TUT MIR SORRY...YOUR YVIE! (lit.: Sorry…Your YVIE).

The formula of apology *Entschuldigung*, common in speech communication, occurs in network communication in the truncated form *schuldigung* which is explained by the specific constitutive characteristics of SMS-messages (quest for language economy) (Lenets & Devlikamova, 2016, p. 118), on the one hand, and the peculiarities of the modern youth language (creativity, expressiveness), on the other hand: *schuldigung hab ne falsche sms geschrieben (lit.: Sorry wrote wrong SMS-message)*. In this example, as in many others, we can observe the omission of the personal pronoun *ich*, the absence of the personal ending of verbs *(habe → hab)*, the truncation of the indefinite article form *(eine → ne),* and the absence of some punctuation marks.

In order to minimize the degree of antipathy to the communication partner, addressers quite often resort to explanations of the reasons for committing a misdemeanor, cf. using the formula *Tut mir leid* (a), and the anglicism *Sorry* (b):

(a) *Tut mir leid bin krank hab Malaria!* (lit.: *Sorry I got sick, I have malaria!*).

c) *Sorry wegen der verspäteten Antwort. Ich las Deine SMS erst um 22h und konnte nicht schreiben, da keine SMS...* (lit.: *Sorry for the late response. I read your message only at 22.00 and could not respond, because the SMS…*).

Within the apology formulas we can observe the use of familiar addresses, which are in-group identity markers, meanwhile implementing a strategy of positive politeness: *Hi A, MENSCH TUT MIR LEID (*lit.: *Hi, A., DUDE, SORRY*).

Modal verbs enable to formulate indirect speech acts which implement a strategy of indirect expression of the utterance for mitigating imposition. This thesis is relevant primarily for incentive statements. In our opinion, within the speech acts of apology, modal verbs are means of expressing the strategy of exaggeration, cf. *müssen* (must) in combination with the performative verb *sich entschudigen* (to apologize): *Ich muss mich bei Dir entschuldigen bislang hatte ich keine Zeit (lit.: I must apologize to you, so far I haven't had time*).

Speech acts of regret used after an apology increase the speaker's feeling of guilt and minimize antipathy to the listener: *SORRY, SCHAFFE ES WOHL LEIDER NET. SCHADE! (*lit.: *SORRY, I PROBABLY WON'T MAKE IT, I'M REALLY SORRY).*

Final formats, for instance, *ja, bitte, oder, gelt,* which mark politeness: *tut mir leid, ja (lit.: Sorry, okay?),* can be used within the apology formulas. Within the directive speech acts, these formatives are used as a means of mitigating imposition, which raises the level of politeness of the corresponding statement.

The first submaxim of the sympathy maxim also directs the use of gratitude formulas. Among the most common means of expressing gratitude, we should note the performative verb *danken* (a) and the verbal noun *Dank* (b):

(a) *Ich danke* (lit.: *I thank*).

(b) *Vielen Dank für den Tipp* (lit.: *Many thanks for the advice*).

It is also noteworthy that in SMS communication, as well as in interpersonal speech communication, we often observe the use of the abbreviated forms of the performative verb *danken*: *danke* (a), *dank* (b). This is due to the principle of language economy in oral speech and in written SMS communication, cf.:

(a) *hi danke für die Auskunft* (lit.: *Hi. Thank you for the information*).

(b) *Dank dir. Is ganz gut gelaufen* (lit.: *Thanks. Everything went very well*).

Meanwhile, the gratitude formulas can be extended with the adjectives *lieb* (a), *schön* (b), the pronoun *viel* (c), and the adverb *nochmal* (d), which verbalize the strategy of exaggerating the sympathy that is necessary for demonstrating a friendly attitude to a pen pal:

(a) *hey netti, lieben dank fürs drucken!* (lit.: *Hello, Nettie, thank you so much for the printout!*).

(b) *Hi du danke schön für dein geschenk* (lit.: *Hi, thank you very much for your gift*).

(c) *Vielen Dank für Deinen Brief* (lit.: *Thank you very much for your letter*).

(d) *Wünsch Dir nen schönen Abend & Danke nochmal!* (lit.: *I wish you a wonderful evening and thank you again!*).

The positive strategy of exaggeration is also expressed by repeated use of the gratitude formulas, cf. (a), (b):

(a) *Daniel H. Danke, Danke, Danke!* (lit.: *Daniel, hi. Thank you, thank you again!*).

(b) *Dank dir. ... War nicht so schlimm .... Nochmal danke.* (lit.: *Thank you ... it wasn't so bad ... thank you again*).

When expressing gratitude, the addresser can address the addressee by name (a) or use informal evaluation addresses (b), which, in turn, actualize the strategy of marking intra-group affiliation aimed at rapprochement with the correspondence partner:

(a) *Theresa vielen Dank für deine Hilfe ich weiß doch schon immer wie lieb du bist!* (lit.: *Teresa, thank you so much for your help, I've always known how nice you are!*).

(b) *Danke, mein Liebster. Ich wünsch Dir süße Träume und vor allem einen erholsamen Schlaf!* (lit.: *Thank you, my good one. I wish you sweet dreams and above all a restful sleep!*).

6.2. The second submaxim of the sympathy maxim

The expression of the maximum possible sympathy for the interlocutor, in our case for the partner in SMS communication, is the essence of the second submaxim of the analyzed maxim. It is most fully expressed in such expressive speech acts as greetings, congratulations, wishes. These expressives are aimed primarily at satisfying the needs of the positive face of the recipient, namely the need for love, sympathy, care, increased attention, approval, friendly attitude, etc.

To demonstrate sympathy, the addresser resorts mostly to speech acts of wish, which are verbalized by means of the performative verb *wünschen (to wish)*. In everyday communication we express wishes to have a good time on weekdays (a), (b), at weekends (c), (d), during the week (e):

(a) Wünsch Dir noch nen schönen Tag!!! Bussie (lit.: I wish you a nice day!!! Kiss).

(b) Wünsch dir viel spaß heute abend. Hdgdl kuss Jenny (lit.: I wish you to have fun tonight. I love you very much, I kiss you, Jenny).

(c) Ich wünsche Dir ein schönes WE! Gruß (lit.: I wish you a wonderful weekend! Bye).

(d) hihi. eva, ich wünsche dir alles gute und ein schönes w.ende (lit.: Hi, Eva, I wish you all the best and a wonderful weekend).

(e) Wünsche dir einen schönen Wochenanfang (lit.: I wish you a great start to the week).

The performative verb of wishes may be extended by some adverbs like *recht* (a)*, ganz* (b) which actualize the strategy of exaggerating sympathy and care:

(a) *HI A, DIE NATUR ZU BETRACHTEN … HAT BESTIMMT VIEL HEILKRAFT. WÜNSCHE DIR RECHT VIEL DAVON. M* (lit.: *Hi, A, enjoyment of nature … has a healing effect. I wish you a lot of it*).

(b) *Wünsch dir ganz viel Glück, ich denk an dich* (lit.: *I wish you a great deal of happiness, I am thinking about you*).

In many cases the verb of wishes *wünschen* may be omitted, wishes being formulated as set formulae according to the following schemes: «alles + a substantivized Adjective» (a), «viel + a Noun in Accusative Case» (b), «schön(en) + a Noun in Accusative Case» (c), and as a combination of the means (d):

(a*) Alles Liebe Pa u. Ma* (lit.: *All the best, Dad and Mom*).

(b) *Viel Spaß noch, Doris* (lit.: *Have fun, Doris*).

(c) *Schönen Tag noch!* (lit.: *Have a nice day!*).

(d) *Na dann viel Spaß und nen schönen Abend. wir sehen uns bestimmt mal die Tage. Bis Denne* (lit.: *Well then, have fun and have a good night, we'll definitely see each other soon. Bye*).

Exaggeration of sympathy can also be achieved due to the use of the modal verb *wollen* (will) in the speech act of wishes. It should be noted that, as a rule, modal verbs are used to express indirect speech acts, i.e. modal verbs are means of semantic minimization of the imposition especially in directive speech

acts. In the case of wishes, modal verbs (*wollen* in particular) are the means to verbalize the strategy of exaggeration. Compare the use of the verb *wollen* in the Indicative Mood (a) and the Conjunctive Mood (b):

(a) *Warte, warte, nicht einschlafen, ich will Dir eine gute Nacht wünschen... träum süß* (lit.: *Wait, wait, don't fall asleep! I want to wish you a good night ... sweet dreams*).

(b) *Hallo ..., wollte Dir nur gute Besserung wünschen. Hoffe Dir geht es schon wieder besser...* (lit.: *Hello ..., I would like to wish you to get well soon. I hope you have already got better*).

Congratulations on holidays and wishes for upcoming events actualize the maxim of sympathy and serve to express joy and provide your communicant with attention. Compare the birthday wishes (a), (b), Easter wishes (c), Whitsun wishes (d):

(a) *HALLO HEIKE! ALLES GUTE ZUM GEBURTSTAG!!!* (lit.: *Hello, Heike! All the best on your birthday!!!*).

(b) *HAPPY BIRTHDAY :-) ALLES LIEBE UND GUTE, FEIER NOCH SCHÖEN* (lit.: *Happy birthday :-) All the best, have a great birthday*).

(c) *Fröhliche Ostern wünscht euch euer Achim* (lit.: *Your Achim wishes you a happy Easter*).

(d) *Schöne Pfingsten Dir+Deiner Familie. LG Nadi* (lit.: *Happy Whitsun to you + your family. Best regards, Nadi*).

In German, like in Russian, when one expresses wishes, the verb is often used in the Imperative Mood. The Imperative form of the utterance in case of wishes does not express a threat to a negative face of the addressee, i.e. it does not limit freedom of his actions and does not violate the boundaries of personal space, c.f. (a) – (c):

(a) *SCHLAF GUT UND TRÄUM WAS SCHÖNES! BIS MORGEN! KUSS J.* (lit.: *Have a good night, sweet dreams! See you tomorrow! Kisses, J.*).

(b) *Wünsche Euch viel Spaß und erholt Euch gut!* (lit.: *I wish you to have fun and have a great time!*).

(c) *SLEEP WELL & SWEET DREAMS!* (ger.: *Gute Nacht & süße Träume!*).

In some cases modal particles (a), (b) or the causative verb *lassen* (*let*) (c) may be used in the formulae of wishes. They reduce the degree of imperative sentences imposition:

(a) *Naja, dann schlaf mal schön, bis morgen* (lit.: *Well, then have a good night, see you tomorrow*).

(b) *NA DANN SCHLAF MAL GUT! LIEBE GRÜßE!* (lit.: *Well, then have a good night! Best regards…*).

(c) *Laß es Dir gutgehen – Ulli* (lit.: *May the world treat you well – Ulli*).

An amiable attitude to a partner in SMS communication may be expressed by humorous utterances which implement such a strategy of positive politeness as the use of a joke: *Schlaf gut Süße und träum was ganz tolles (also von mir) haha Scherz hab dich lieb bist mein Teddybär Bussi* (lit.: *Sweet dreams, my sweetie, may you dream about something wonderful (me) ha-ha, I am kidding, I love you, my Teddy bear, kisses*).

The sympathy maxim is often implemented through the strategy of giving communicative gifts, which is expressed by lexical units verbalizing such non-verbal components as kisses (a), (b), cuddles (c):

(a) *Gruß, Küsschen, Christian* (lit.: *Bye, kiss you, Christian*).

(b) *ALSO DENN BIS HEUT ABEND! GuK!* (lit.: *See you tonight! Bye, kiss you!*).

(c) *Meld mich bei dir, dicke umarmung, deine J.* (lit*.: I'll call you, I'm hugging you, your J.*).

The demonstration of interest and the expression of care towards the addressee comprise the essence of the strategy "*Notice, attend to H. (his interests, wants, needs, goods)*". The given strategy is verbalized, as a rule, by means of asking questions about health and personal matters of the addressee (a), (b), about the pastime during trips (c), about the leisure activities (d) etc, compare with the demonstration of care using the verb *hoffen* (to hope) (e):

(a) *Hallo Kleene. Alles in Ordnung bei Dir?* (lit.: *Hi, babe, is everything fine with you?*).

(b) *Hi Caro! Lange nichts von dir gehört. Alles fit?* (lit.: *Hi, Karo! Haven't heard from you for a long time. Are you ok?*).

(c) *Hi Anna! Wie war es in PARIS?* (lit.: *Hi, Ann! How did you like it in Paris?*).

(d) *Hi Julia, wie war dein Urlaub?* (lit.: *Hi, Julia, how did you spend your holiday?*).

(e) *Hoff du genießt die ferien! machs gut und liebe grüße, tine* (lit.: *I hope, you are enjoing your vacations! All the best and best wishes to Tina*).

Along with the demonstration of attention, care and interest towards the interlocutor of the strategy of positive politeness, which realizes sympathy maxim, people say about the expression of joy about a previous or future meeting with the partner of communication. In case of the expression of joy about a future meeting the verb of joy *sich freuen* (to rejoice) is used, as a rule (a). In case of a previous meeting the verb of perception *sehen* (to see) is used (b):

(a*) Ich freue mich schon auf morgen. Schlaft gut!* (lit.: *I already rejoice at our tomorrow meeting. Sleep soundly!*).

(b) *Schön dich am Wochenende gesehen zu haben* (lit.: *Great that I saw you at the weekend*).

It should be mentioned that expressions of farewell are often used as wishes (a) and vice versa: wishes can end SMS communication (b), thus replacing saying good-buy, compare the speech acts of wish and farewell combined with each other (c):

(a) *Liebe Grüße Kati* (lit.: *With best regards, Cathy*).

(b) *GUTE FAHRT ANDI* (lit.: *Pleasant journey. Andy*).

(c) *Alles Liebe u. ein schönes WE, Gruss Rike* (lit.: *Best wishes and nice weekend, buy. Ricky*).

7. Conclusion

Thus, the sympathy maxim prescribes the addressee to apologize or thank the interlocutor, pay attention, interest and care, express joy and good attitude to him. In German linguoculture, this maxim is realized through different strategies of positive politeness. As exemplified by SMS, the analyzed ways of expressing the sympathy maxim in the online German linguoculture testify that this type of communication makes use of the different means of implementing the strategy of positive politeness aimed at satisfying the needs of the positive face of addressee.

Among the most frequent communicative strategies of politeness, which actuate the sympathy maxim in German online communication, it is worth singling out the strategy of noticing the interlocutor (his interests, wants, needs, goods), strategy of exaggerating the interest, approval and sympathy, strategy

of demonstrating the intensified interest, strategy of using a joke, strategy of giving communicative gifts (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation).

It seems promising to investigate the means of realizing other politeness maxims, such as tact maxim, agreement maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, generosity maxim, in online communication of communicants of different ages.

Acknowledgments

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