



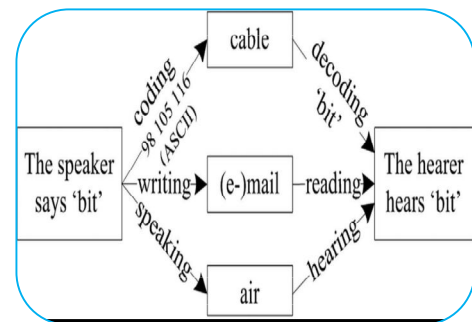
THE STUDY OF POLITENESS PRINCIPLE IN THE THIRD ACT OF THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

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ABSTRACT:

The politeness principle is a key term of pragmatics, one of the levels of linguistic. Linguistic is the scientific study of language and pragmatics studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning. It studies how the meaning of any conversation is not only depend on the linguistic knowledge of the speaker and hearer, but also it is related with context, knowledge about the status, intensions of speaker and hearer and so on. Thus, it helps to understand the proper meaning from the conversation exchanges of the plays. Politeness theory is based on interpersonal aspect of communication. According to Geoffrey Leech in communication the speakers and hearers try to follow certain civic rules and social goals to maintain harmonious relationship among them. They try to avoid conflicts while pursuing their goals, use various linguistic strategies. For Leech through politeness everyone maintains human relationship and avoid conflicts. He relates it with conversation and it is useful to improve our communication skill.



KEY WORDS: language and pragmatics studies , communication the speakers and hearers try.

INTRODUCTION :

Leech further divides his politeness principle into six subcategories i.e. (1)Tact Maxim :(2) Generosity Maxim: (3) Approbation Maxim: (4) Modesty Maxim: (5) Agreement Maxim : (6) Sympathy Maxim: (Leech132). The tact maxim means through our expression of beliefs which implies minimum cost to others and maximum benefit to others. The maxim suggests minimising the expression of benefit to self and maximising the expression of cost to self. The approbation maxim states that minimise the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other and maximise the expression of beliefs which express approval to other. The modesty maxim states to minimise the expression of praise to self and to maximise the expression of dispraise of self. The agreement maxim denotes minimise the expression of disagreement between self and other and maximise the expression of agreement between self and other. The sympathy maxim explains that minimise antipathy between self and other and maximise sympathy between self and other.

In the present research peper the researcher has applied the politeness principle on the selected conversation exchanges of the act three of *The Birthday Party*. It is Harold Pinter's first full length play, a fine example of absurd play. The plot moves around Stanley. a mentally disturbed young

man in his thirties, lives in the boarding house of Meg and Petey. He has complex relationship with Meg and the conflicts starts from the entrance of two new guests i.e. Goldberg and McCann in that boarding house on some secret mission. Actually they come to trap Stanley for his derogatory past. Throughout the play the readers cannot understand Stanley's doubtful past. In the first two acts we observe the absurd elements like meaningless life, lack of communication, ambiguity etc. At first, Stanley looks more interested in Meg than Lulu, a young woman and Petey does not take any objection on it, denotes the complex relationship and ambiguous nature of all characters. Goldberg and McCann come there and as per their plan they put pressure on Stanley through their harsh and illogical interrogation. At the end of second act we observe the mental and physical violence in the birthday party of Stanley. The second act ends with uncertainty and obscurity about all the incidents happened in the party. We see the denouement in the third act. The contextual study reveals the hidden intension and absurdities from the conversation exchanges and helps reader to understand them properly. The politeness principle helps to know the complex behaviour pattern of characters.

In the following conversation exchange from the act three between Meg and Petey, we observe the absurd, complex and uncertain nature of husband and wife. It suggests their noncompliance with maxim of sympathy as they fail to take care and to understand Stanley's pathetic condition. Though on the one hand, they follow maxim of approbation as they praise the party, but on the other hand, it suggests their simple and impractical nature due to their complex behaviour. They even do not concern about Stanley's mental state and think him as normal denotes their incomplete parental love towards Stanley. The opening scene of the third act and the first act look similar and natural as nothing happen in the birthday party. It denotes lack of understanding and worldliness among them. Though on most of the occasions they follow the maxims of politeness in their conversation, but here in the following conversation Meg violates to hide her fear from Petey.

PETEY. What do you mean, in it?

MEG. Inside it.

PETEY. What sort of things?

MEG. Well...I mean...is there...is there a wheelbarrow in it?

PETEY. A wheelbarrow?

MEG. Yes.(TBP69)

From the above conversation we feel that Petey and Meg behave very cooperatively and politely with each other. It is really surprised that both think the violence in the birthday party as normal, in this sense they violate maxim of sympathy and agreement as they do not sympathise with Lulu and Stanley and their thinking is not accordance to society. Here at first, Meg follows maxim of generosity as she is ready to buy some food for breakfast suggests that she offers maximum cost to her and maximum benefit to others. Petey too violates the maxim of sympathy as he peeps into car without owner's permission. It denotes their simple and rustic nature. Then Meg inquires about wheelbarrow, but she hides the truth from her husband that she is fearful as Stanley told her that the car and the wheelbarrow comes there for her. Her pauses also suggests her fearful nature. It denotes her noncompliance with maxim of agreement as she hides truth from Petey. In the end she repeatedly asks about wheelbarrow and does not believe on Petey suggests her noncompliance of maxim of agreement as her expression shows disagreement between her and Petey. Thus, with the help of politeness it is possible to find real intension of characters. Sometimes they deliberately violate the politeness principle to search for truth or to hide their real intensions.

In the following conversation we observe that Goldberg first follows then violates the politeness principle for his own benefit. It denotes that he is very wise and intelligent character.

GOLDBERG(*sipping hs tea*). A good woman. A charming woman. My mother was the same. My wife was the identical.

PETEY. How is he this morning?

GOLDBERG. Who?

PETEY. Stanley, is he any better?

GOLDBERG(*a little uncertainly*). Oh... a little better, I think, a little better.

Of course, I'm not really qualified to say, Mr Boles. I mean, I haven't got the ... the qualifications. (TBP 71)

In the above conversation, at first Goldberg behaves rudely with Meg and flouts maxims of sympathy, modesty and agreement as he praises his car, does not show any interest in Meg's question about a ride in the car. In connection with previous conversation here, he praises Meg for her tea and cooperative nature, also compares her with his mother, and denotes his observance of approbation. He unnecessarily praises his mother and wife suggests his noncompliance with maxim of modesty. It suggests his arrogant nature. Petey follows maxim of sympathy as he looked very careful about Stanley's health. Even he inquires about Stanley in the absence of Meg suggests his love for her. In the later part of this conversation Goldberg violates maxim of sympathy as he deliberately ignores Petey. Then his pauses suggest his uncertainty over Stanley's health. Here on one hand, he follows maxim of modesty by explaining that he does not have the doctor's qualification and on the other hand, he violates the maxims of agreement and sympathy as he hides truth from Petey. Even he hides the truth about them and explains that there are lot of reasons for the nervous attack. Thus, the contextual study clears that Goldberg arrived there with some secret purpose and he is very intelligent and practical man who did everything to complete his mission. The politeness principle denotes that if he behaves politely then it might be possible that Stanley would not be victim of nervous breakdown, thus politeness principle is helpful for all to create civility in our society

In the following conversation, we observe that for the first time in the play Goldberg and McCann behave noncooperatively with each other. Their behaviour suggest that though on the upper level they succeeded in their plan, but in reality they fail due to nervousness of Stanley.

GOLDBERG (*opening his eyes, regarding McCann*). What—did—you—call—me?

MCCANN. Who?

GOLDBERG. (*murderously*). Don't call me that!(*He seizes MCCANN by the throat*).

NEVER CALL ME THAT!

MCCANN (*writhing*). Nat, Nat, Nat, NAT! I called you Nat. I was asking you Nat.

Honest to God...(TBP 76)

In the above conversation exchange, we observe the clash between maxim Goldberg and McCann, it also denotes Goldberg's arrogant, egoistic and superior nature than McCann. At first, Goldberg becomes unhappy and sorrowful on the violence and nervous breakdown of Stanley, in this sense he follows maxim of sympathy by expressing his concern over Stanley's health. McCann violates maxim of agreement as he disagrees with Goldberg's opinion and in his sentiments he calls him Nat, hence flouts maxim of agreement as he knows that Goldberg is superior than him and he does not like that name. But we observe the sudden violated reaction from him, he not only shows his anger but also seizes McCann's throat, thus in his anger he violates maxims of agreement and sympathy. The contextual study denotes the importance of controlling one's emotions; it also suggests the superiority of Goldberg over McCann in their team work. In the end McCann denies the allegation and violate maxim of agreement as he speaks falsely and disagrees with Goldberg. Later Goldberg becomes cool and explains everything about him, even unnecessarily praises his hard work and health, suggests his noncompliance of maxim of modesty. In the end he orders McCann to give him a blow in his mouth suggests his repentance over anger incident and he follows maxim of sympathy as he is ready to accept punishment for his anger from McCann.

In the following conversation we notice the absurdity and meaningless life of modern human being. This is the last conversation between Goldberg, McCann and Lulu in which for the first time we observe the immoral nature of Goldberg and McCann.

LULU. That's what you did. You quenched your ugly thirst. You taught me things a girl shouldn't know before she's been married at least three times.

GOLDBERG. Now you're a jump ahead! What are you complaining about?
Enter MCCANN quickly.

LULU. You didn't appreciate me for myself. You took all those liberties only to satisfy Your appetite. Oh Nat, why did you do it?

GOLDBERG. You wanted me to do it, Lulu, so I did it.

MCCANN. That's fair enough (*Advancing.*) You had a long sleep.
Miss. (TBP80)

In this conversation exchange, Goldberg, McCann and Lulu violate politeness maxims for their own benefit. At first, Lulu blames Goldberg for seducing her last night and the same time she praises her nature as simple and innocent suggests her noncompliance of maxims of approbation and modesty. Here, it suggests it that she is immoral and even she lives a meaning life. In fact her allegations on Goldberg suggest her absurd nature. The playwright wants to show the same absurdity in modern youth as they are not able to understand the real meaning of life, so they live absurdly in the world. Goldberg on the one hand, maintains maxim of sympathy as he tries to sooth Lulu on the other hand, he violates the maxim of agreement as he disagrees with Lulu's opinion that only he is responsible for it. He explains that he leaves the place on that day suggests his noncompliance of maxim of sympathy, as he leaves Lulu without explaining anything about him. Lulu's remark suggests that she is unhappy as he does not really appreciate her and he seduces her only to satisfy his own appetite. It denotes that she violates maxims of approbation and modesty as her expression suggests maximum praise to her and maximum dispraise to others. Goldberg tries to sooth her by maintaining agreement maxim as it was happened as both agree on that matter. Even McCann also supports him and follows agreement maxim with Goldberg. But both violate sympathy and agreement maxim as they not only disagree with Lulu's opinion but blame her for the incident and explain to confess about her sin. Thus, the politeness principle explains the real nature and intension of characters and playwright also.

Thus, when we apply the politeness principle on the conversation exchanges of the play, it is easy to understand the communication gap, absurdity and real motif of playwright. Here in the present research paper, the researcher has tries to explain the meaning and intension of the characters and playwright of *The Birthday Party* with the help of politeness principle. It is observed that the observance of politeness principle in our day to day communication not only helps our communication skill but also develop civility of our society means it helps indirectly to develop our society.

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