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EVOLUTION OF (IM)POLITENESS THEORIES: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EXISTING APPROACHES AND CONCEPTS

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Abstract. The article undertakes a meticulous examination of the evolution of (im)politeness theories, offering a critical analysis of prevailing approaches and concepts within this field. The objective of this article is to identify key trends and conduct a retrospective analysis of the evolution of (im)politeness theories, while assessing their impact on the contemporary socio-cultural landscape. This article aims at unveiling the fundamental nature of the category of (im)politeness within the dynamics of modern society and identify areas and aspects that merit further scientific research. (Im)politeness, a dynamic and culturally embedded phenomenon, has been a focal point in linguistics and communication studies. Through a comprehensive review of existing theories, this article navigates the historical trajectory of the category of (im)politeness, identifying pivotal conceptual shifts and theoretical advancements. The critical analysis delves into the foundational works that shaped early (im)politeness theories, scrutinizing their socio-cultural underpinnings and linguistic implications. Particular attention is given to approaches that center around the concept of “face”, exploring how theories have adapted to diverse cultural contexts and linguistic landscapes. The discursive approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness are scrutinized, uncovering the intricacies of language use in relation to (im)politeness phenomena. Moreover, the article delves into modern approaches that integrate (im)politeness within broader sociolinguistic frameworks, reflecting the interdisciplinary influences shaping contemporary scholarship. This holistic exploration seeks to broaden our understanding of the category of (im)politeness as a multifaceted phenomenon, offering insights into its complex interplay with language, culture, and societal dynamics.

Keywords: politeness, impoliteness, mock politeness, mock impoliteness, discursive approach, ‘face’ theory, sociopragmatics, pragmalinguistics, pragmatics.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the constant development of theories of (im)politeness, the modern scientific community has faced serious challenges and paradoxes. Observing the dynamics of theoretical approaches to (im)politeness calls for a critical analysis of changes in approaches and concepts, which is the basis of this article. In the context of changes in modern theories of (im)politeness, a number of fundamental questions arise that require study and answers. In particular, these issues include the problem of the evolution of the concepts of “politeness” and “impoliteness” in the context of modern socio-cultural dynamics. Another important aspect is the consideration of the influence of technological and communicative innovations on the perception of (im)politeness.

Nowadays, there is a significant amount of research devoted to the category of (im)politeness, which includes various aspects, methods and periods of analysis. However, issues related to the essence of the category of (im)politeness continue to cause debate and require detailed consideration.

The purpose of this article is to identify key trends and retrospectively analyse the development of theories of (im)politeness, as well as determine their impact on the modern socio-cultural environment. This will reveal the essence of the category of (im)politeness in the dynamics of modern society, as well as identify gaps and aspects that require further scientific research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW, GENERALIZATION OF MAIN STATEMENTS

Culpeper and Haugh (Haugh & Culpeper, 2018) systematized the approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness within three waves of research on the category of (im)politeness. The first wave draws on the formal approach proposed by Brown and Levinson (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and Leech (Leech, 1983), who consider language as the starting point for researching the category of (im)politeness. The second wave covers discursive approaches (Eelen, 2001; Locher & Watts, 2005; Mills, 2003). The third wave occupies an intermediate position between classical (first wave) and discursive (second wave) approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness (Haugh & Culpeper, 2018; Locher & Bousfield 2008; Locher, 2015; Kádár & Haugh, 2013).

This systematization is based on three ways of distinguishing approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness. The first of them reflects the position according to which emphasis is placed on the participants of the interaction (first order) or on the researcher-analyst (second order). The second way has a more theoretical basis, namely whether it reflects pragmatic aspects or social context. Haugh and Culpeper propose to highlight the following approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness (Haugh & Culpeper, 2018, p. 4):

- 1) discursive-materialist approach (Sara Mills, Isabelle van der Bom and Mills);
- 2) discursive-relational approach (Miriam A. Locher; Richard J. Watts);
- 3) interactive pragmatic approach (Michael Haugh);
- 4) genre approach (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich);
- 5) interactional sociolinguistic approach (Janet Holmes, Meredith Marra, Bernadette Vine, Karen Grainger);
- 6) socio-pragmatic approach (Jonathan Culpeper, Helen Spencer-Oatey);
- 7) a model-based approach (Marina Terkourafi);
- 8) updated approach based on maxims (Geoffrey Leech).

Thus, in modern linguistics there are various approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness. Taking into account the dynamics of the development of linguistic research, it seems quite reasonable to expect that new approaches to the study of the category of (im)politeness will continue to emerge. In the following section we are going to conduct a detailed analysis of existing approaches to the study of this category in order to understand their foundations, identify common features and differences.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness based on the concept of “face”

The concept of “face” and its connection with the category of (im)politeness are the subject of numerous scientific discussions. The study of the concept of “face” in linguistics or pragmatics, and the category of (im)politeness in particular, became possible thanks to Goffman. The researcher defines “face” as a positive social value that a person effectively ascribes to themselves due to the actions they performed during a specific speech act (Goffman, 1955, p. 213). The scientist emphasizes the importance of the social value of “face”. Goffman states that this value arises as a result of the successful positioning of a person in their own actions during a specific speech act. Therefore, we believe that the “face” has an active character and is formed thanks to the conscious actions of a person. It is worth noting that the term “face” is not limited to internal experience, but also reflects a socio-pragmatic aspect, in which the influence of a person on the perception of their environment through their own actions and deeds is important. Therefore, “face” is a social representation that is formed on the basis of the perception of an individual by other people.

In their study, Brown and Levinson revisit and modify the concept of “face” that Goffman proposed earlier. Unlike Goffman, who considers “face” to be a social representation that arises only during communication, Brown and Levinson (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 61-62) offer their own interpretation of the concept of “face” as “self-image”, which must be preserved during the interaction. It is worth noting that the approach of Brown and Levinson is aimed at taking into account the internal aspect of the personality and its relation to themselves during interaction with others. Brown and Levinson distinguish two types of “face” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62):

1) “positive face”, which is defined as the desire of each individual to be accepted and valued by other people. This concept is considered in the context of interaction between individuals, where attention is paid to the desire to receive support and positive reactions from others. The idea of influence of social perception on the self-determination of a person is important. Such an approach emphasizes the role of others in forming a positive self-image and points to the importance of approval and recognition of social value.

2) “negative face”, which is defined as a person's desire to preserve their individuality, protect personal boundaries and the right to inviolability, the absence of distractions and the ability to act freely without being subject to external restrictions or coercion. This concept aims at preserving individual autonomy while interacting with other people. This approach contributes to the understanding of the dynamics of interpersonal relations, indicating that the preservation of personal freedom and individual boundaries can be a sustainable motivation in communication.

Spencer-Oatey interprets the “face” somewhat differently. The researcher returns the emphasis on social interdependence, which is embodied by Goffman's understanding of the concept of “face”. Such a rethinking contributes to a return to the aspect of social relations that was brought to the fore by Goffman. Spencer-Oatey supports Goffman's definition of “face” as a positive social value that a person effectively ascribes to themselves due to the actions they have taken during a specific speech act (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 13), however, places greater emphasis on ‘value’. At first, she distinguishes two types of “face” (Spencer-Oatey 2002, p. 540):

1) “quality face”, which is defined as an individual's desire for their personal qualities to be positively evaluated, especially in the context of their competencies, abilities, appearance etc. The main essence of this concept is the desire for recognition and positive evaluation of our qualities, which in

turn, is deeply connected with our self-awareness and self-esteem. This approach reflects similarities with the concept of “positive face” of Brown and Levinson.

2) “social identity face”, which is defined as an individual's desire to receive recognition and support for their social identity or role, such as a group leader, a valued client, a close friend. The concept of “social identity face” is related to the value we effectively claim in relation to our social or group roles. Such an approach contributes to the understanding of our social value.

Spencer-Oatey (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p. 15) later notes that effective communication involves a relational aspect. For example, the desire to be a good leader or a kind teacher contains an innate relational component. This means that evaluating someone as a skilled leader and/or compassionate teacher involves not only evaluating their individual skills, but also how well they establish and manage relationships. Essentially, the evaluation of these roles is based not only on individual skills, but also on how well they establish and manage relationships. Therefore, she adds another type of “face” (Spencer-Oatey, 2007, p. 647):

3) “relational face”, which is defined as an individual's desire for his social role to be positively evaluated in relationships with others. This desire arises from the need for positive recognition and definition of one's own role in communication with other people. The term “relational” refers to the relationships between participants (distancing-closeness, equality-inequality, perception of rights and responsibilities), as well as how these relationships are managed. This approach reveals the importance of social dynamics and interaction, where an individual wants their role to be perceived positively, and where different aspects of the relationship influence the way of interaction and mutual understanding.

In our opinion, these three interrelated aspects of “face”, compared to the abstract concept of “face” of Goffman, are more thorough and in more detail analyse the value of an individual in relation to their personal qualities, social identity and interpersonal relations.

The concept of “face” in the initial stages of its development was not always directly related to (im)politeness. In fact, Goffman's interpretation of “face” concerned primarily the “presentation of self” in everyday communication. Actually, the works of Brown and Levinson were devoted to the study of (im)politeness from the point of view of “positive and negative face”. Assuming that “face” and “rationality” are universal categories, they propose the concept of “face threatening acts” (FTAs), which they consider as “certain types of speech acts that constitute an internal threat to “face”, in particular those speech acts, which by their nature contradict the wishes of the speaker or addressee regarding their “face” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). Accordingly, expressing politeness involves using some strategies to minimize the threat. Brown and Levinson distinguish 5 politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69): 1) bald on record; 2) positive politeness; 3) negative politeness; 4) off record politeness; 5) don't do the FTA. Positive and negative politeness are focused on the positive and negative face of the listener, respectively; the strategy of bald on record politeness is used when there are direct, clear, unambiguous speech acts; off record politeness is used when there are two or more unambiguous intentions, so the speaker cannot identify themselves with any concrete intention (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69).

Brown and Levinson's approach has inspired many linguists in the field of research of the category of (im)politeness. Thus, Culpeper's concept of impoliteness is based on Brown and Levinson's concepts of positive and negative face. In contrast to the five politeness strategies of Brown and Levinson, the researcher proposed five impoliteness superstrategies (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356): 1) bald on record

impoliteness; 2) positive impoliteness; 3) negative impoliteness; 4) sarcasm or mock politeness; 5) withhold politeness. Instead of minimizing the threat to the listener's face, impoliteness strategies aim at increasing it.

The concept of Brown and Levinson was criticized not only for the definition of the concept of “face”, but also for the statement that “speakers are polite only in order to realize their personal goals” (Eelen, 2001, p. 128) and that “all speech acts are a potential threat to “face” (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 14). At the same time, they paid very little attention to speech acts aimed at saving “face”. As a result, criticism of the concept of Brown and Levinson “triggered two trends in the field” (Haugh, 2013, p. 5). The first trend included proposals to revise Goffman's definition of “face” (F. Bargiela-Chiappini, M. A. Locher, R. J. Watts), as its definition is more detailed. Modern studies suggest studying the concept of “face” separately from the category of (im)politeness (M. Haugh, F. Bargiela-Chiappini, J. O'Driscoll). It was quite logical that Goffman expanded the definition “positive social value” (Goffman, 1981); Bravo rethought the concept of “face” and considered it as two universal desires – autonomy and cooperation (Bravo, 2008); Arundale proposed an alternative concept – Face Constituting Theory (FCT) (Arundale, 2006); Spencer-Oatey included social rights in her Rapport Management Theory (Spencer-Oatey, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2008). The second trend involved proposals to shift the focus to “facework” and separate it from the category of politeness (D. Bousfield, D. Bravo, R. Chen, J. Culpeper, N. Hernández-Flores, M. A. Locher, R. J. Watts). Haugh noted that “it is now a well-known fact that politeness singles out only one type of “facework” (or relational work) among a number of different types of interpersonal phenomena, including impoliteness, mock impoliteness, politeness to oneself / work with one's own face (Haugh, 2013, p. 5).

3.2. Discursive approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness

A critical analysis of the theory of Brown and Levinson testified to the emergence of discursive approaches to the study of the category of (im)politeness, supported by scholars such as Eelen, Locher, Watts, Locher and Mills.

Eelen (Eelen, 2001) criticizes the ambiguity in politeness theories and supports Watts' (Watts, 1992) assertion of a distinction between primary politeness (politeness 1) and secondary politeness (politeness 2). This differentiation is also known as the emic/ethic distinction or the user/observer distinction. Watts (Watts, Ide & Ehlich, 1992, p. 3) believes that primary politeness encompasses commonly known notions of politeness, while secondary politeness is a theoretical construct. In other words, the first approach assumes the presence of practical, metalinguistic representations that may be invisible to researchers, while the second approach offers theoretical generalizations and systematics in explaining the category of (im)politeness. Thus, approaches based on the concept of “face” rely on the second approach to studying the category of (im)politeness, without distinguishing between politeness 1 and politeness 2. Eelen warns that “if the distinction has not been made properly, both politeness 1 and politeness 2 equate, then the epistemological significance of theoretical analysis becomes blurred” (Eelen, 2001, p. 31), noting that this is the main problem of many theories of that time.

Thus, a key idea of discursive approaches is that the way researchers define “face” or (im)politeness does not provide a complete picture of the category of (im)politeness; meanwhile, (im)politeness emerges from the discursive opposition of the participants. Locher and Watts suggest “taking native speakers' assessment of politeness seriously and making it the basis of discursive approaches to the

study of (im)politeness" (Locher & Watts, 2005, p. 16). Thus, they argue that politeness cannot simply be equated with mitigating face-threatening acts because politeness is a discursive concept in which relational work is an important aspect (Locher & Watts, 2005). As Locher notes, "a discursive approach to studying the category of (im)politeness recognizes the evaluative and normative nature of politeness, stating that politeness refers to the interpersonal aspect of linguistic interaction (Locher 2006, p. 253). In fact, discursive approaches to the study of the category of (im)politeness involve taking into account various factors that contribute to interpersonal confrontation. Unlike the studies of Locher and Watts, who emphasize relational work, Mills (Mills, 2003) takes into account the influence of a number of social factors on politeness, such as class, race, and gender in particular.

Compared to approaches based on the concept of "face", which are politeness 2, discursive approaches to the study of the category of (im)politeness emphasize mostly politeness 1. The value of discursive approaches to the study of the category of (im)politeness is not in doubt, but researchers criticize the emphasis on (im)politeness 1 due to the lack of conceptualization and systematicity (M. Terkourafi, J. Holmes, S. Schnurr). Moreover, the emphasis on participants' perceptions may lead such approaches to embrace general perceptions as if they were part of a (formal) theory (Haugh & Culpeper, 2018, p. 4).

3.3. Modern approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness

Approaches based on the concept of "face" and discursive approaches have many shortcomings. Therefore, the emergence of compromise approaches to the study of the category of (im)politeness that combine the advantages of both concepts is quite logical, namely: the concept of Spencer-Oatey, the concept of Culpeper, the concept of Culpeper & Haugh; Holmes, Marra & Vine's concept of neopoliteness; Kádár & Haugh's concept.

According to Spencer-Oatey, the concept of "face" is only one aspect of her Rapport Management Theory. Another aspect of Rapport Management Theory is "social rights", which are "fundamental personal/social rights that an individual effectively claims during an interaction" (Spencer-Oatey, 2002, p. 540). For Spencer-Oatey, this model of rapport management is a starting point for understanding interpersonal communication that differs from politeness theory, which is primarily focused on language use. It is worth noting that the Rapport Management Theory is not limited only to the study of the category of (im)politeness, since Spencer-Oatey mostly focuses her attention on "motivational aspects that are the basis of rapport management" (Spencer-Oatey, 2002, p. 529). In this context, there is a much wider explanatory potential for various phenomena related to the management of interpersonal relations, compared to the theory of Brown and Levinson, in which the concept of "face" is equated with the category of politeness. In contrast to discursive approaches, which lack conceptualization and systematicity, Rapport Management Theory is a systemic conceptual model.

Culpeper's approach to studying the category of impoliteness involves a division into primary impoliteness (impoliteness 1) and secondary impoliteness (impoliteness 2). Conceptualization encompasses the expectations, desires, and beliefs of participants (impoliteness 2). Thus, the researcher combines the advantages of two approaches. At the same time, Culpeper does not reject the concept of "face", but modifies it with reference to Spencer-Oatey's Rapport Management Theory. The works of Culpeper (Culpeper, 2011) proved a deep analysis of the category of impoliteness. The researcher

revealed the difference between conventional formulaic impoliteness and unconventional impoliteness and developed a theoretical model for the analysis of unconventional impoliteness.

At the same time, Holmes, Marra, and Vine propose a concept of neo-politeness that “combines some of the ideas and concepts of Brown and Levinson's theory and ideas of social constructivism to provide a more dynamic concept focused on context and discourse” (Holmes, Marra & Vine, 2012, p. 1064). Compared to discursive approaches, the concept of neo-politeness not only recognizes the role of the analyst-researcher, but also adopts an emic approach, emphasizing the interaction of participants. This approach is also known as the interactional sociolinguistic approach (Haugh and Culpeper, 2018).

Kádár and Haugh point out that “politeness can be viewed from both participant (compared to metaparticipants) and emic or insider (compared to outsider) perspectives (both approaches refer to the primary user) and from the perspective of the researcher-analyst (compared to ordinary observers) and theoretical (compared to general theoretical) representations (both approaches concern the secondary user)” (Kádár & Haugh, 2013, p. 3). (Im)politeness, as a social practice, is implemented by the participants and is the subject of pragmatics research. Excluding any of these views leads to a limited understanding of the multifaceted phenomenon of (im)politeness.

It is worth noting that the considered concepts are mainly focused on the discussions that arise between primary and secondary approaches to the study of the category of (im)politeness, however, they do not cover all its aspects. Leech (Leech, 1983) considers politeness from the point of view of linguistic pragmatics, proposing a set of maxims of politeness. In other words, Leech's politeness maxims are not related to the concept of “face” at all. In exploring the category of politeness, Leech does not use abstractions such as “face” or “culture”. The researcher considers politeness to be a pragmatic phenomenon, the study of which should be based primarily on the study of language. To study such a phenomenon as mock politeness, Leech proposes the Banter Principle and the Irony Principle. Regarding the debate about primary and secondary approaches to studying the category of (im)politeness, Leech (Leech, 2014) believes that politeness theories should be considered from the perspective of pragmatics and argues that pragmalinguistic politeness and sociopragmatic politeness should be studied as two separate aspects of politeness.

Meanwhile, Terkourafi proposes a model-based approach to the study of politeness, which is based largely on conventionalization. Terkourafi's “model” as “structures of hidden knowledge about the surrounding world” (Terkourafi, 2001, p. 184) is a typical context for speaker's interaction. Thus, Terkourafi refutes the connection between politeness and ambiguity and claims that “the periodic relationship of certain types of context and special linguistic expressions as unquestionable realizations of some actions create the perception of politeness” (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 248). Thus, politeness is associated with conventionalization. However, such an approach has some disadvantages when studying impoliteness. As Culpeper states, “if impoliteness is a deviation from the norm, it can never be conventional” (Culpeper, 2011, p. 35). To refute the claim of deviation from the norm, Culpeper provides many examples of impoliteness formulas that prove that impoliteness can be conventional. Researchers (J. Culpeper, V. Sinkeviciute, C. Taylor) point out that the category of (im)politeness should be studied from the point of view of communication participants.

4. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, approaches based on the concept of “face” and discursive approaches to the study of (im)politeness have their limitations. The theory of “face” is complex and multifaceted. It reflects social and individual value aspects of personality in communication. The concepts of Goffman, Brown and Levinson, as well as Spencer-Oatey reflect different approaches to understanding “face”, complementing each other and revealing the meaning of the concept of “face” in more detail. Some researchers have pointed out the shortcomings of their definitions of “face”. Such remarks led to the emergence of two main trends in the study of (im)politeness. The first trend involved the need to revise the concept of “face” and expand its content. The second trend involved alternative approaches to the study of this category, emphasizing the need to consider different aspects of interpersonal relationships. It can be argued that the critical analysis of Brown and Levinson's concept opened up new perspectives for the development of discursive approaches to the study of the category of (im)politeness. These studies revealed the importance of differentiating politeness of the first (politeness 1) and second (politeness 2) orders, which contributes to a deeper understanding of these concepts. It was justified that (im)politeness is a complex phenomenon that is formed due to the interaction of discourse participants and reflects their social, cultural and individual aspects. Discursive approaches reveal the multiplicity of dimensions of the category of (im)politeness, which contributes to a deeper understanding and explanation of the important dynamics that define the category of (im)politeness.

Therefore, the emergence of compromise approaches that combine the advantages of both concepts is logical. Spencer-Oatey, Culpeper, Haugh, Holmes, Marra, Vine, and Kádár consider both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic aspects of politeness. Terkourafi examines politeness from the point of view of models, emphasizing the role of conventionalization. Leech considers politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon that is studied on the basis of language analysis. We believe that studying the category of (im)politeness requires a comprehensive approach that combines various aspects and helps understand this phenomenon better.

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У статті детально розглянуто еволюцію теорій (не)ввічливості, запропоновано критичний аналіз основних підходів і концепцій у цій галузі. Метою цієї статті є виявлення ключових тенденцій і

проведення ретроспективного аналізу еволюції теорій (не)ввічливості, аналіз їхнього впливу на сучасний соціокультурний контекст. Стаття спрямована на розкриття фундаментальної природи категорії (не)ввічливості в динаміці сучасного суспільства й визначення сфери й аспектів, які потребують подальшого наукового дослідження. (Не)ввічливість, динамічний і культурно вкорінений феномен, завжди була центральною темою в лінгвістиці. Завдяки комплексному огляду наявних теорій стаття орієнтована на історичну траєкторію категорії (не)ввічливості, визначаючи ключові концептуальні зрушення й теоретичні досягнення. Проведено критичний аналіз основних наукових праць, які сформувавши ранні теорії (не)ввічливості, ретельно досліджуючи їх соціокультурні основи й лінгвістичні аспекти. Особлива увага приділена підходам, які зосереджені навколо поняття «обличчя», вивчаючи, як ці теорії адаптувалися до різноманітних культурних і мовних контекстів. У статті розглянуті дискурсивні підходи до вивчення категорії (не)ввічливості, розкриті тонкощі мовного вживання, пов'язаного з феноменом (не)ввічливості. Водночас, у статті описано сучасні підходи, які інтегрують категорію (не)ввічливості в ширші соціолінгвістичні рамки, відображаючи міждисциплінарні впливи, що формують сучасну науку. Це цілісне дослідження має на меті розширити наше розуміння категорії (не)ввічливості як багатогранного явища, пропонуючи зрозуміти його складну взаємодію з мовою, культурою й суспільною динамікою.

Ключові слова: ввічливість, неввічливість, псевдоввічливість, псевдоневвічливість, дискурсивний підхід, теорія «обличчя», соціопрагматика, прагмалінгвістика, прагматика.