

## A Parking Man Language Towards Scollon and Scollon's Theory

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### Abstract

The present study is an attempt to revisit the universality of Brown and Levinson model theory on politeness (1978, 1987) in the context of A Parking Man Language. The data are a several dialogues drawn purposively from two Parking Man literary texts which contain materials on the history, lives, and culture of a Parking Man. These samples are then translated into English literally and idiomatically, and then analysed within the framework adapted from Scollon and Scollon's (1983, 1995). The study concludes that in either negating or affirming a proposition, A Parking Man tend to provide hearers with additional information mainly serving either as a validation, an emphasis, or a lubrication of their negation or affirmation. This is mainly intended to keep hearers feel happy and satisfied which eventually save their 'positive face'. The data shows that there is no negation in responding to a command and a statement. This implies that A Parking Man tend to avoid refusing a command and confronting one's statement since this will obviously satisfies hearer's 'negative face' by disappointing them. Above all, politeness phenomenon in Parking Man Language is all governed by socio-cultural norms and values applied in the community. Thus, politeness in A Parking Man Language is a norm which tends to be more applicable in a collective society not simply an instrument which is more popular in an individualistic society.

**Keywords** : Parking Man, Pragmatics concept

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini adalah upaya untuk meninjau kembali universalitas model teori Brown dan Levinson tentang kesopanan (1978, 1987) dalam konteks A Parking Man Language. Data dari beberapa dialog yang diambil secara dari dua tukang Parkir Pria yang berisi bahan-bahan tentang sejarah, kehidupan, dan budaya Seorang Parkir. Sampel-sampel ini kemudian diterjemahkan ke dalam bahasa Inggris secara harfiah dan idiomatik, dan kemudian dianalisis dalam kerangka kerja yang diadaptasi dari Scollon dan Scollon (1983, 1995). Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa baik dalam meniadakan atau menegaskan suatu proposisi, Seorang tukang parkir laki-laki cenderung memberikan informasi tambahan kepada pendengar terutama berfungsi baik sebagai validasi, penekanan, atau pelumasan negasi atau afirmasi mereka. Hal ini terutama dimaksudkan untuk membuat pendengar merasa senang dan puas yang pada akhirnya menyelamatkan 'wajah positif' mereka. Data menunjukkan bahwa tidak ada negasi dalam menanggapi perintah dan pernyataan. Ini menyiratkan bahwa Seorang Petugas Parkir cenderung menghindari menolak perintah dan menghadapi pernyataan seseorang karena ini jelas akan memuaskan 'wajah negatif' pendengar dengan mengecewakan mereka. Di atas segalanya, fenomena kesopanan dalam Bahasa Parkir Manusia semua diatur oleh norma-norma sosial dan nilai-nilai yang diterapkan dalam masyarakat. Dengan demikian, kesopanan dalam Bahasa Parkir Orang adalah norma yang cenderung lebih berlaku dalam masyarakat kolektif bukan hanya instrumen yang lebih populer dalam masyarakat individualistis.*

**Kata Kunci:** Pentugas Parkir, Konsep pragmatik

### 1. Introduction

In recent years, the relevance of pragmatics has become increasingly clear to applied linguists. Though the scope of pragmatics is far from easy to define, the variety of research interests and developments in the field share one basic concern: the need

to account for the rules that govern the use of language in context (Levinson, 1983). One of the basic challenges for research in pragmatics is the issue of universality: to what extent is it possible to determine the degree to which the rules that govern the use of language in context vary from culture to

culture and from language to language? Answers to this question have to be sought through cross-cultural research in pragmatics.

A number of studies have established empirically (Cohen and Olshtain, 1981; Kasper 1981; House 1982; Wolfson 1981; Blurn-Kulka 1982; Thomas 1983) that second language speakers might fail to communicate effectively (commit pragmatic failure). Even indicating in Widdowson's terms (Widdowson, 1978) that learners are just liable to transfer 'rules of use' (having to do with contextual appropriacy) as those of 'usage' (related to grammatical accuracy). One part of such a phenomenon is the study on politeness.

In their famous work on politeness, Brown and Levinson (hereafter, B&L) (1987) set out to investigate universal principles of language use. While recent work shows that not all the concepts they developed were applicable across cultures (Matsumoto 1988; Watts, Me and Ehlich 1992; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1992b), they did provide a useful analytical framework for the study of politeness phenomena. They showed very convincingly for instance that request are in essence "Face-Threatening Acts" (1987:59), and that all cultures share at least some common strategies to solve this problem.

#### Problem and Objectives

The search for language universal, however, is not always the most useful approach when dealing with cross-cultural communication, because, as Ide (1988:372) points out, 'if such universals of linguistic politeness exist, how can we account for the differences in different language ...?' B&L (1987:36) themselves point out that 'even minor difference in interpretive strategies carried over from a first to a second language ... can lead to misunderstanding and cross-group stereotyping of interactional style'. When exploring problems of cross-cultural communication it is those minor differences - and their sometimes devastating consequences - which inevitably become the focus of the research. Therefore, It is in this case the present study will embark, particularly in the context of Parking Man Language.

In Parking Man Language, politeness

is one of the concrete entities efface' which essentially concerns with 'one's dignity', and 'honour'. Such an honour is not concerned only with the individuals but also with families including relatives and even with groups. As such, 'face' plays a very significant roles in Parking Man Language since it governs A Parking Man in how to live their lives in harmony which results in what Frazer calls (1990:220) 'positive politeness'. In contrast, the incongruence of an action with such a cultural value or norm will result in 'negative politeness' (Frazer, 1990:220). Consequently, It will ruin their honour which eventually could result in an alienation from their community.

In Parking Man, negating and affirming a proposition could be realised in various linguistic forms such as 'tena', 'tenapa', 'tea', 'teaja', 'teamaki', 'teamako', 'teako' denoting a negation, while 'iyeq', 'iyoq', 'bajihni' denote an affirmation. Another important form in either addressing or responding in an interaction in Parking Man is the employment of second person pronoun forms which also has some different forms such as -nu, nu-, -ko, -ki, ikau, ikatte, etc. Such a variation is obviously motivated by different settings and social status of participants. It is to this phenomenon this study will be in base. Moreover, the study is also aimed at revisiting the universality of B & L model theory on politeness (1978, 1987)

#### Data

The data of this study are dialogues which are taken from two types of Parking Man literary texts. From the two sources, several dialogues drawn purposively as the samples of the present study. These samples are then translated into English literally and then idiomatically.

### 1.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is primarily based on B&L's model theory (1978, 1987) on the notions of positive and negative politeness strategies.

To be more specific, the study has as the data of the present study demands adapted Scollon and Scollon's (1995) politeness theory, especially their labelling system, by adding another variable, i.e. +/- K (kinship). As we know that Scollon and Scollon's model theory divide politeness

strategy into three politeness system and each exhibits only two variables, i.e +/-P (Power); +/-E (Distance),: Deference, Solidarity, and Hierarchical politeness strategies. They label deference politeness strategy as (-P+D), solidarity politeness strategy as (-P-D), and hierarchical politeness strategy as (+P-/D) (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:44-47).

The crucial reason for adapting Scollon and Scollon's model theory is primarily motivated by the need to have a somewhat more reliable and comprehensive framework for analyzing the data of the present study. I found that Scollon and Scollon's theory is still not enough to account for the difference between hierarchical relation within a kin context and non-kin context. These two relations are fused in one in Scollon and Scollon's. In Parking Man, such a kin relation appears to be much more complex because it concerns with not only the relation.

I believe that the form used in the interactions within a kin context relation is significantly different from those in a non-kin context one in their language. For instance, In Makassarese, forms used will be different in master-servant interaction, an asymmetrical non-kin relation, and those in father-son interaction, an asymmetrical kin relation. In the Scollon and Scollon's framework, these two interactions will be all mapped onto only one frame, that is, hierarchical politeness strategy which is labelled as (+.P-D). As such, in terms of labelling system, the two interactions do not show any differences. Therefore, in the present study I will propose to add another variable to Scollon and Scollon's model theory, i.e. a kin context which is labelled as (+K) and non-kin relation labelled as (-K). So, the two interactions above can be labelled as (+P-D-K) for the master-servant interaction and as (+P-D+K) for the father-son interaction. As such, the distinction between the two interactions is much clearer in terms of their relational patterns. Hopefully this model could provide a more abstract framework for any other similar cultures.

Brown and Levinson (1978) distinguish five categories of politeness strategies. These range from those which involve

very little risk of loss of face, their first strategy 'bald on record', to the strategy of not saying anything because the risk is too great, their fifth strategy. The second category of strategies they call positive politeness. These strategies emphasise the commonality of the speaker and the hearer. These strategies are addressed to the hearer's positive face, that is, to his desire to be thought of as a supporting member of the society.

Scollon and Scollon (1983, 1995) call this category of politeness strategies 'solidarity politeness' as a way of reminding ourselves that the emphasis of these strategies is on the common grounds of the participants' relations. Lying behind solidarity politeness is the assumption that there is little distance (-D) between the participants and that there is also at most a slight power (-P) difference between them.

Brown and Levinson (1978) call the third category of politeness strategies negative politeness. This is because these strategies are directed to the negative face of the hearer, to his right to be free from imposition. The essence of negative politeness is deference and so no wonder that Scollon and Scollon (1983,1995) call these strategies 'deference politeness strategies'.

According to Scollon and Scollon (1983), unlike solidarity politeness, deference politeness emphasises the distance (+D) between the participants. The speaker, out of respect for the hearer's negative face, advances his imposition with care. He seeks to give the hearer 'a way out' in case the hearer regards the imposition as too great. Deference politeness acknowledges the seriousness of the imposition in the act of making it. Solidarity politeness, though, is directed more to the general nature of the relationship between interactants. The fourth category of politeness strategies treats impositions as so great that they are advanced only 'off record'. By this we mean that the communication is ambiguous. It may be taken either as an imposition or not. The decision is left up to the hearer.

## 2. Findings and Discussion

Nowadays, many literature have been published on politeness theory such as to name only a few Lakoff (1973), Brown

and Levinson (1978, 1987), Hill et al (1986), Leech (1983), Frazer (1990), Kasper (1990), Scollon and Scollon (1983, 1995). Among them Brown and Levinson's face saving approach was evaluated to be a more fully articulated version (Frazer, 1990) and it is the most widely cited and followed model.

However, some studies including We (1989), Matsumoto (1988), and Gu (1990) rather contradictory with, to some extent, Brown and Levinson's framework to explain some politeness phenomena especially in non-western cultures including this present study.

Recent non-Western politeness research has mainly consisted of attempts to show the invalidity of Brown and Levinson's theory for the universality of face - the notion at the heart of their politeness theory. Brown and Levinson's notion efface is based on Goffman's definition of face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself (1972:319). The central aspects of Brown and Levinson's theory are two types of desires: the desire to be approved of by others called positive face and the desire to be unimpeded by others in one's actions called negative face.

The first desire is termed 'positive face' and the second 'negative face'. Brown and Levinson assume not only that these operate in almost all languages and cultures, but also that the need to protect alter's negative face and to defend ego's positive face are important functions of politeness in all languages and cultures. Face is therefore seen as a type of pancultural human resource that can be lost, maintained, and enhanced. The main principle of Brown and Levinson's theory is the notion that "some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require 'softening'" (1987:24). Consequently, social interaction becomes an activity of continuous mutual monitoring of potential threats to the faces of interactants, and of devising strategies for maintaining the interactants' face - a view that if always true, could rob social interaction of all elements of pleasure.

Research questioning the universality of Brown and Levinson's notion of face can be categorised as falling into the following dichotomies: strategic versus dis-

cernment politeness, private versus public face, and social norm versus face-saving politeness. To begin with the first, in their studies of the honorific system in Japanese, both Matsumoto (1989) and Ide (1989) argue that it is not necessarily face that governs the interactants' behaviour but rather interactional aspects of the conversation and social and psychological attitudes toward the particular referent expressed by the subject. Matsumoto (1989: 208) asserts that "no utterance in Japanese can be neutral with respect to (the) social context" in which it is uttered; "a Japanese speaker cannot avoid conveying the setting and the relationship among the addressee, the third person(s) or object(s) (which I will call referent(s)) in the utterance, and him/herself. In a culture where the individual is more concerned with conforming to norms of expected behaviour than with maximising benefits to self, face, in Brown and Levinson's sense, ceases to be an important issue in interpersonal relationships (Matsumoto 1989:218). In such a culture, discerning what is appropriate and acting accordingly is much more important than acting according to strategies designed to accomplish specific objectives such as pleasing or not displeasing others.

Ide (1989:223) subscribes to the view that discernment rather than face is the motivating force behind Japanese politeness. She argues that Brown and Levinson's universal principles neglect two aspects of language and usage which are relevant to linguistic politeness in Japanese: (a) the conscious choice of 'formal linguistic forms', and (b) an aspect of usage, 'discernment', which she defines as "the speaker's use of polite expressions according to social conventions rather than interactional strategy". Discernment is to be distinguished from volitional politeness. While volitional politeness aims at performing linguistic acts to achieve specific goals, discernment is a form of social indexing that "operates independently of the current goal a speaker intends to achieve" (Kasper 1989:196). This again suggests that certain manifestations of politeness are responses to expected social norms of behaviour. In Japanese society, according to Ide, "the practice of polite behaviour according to social conventions is known as wakimae. To behave

according to wakimaais to show verbally and non-verbally one's sense of place or role in a given situation according to social conventions" (1989:230). In other words, polite behaviour is a response to one's awareness of social expectations appropriate to his/her place in society.

A contrast between private versus public face views of politeness is made by Gu (1990), although indirectly. If Brown and Levinson's theory represent a private face view that implicitly elevates the individual over the group, Gu's approach represents a public face view that emphasises group rather than the individual. Gu (1990) finds Brown and Levinson's model unsuitable for accounting for politeness phenomena in Chinese. First, "the Chinese notion of negative face seems to differ from that defined by Brown and Levinson", and second "in interaction politeness is not just instrumental. It is normative" (1990: 241-242). He emphasises the normative nature of politeness in Chinese society, noting that Brown and Levinson's failure to go beyond the instrumental and recognise the normative function of politeness in interaction is probably due to their construction of their theory around the notion of two rational and face-caring model persons (MPs). This, he argues, may well work in atomistic and individualistic societies like those in the West, but not in a non-Western society where the group is stressed above the individual. Gu's social norm view corresponds, and is therefore quite compatible with, the public face view which I adopt in this study. Both are in agreement with Watt's notion of politic behaviour, which he defines as "socio-culturally determined behaviour directed towards the goal of establishing and/or maintaining in a state of equilibrium the personal relationships between individuals of a social group, whether open or closed, during the on-going process of interaction" (1989:135, and forthcoming).

Responding to polar question. The data show that in negating and affirming the speaker's proposition in polar question, there is no significant differences between simple and complex responses in terms of the forms used by the participants. When the relation of the interactants is asymmetrical, the superiors are more likely to use a

less polite form such as *mako*, *mi*- 'you' in both responding and addressing. In contrast, the inferiors use the more polite forms such as *bos*/'sir' in responding or addressing. The following examples, show this clearly.

1. A dialogue between a parking man and office boy who has just got home. S (speaker) = parking man 11 (hearer) - office boy  
The relation form - Hierarchical politeness strategy in kin context (+P-D+K)

S. *Niyak+mako?*  
'Are you present, now?'  
H. *Niak+mak.* 'I am'.

2. A dialogue between parking man and student, S = parking man, H = student  
The relation form = Hierarchical politeness strategy in non kin context (+P-D-K)

S. *Niyaksumpaeng tau nu+cinikammentengri+motoro na? just now people You+see stand PREP+vehicle ? 'Were there any people you saw just now standing near his vehicle in front of the vehicle?'*  
H. *Niyak, bos.* 'Yes, there was, sir'

The two interactions above show the same form of what Scollon and Scollon (1995) term it as 'hierarchical politeness strategy' and are labelled as +P-D for (1) and +P+D for (2). However, Scollon and Section's framework cannot explain the difference between the two interactions above. In (1), the relation is in a kin context and thus is labelled as (+K). As such, the use of titles such as *puang*, *karaeng*, *bos* 'sir' etc., by the inferiors in both addressing and responding to their superiors is optional. By contrast, in (2) where the relation is non-kin (-K) the use of such a title for the inferiors is compulsory. The omission such a title in addressing and responding will violate what Fraser call it as 'the social norm view', that is explicit rules that prescribe a certain behavior, which result in incongruent action with the norm, i.e. impolite (Fraser, 1990:220). So, to combine the Scollon and Scollon's labelling system with the label that I propose we then can label (1) as (+P-D+K) while (2) as (+P+D-K) which clearly

show the difference of relational pattern.

Interestingly, even in symmetrical relations, for instance an interaction between two colleagues which is formulated as ‘solidarity politeness strategy in non-kin context labelled as (-P-D-K) also shows a contradiction with Scollon and Scollon’s theory (1995:45) claiming that such a strategy will involve much informality regardless of the setting. This is counter-attacked by the data as in (3) below which indicates the participants still involve formality although the participants are colleagues, and thus the forms they used are those which are more polite ones such as *iyeq*(opp. *iyuq*) ‘yes\ bos’sir’.

3. A dialogue between two colleagues, S= older H= younger

The relation form = Solidarity politeness strategy in non-kin context (-P-D-K)

S. *Man-na+njolanarosobajik+jibate+naakbua ?although+DCT soil infertile good+PTCLway+POSS yield ? ‘Does it still yield well although the soil is infertile?’*  
H. *lyekbos, kama+mi+njobate+nana+paumantaripa rtaniang+a. yes sir ‘Yes, sir, said by the agricultural officer’.*

The phenomenon is also found in the interaction between two strangers which is framed into a ‘deference politeness strategy in non-kin context’labelled as (-P+D-K). According to Scollon and Scollon’s theory (1995:44) in such a politeness strategy the participant will employ formality (contrast with above). And thus they will use polite forms in the interaction. Again the data show a different behaviour, i.e. the participants use impolite rather than polite forms such as *ikau*(opp. *ikatte*) ‘you’

However, in reality, these two contradiction phenomena, i.e. Scollon and Scollon’s theory and the fact shown by the data, are not impossible to occur. Actually, tendency to be polite with all people including strangers is typical character of A Parking Man. Nevertheless, certain people like

bureaucrats, people who hold a higher rank or social status have got used to accepting formal and very polite forms from their subordinates and giving a less polite form. As Brown and Oilman (1960) in Giglioli (1972:255) point out that there is a tendency for superiors give ‘T’ form and receive ‘V’ form. As such, that behaviour becomes gradually habitual.

Such a phenomenon above is a common practice among Parking Man So, as a whole, responding politely to polar questions is much determined by the linguistic form especially pronoun ‘you’ encoded by the hearers in responding to the speakers. So, in this sense, this feature verifies Ide’s (1989) argument claiming that politeness phenomena in Japanese culture is manifested through two forms; the linguistic forms and discernment which are according to Ide neglected by Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) model theory of politeness. This phenomenon might also imply that politeness in Makassarrese can be manifested by not only verbal forms like pronoun ‘you’; -ta, ki-ki, *ikatte*, (opp. -nu, nu-, -ko, *ikau*) titles; *bos*, ‘sir’, etc. but also non-verbal ones such as gestures, facial expressions, etc. Tannen (1984:193) points out that ‘only a part of meaning resides in the words spoken, the largest part is communicated by hints, assumptions, and audience filling-jn from context and prior experience. I believe that these two forms are equally important in Makassarrese since these are all governed by what we call it as ‘etiquette in speaking and acting/behaving politely’, for instance, paying attention when people talk to you, try to keep smile during the interaction, be cooperative, etc.

Responding to a request. The data show that no significant differences between the simple and the complex responds in negating and affirming the speaker’s proposition when responding to a request in terms of the use of pronoun ‘you’ and the titles like *bos*?‘sir’. Like the previous discussion, when the relation is asymmetrical, that is, ‘hierarchical politeness strategy in kin or non-kin context (+P+/-D+/-K), the superiors are more likely to employ less polite forms such as *ikau*, nu-, -nu, ‘you’ etc. By contrast, the inferiors will constantly use the more polite forms such as *ikatte*, -ki‘you’,

etc. as in the following example.

4. A dialogue between parking man and student. S= parking man, H= student

The relation form = 'Hierarchical politeness strategy in non-kin context' (+P-D-K)

S. *Ikatte+mamisengku+parekmangge. you+only I make father.*

*'It is only you that I regard as my father'.*

H. *Bajik+mi. ikausikalinakkepissimpulorannu+ku.*

*'All right. Your happiness is once but mine is ten times'.*

Even in a kin (+K.) context such as interaction between parking man and student, the parking man as the superior might address and respond to his student by using both the polite and less polite forms. In contrast, the student as the inferior keeps using the more polite forms when addressing and responding to her parking man. The following example shows this.

5. A dialogue between parking man and office boy,

S = parking man H = office boy  
 The relation form - Hierarchical politeness strategy in kin context (+P-D+K)

S. *Erokdu-du+aknaungammantangmanlangridaeng+ku.*

H. *Bajik+mipitnnapalengerok+konaung.*

Another typical feature is shown by the interaction between a king and a common people. In this interaction the common people as the inferior has to use typical expression in responding to and addressing the king as the superior, i.e. sombangu 'your Highness' as in the following example.

6. A dialogue between parking man and other people. S = parking man H = student

The relation form = Hierarchical politeness strategy in non-kin context (-HP+D-K)

S. *Bajikbajiktojeng-ibainen+nu,*  
 H. *Sombang+ku, amman-tam+mi+akanapujikaraeng+a.*

However, such a form is not used anymore today. Instead, there are special forms used for parking man. But, in daily practice today, these forms appear ambiguous with those which actually mean 'sir' such as bos as found in the samples. In certain people might use these forms to aim at performing a compliment or flattery. There is an assumption that such a strategy can lubricate and thus speed up the process of the business that we encounter. In other word, by addressing for instance the bureaucrats using such a form, they will feel good because they feel themselves as if they are a noblemen which occupy a higher rank in the society., As such, it will save their positive face.

As a whole, the data show that negating and affirming a proposition in a request interaction can be done by using direct and indirect forms. When the hearer (H) is in superior position, a more direct response will likely to be used by him/her as in example (5) above. By contrast, a less direct respond will be likely to be used if the H is in inferior position as shown by (6) above or alternatively H is superior but in this case the speaker is showing a modesty by employing for instance a metaphorical form as shown by the examples in (4) above and typical religious expression like 'if God and the prophet permit' as in (7) below. Leech (1983:132) categorised his Politeness Principle (PP) into six maxims; Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy. He defines modesty in a two-clauses contrasting pair as minimising praise of self, maximising dispraise of self. This suggests that the speaker who does modesty will put her/himself in the inferior slot.

### 3. Conclusion

Regardless of some disputes on B&L (1987) theory, the theory has scholarly laid a fundamental framework for any politeness studies in the world. It is said that B&L model theory is the most articulated and cited framework of politeness since it

was launched about three decades ago. However, as other studies do especially those which are conducted in Asia, the present study has empirically demonstrated some defect of the universality of B&L model theory. Among other things, the notion of 'face' in B&L (1987) model theory refers to 'one's wants and desire' while in Parking Man it is much more oriented to one's dignity and pride.

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