



**Impoliteness Issue in Hemingway's ''
The Short Happy Life of Francis
- Macomber**

**Assist. Instructor Rasha S. Obaid
Education College for Women, Anbar
University**

E-mail: rashaso@ uoanbar.edu.iq

Abstract Politeness is considered as one manifestation of the wider concept of etiquette, or appropriate behavior. **It is the expression or the behavior one adopts in order to alleviate a social interaction.** While impoliteness works in the opposite direction of politeness by which the addresser intends intentionally or unintentionally to damage the addressee's face rather than saving it. **The present study sheds lights on the notion of impoliteness in general and Austin's model 'Face Attack Acts' (1987) in particular.** It begins by a brief overview of the theoretical framework underlying politeness, in order to discuss some definitions of politeness and impoliteness. The aim of this paper is to reveal how far the strategies of impoliteness affect polite style, then it presents a practical application of what has been offered theoretically by analyzing some extracts of Hemingway's "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"

Keywords: Politeness, Impoliteness, Face Attack Act, Hemingway's story

1. Introduction

People need language as a tool to communicate with each other. They make conversation to obtain certain information or have some knowledge about what happens in the environment. In every communication there should be a principle, general truth, or pattern. This communication contains politeness and violation. Politeness is considered as an aspect of pragmatics, but some regard it as a sociolinguistic phenomenon. Accordingly, impoliteness is also viewed as a pragmatic phenomenon since it is emerged from the former. As pragmatics according to (Mey,1993:7) is needed if we want a fuller, deeper and generally more reasonable account of human language behavior and the effects of the use of language on the other participants in an act of communication, so **politeness** is based on the notions of social norm and convention, and impoliteness is identified by the deviation from those norms of the former. Thus, politeness and impoliteness as concepts are dealt within the study of 'social dynamics of human interactions' and that the terms which are attached to politeness are 'respect', 'courtesy' and 'deference', while those attached to impoliteness are 'rudeness', 'discourtesy', and 'verbal aggression'. (Culpeper and Kadar, 2010:9)

2. Politeness

Politeness has become a commonly discussed notion related to sociolinguistics and pragmatics in the last decades as a tool to investigate the intercultural communication. This is normal since it comes out to be an essential part of everyday life in all civilized societies. Politeness involves 'polite' behaviors. It is concerned with what those behaviors, linguistic and nonlinguistic, consist of, how they vary in context, and why they are considered 'polite'. There are many definitions of politeness offered by linguistic scholars. According to Lakoff (1990:34) and Leech (1983:82) politeness is the forms of behavior which make personal and social interactions more easily obtained and make an atmosphere of harmony between interlocutors via minimizing the inner inherent conflict in all human interactions. Like other pragmatics phenomena, politeness has more than one model like Brown and Levinson (1978), Leech's (1985) and Lakoff's (1979). They all suggest some strategies and there are common features among the three models. There are some aspects of an external context which are particularly determinate of language choice in the domain of politeness; these may include the power-distance relationship of the interactants and the extent to which a speaker imposes or requires something of his/her addressee. To be (polite), means a speaker is attempting to create an implicated context that matches the one assumed by the addressee. (Grundy,1995:127). Brown and Levinson explain politeness as a complex structure applied to soften face threatening acts, while other linguists like, Culpeper, and Bousfield, deal with the opposite direction of politeness. Thus, they have studied the communicative situations where the addresser's purpose is to damage the addressee's face rather than softening face threatening acts.

3. Impoliteness

Impoliteness may well be identified, based on Brown and Levinson's 'Theory of politeness', as the form of such acts as reproaching, threatening, insulting, belittling, etc. The evaluation of an utterance to be polite or impolite is subject to the norms of a sociocultural community. Most of the definitions of it are based on the notion of face. Brown and Levinson are enthused by the notion of face presented by Goffman and Grice's Maxims. They affirm that any behavior that attempts to protect the face of addressee is polite; consequently any behavior that attacks the face of addressee is impolite. Therefore, face later is viewed as the central concept of the definition of impoliteness. (Aydınoglu, 2013:473) Thus, Impoliteness is associated with the terms face, face threatening acts, face saving acts, negative and positive face, bald on record, etc. Yule gives a good account of those terms, Yule describes face as the public image of person; the emotional and social sense of self everyone has which needs everyone else to recognize. While positive

face is the need to be accepted by others, to be treated as a member of some group and to know that his/her wants are shared by others. On the other hand, negative face is the need to be independent and have freedom of action and not to be imposed on by others. What a speaker says and threatens another individual's expectation regarding self image is face threatening act. Additionally, face saving act is the speaker's action to minimize the possible threat. (1996:60-61)

Culpeper, et al state that impoliteness is the use of strategies which are designed to attack the hearer's face and in this manner, they cause social conflict and disharmony(2003:1550). Leech, on the other hand explains that a theory of politeness is certainly also a theory of impoliteness ,since impoliteness is non-observance or violation of the constraints of politeness (Leech,2005:18).

4. Face Theory

Face is regarded as socially or interactively based, this means that face exists in response to the existence of others and in interactions with others. So, face is a specific image that a person presents to another one sine everyone has a desire to be seen in a certain way by others. Not to forget that this image is affected by the requirements of the situation or context. According to Goffman (1955) face "is the positive public image you seek to establish in social interactions."

Brown and Levinson depend on Coffman's face theory in founding politeness theory and they expand face theory. They (1978:63) define face as "the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved of in certain respects." They state that people have two faces *positive face*; which is a desire to be approved and accepted by others, and *negative face* based on adesire to proceed without being impeded upon.

Goffman's view (1967:14) is that impoliteness causes an intentional verbal threat to the other face. So he proposes three categories regarding face threats in order to interpret impoliteness properly. The first one is intentional face threat in which the addresser causes offence and aggression through his malicious and spiteful intention utterance to the addressee. Secondly, incidental face threat where the addresser may be offensive due to unintended actions so they arise impoliteness. And thirdly, accidental face threat where the addresser may be observed as offensive due to naiveness, although his utterances of impoliteness are unintentional and unwitting. (Bousfield,2008:67 cited in El- Samir)

5. Austin Model of Impoliteness (1987)

Austin (1987) employs the term 'dark side of politeness', instead of dealing with the notion of impoliteness directly. So he proposes the term 'face attack' in which he argues that the 'dark side of politeness' could be more explicit in terms of 'face attack acts'(FAA) by which the hearer's face is threatened. (1987:14 cited in El- Samir)

In his model (ibid: 19-25), he presents two strategies and then he focuses on the factors that affect Face Attack choice.

1. Attacks on Positive Face: it works as follows:

- a. The speaker does the FAA baldly without redress through his identifying the hearer's face, and he intentionally insults the latter.
- b. The speaker orients the hearer's positive face to an inappropriate act and thus the speaker goes off record.

2- Attacks on Negative Face

- a. The speaker directly ignores the hearer's needs making imposition without redress and creating coercive conduct.
- b. The speaker orients the hearer's negative face, therefore familiarity would be inappropriate indicating a distancing conduct

The following subclasses of these strategies are thus observed: **1- Attacks on Positive Face include:**

a. Insult or humiliation: by which the speaker shows disrespect to thehearer's face needs - Expression of violent, unacceptable emotion.

- Mentioning of taboo topics.
- Bringing bad news for the addressee.
- Raising dangerously emotive, divisive topics.
- Deliberate conversational non-cooperation, e.g., interrupting, ignoring.
- Use of address terms.
- Unwilling promising.
- Over- familiarity.

b. Patronizing: The speaker disregard s the hearer's face needs

- Dropping hints, using euphemisms in a selective manner

- Effusive and obvious complimenting.
- Unnecessary and delayed explanations.
- Drawing attention to reasons for excessive face regard

2- Attacks on Negative Face include:

- a. Coercion:** The speaker forces the hearer to do something, which the latter would not do otherwise.
- Orders and bald requests. - Suggestions or pieces of advice.
 - Reminding.
 - Threats, warnings, and dares.
 - Sexual harassment.
- b. Distancing:** The speaker shows familiarity with the hearer, but not with others:
- Use of address terms and status - marked identification
 - Going off record without need
 - Interrupting flow of conversation to avoid embarrassing the hearer.
 - Unnecessarily apologizing. - Offering excuses.

6. A Brief Account on Hemingway's Story

This story is about power and according to Brown and Levinson power means "is the degree to which the hearer can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of the speaker's plans and self-evaluation." (1978: 82 cited in Hardy 1985:62)

The main characters in the story are Francis, Margret his wife and Robert Wilson the safari guide. It begins with the sentence, "It was now lunch time and they were all sitting under the double green fly of the dining tent pretending that nothing had happened" (Hemingway,1966:3 cited in Hardy,1985:58), but before that an incident has happened that morning when Macomber, runs from the charging, wounded lion, in full view of his wife, Wilson, and the gun bearers, and Wilson manages to kill it, thus Macomber severely damages his own positive face. That's why just thirty minutes after the incident, they sit at the dining tent in a state of emotional shock pretending to avoid what had happened.

Macomber is depicted as having very low power and he tries many times to reconstruct his own positive face, but he lacks the ability of imposing his own evaluation of his face on others. Therefore, he has to choose between Margot's evaluation of his face and Wilson's evaluation of his face. And at the end, there will be a direct conflict between Margot and Wilson over the fate of the powerless Francis. Margot holds the view that if Francis stays a coward he will less likely leave her for a younger woman, so her evaluation of him must be always a coward and she tries to impose that on him. While Wilson's evaluation on the other hand, is that even if he is a coward, he can be a brave man, but he must follow Wilson's own creed for bravery. (Hardy 1985:62)

So there is a difficult job imposed on Macomber to save his positive face in front of the **people who saw it** damaged.

7. Data analysis

The researcher finds Austin's model(1987) is adequate to the analysis of this story since it deals with the term 'dark side of politeness' and because it neglects the role of the speaker illustrating how utterances are understood and interpreted as offensive. Also, there is a clear coincidence between the utterances in the story and Austin's strategies of impoliteness as will be shown later.

Extract 1

"Will you have lime juice or lemon squash?" Macomber asked.

"I'll have a gimlet," Robert Wilson told him. "I'll have a gimlet too. I need something," Macomber's wife said. "I suppose it's the thing to do," Macomber agreed. "Tell him to make three gimlets." (Hemingway,1966:3)It is the penning scenes of the story which is at lunch time, the three characters seem to sit under the double green fly of the dining tent and pretend to behave politely to each other as if nothing had happened, but on the contrary, impoliteness is apparently observed since Wilson seems to be more familiar with Macomber and asking for his drink in a convenient way showing over- familiarity and thus insulting Macomber positive face. His wife also insults and ignores her husband's offer by agreeing with Wilson and asking the same drink. So here is a clear attack on the positive face of Macomber. The latter behaves politely to them ignoring his face needs and also orders the same drink.

Extract 2

"You've got your lion," Robert Wilson said to him, "and a damned fine one too" Mrs. Macomber looked at Wilson quickly"He is a good lion, isn't he?" Macomber said. His wife looked at him now. She looked

at both these men as though she had never seen them before. One, Wilson, the white hunter, she knew she had never truly seen before. He smiled at her now and she looked away from his face . and back to his red face again. "Well, here's to the lion," Robert Wilson said. He smiled at her again and, not smiling, she **looked curiously at her husband.** (Hemingway,1966:4)

In this extract, there is a realization of positive impoliteness. It's clear that Wilson speaks ironically to Macomber and exaggerates his compliment towards him by saying that he gets his lion hunting that Macomber is the one who hunts the lion which is a fine one too. So Wilson uses the subclass (patronizing) by dropping a hint and using euphemism and thus he attacks his positive face. By his wife's behavior here she tries to attack his positive face too by ignoring him and looking at Wilson's face and her husband's face as if she were making a comparison between them and then by turning to Wilson and smiling to him and not smiling to her husband so there is an obvious insulting towards him. **As mentioned earlier,** Macomber by running from the injured lion in the hunting incident that morning in front of them, severely damages his own positive face. Therefore, their behavior is an act of forgetting what had happened.

Extract 3

"You know you have a very red face, Mr. Wilson," she told him and smiled again. "Drink," said Wilson. "I don't think so," she said. "Francis drinks a great deal, but his face is never red." "It's red today," Macomber tried a joke. "No," said Margaret. "It's mine that's red today. But Mr. Wilson's is always red." "Must be racial," said Wilson. "I say, you wouldn't like to drop my beauty as a topic, would you?" "I've just started on it." "Let's chuck it," said Wilson (Hemingway,1966:5) In this excerpt, Margot's using of the utterance 'red face' brings face threatening act to both Wilson who tries to give a reason and abandons her topic later by changing it and thus he also shows impoliteness by abandoning her words and ignoring her flirting. And Macomber's face is threatened **by** mentioning such thing which is considered a taboo since she disrespects her husband raising dangerously emotive, divisive topic. So it is found that positive impoliteness is clear here by using those sub strategies of it . Macomber also tries to save his face and overtake this topic by making a joke at his expense when he says that his is red too, but she insists on her attacking his face an insulting him. The word 'red' is used metaphorically **because** Margot implies that although her husband drinks, he is neither brave nor attractive like the red-faced Mr. Wilson.

Extract 4

"I'm awfully sorry about that lion business. said Macomber It doesn't have to go any further, does it? I mean no one will hear about it, will they?"

"You mean will I tell it at the Mathaiga Club?" Wilson looked at him now coldly. "No," said Wilson. "I'm a professional hunter. We never talk about our clients. You can be quite easy on that. It's supposed to be bad form to ask us not to talk though.

"I'm sorry," Macomber said. "I'm sorry I didn't realize that. There are lots of things I don't know." (Hemingway,1966: pp. 6-7)

Macomber apologizes to Wilson here and realizes that his loss of face is a threat not only to him, but also to all those who witness the act. So he uses apologizing as a negative impoliteness Strategy. Then Macomber

interrupts Wilson's negative face by asking him not to talk about his cowardly act. He does that by giving hints using off-record Strategy in order not explicitly asking Wilson not to talk about his spineless act. Thus, Macomber does not refer to himself nor to Wilson except when he uses 'I' in his clarification and he asserts "It doesn't have to go any further" and "no one will hear about it." **After that Wilson seems to be angry at Macomber's hint about not talking and he creates a social distance between him and Macomber** implying that his being professional prevents him to expose his client's matters. So he makes use of distancing as a negative impoliteness strategy to create a kind of formal relationship between them. Macomber again employs positive impoliteness by apologizing and giving reasons saying that there are lots of things that he doesn't know.

Extract 5

"How is the beautiful red-faced Mr. Wilson?

Are you feeling better, Francis, my pearl?"

"Oh, much," said Macomber.

down "I've dropped the whole thing," she said, sitting down at the table. "What importance is there to whether Francis is any good at killing lions?"

That's not his trade. That's Mr. Wilson's trade. Mr. Wilson is really verimpressive killing anything. You do kill anything, don't you?"

"Oh, anything," said Wilson. "Simply anything" (Hemingway,1966:8)

Margot has been taking some rest in the tent, then she comes again to join Mr. Wilson and her husband. They have been talking about fixing the issue of the lion and hunting a buffalo in the next morning. In this extract she intends to provoke the red face matter making it more threatening to Wilson and Macomber by describing it 'beautiful'. She attacks her husband face directly by her utterances. She uses the word pearl intentionally implementing that her husband's face is pale as a pearl, so there is a clear metaphor used here to make a comparison between the redness of Wilson and paleness of Macomber. She continues to attack his negative face using impolite strategies by giving excuses that this trade is not her husband's but it's the trade of Wilson, then she moves to use positive impoliteness by flirting Wilson in front of her husband saying that he kills anything. The use of killing here is not meant literally, but that Wilson kills Margot by her attraction to him so she again raises taboo and emotive topics to insult her husband's face.(Hardy, 1985:76)

8. Discussions and Remarks

Hemingway ends his story by the scene of Margret shooting her husband in the back of the head by accident when he is standing ready to shoot the wounded water buffalo. So for the first time in his life, Macomber manages to save his own positive face and overcome his cowardice when he finally shoots the buffalo. Thus, his short happy life begins and ends in a few seconds. So he dies with a continuous attempt to reconstruct his face of bravery. Additionally, Wilson always attempts to persuade him to forget about the lion issue and repair his face.

Impoliteness becomes clear in this story if Mills (2002:78 cited in El-Samir) point of view is looked upon here since she states that an act of impoliteness is judged according to such factors as dominance, break of the norms of the cultural community, and when the act leads to breakdown in a relationship. So all these factors are found in the story. The factor of control and dominance of Margot over Francis is found throughout the whole story. Moreover, Wilson is depicted here as a man who always disregards the rules of the society and makes his own rules. Wilson's defiance of the conventional rules of the hunting game by using a car, which is forbidden in hunting, is an example of this disobedience. And finally the breakdown of the relationship between Macomber and his wife happens when he discovers her betrayal with Wilson after the lion's accident. It is true that if Macomber does not die he will never return to Margot since he finally finds his manhood and gets rid of her dominance

9. Conclusion

This research reaches at the conclusion that impoliteness can be interpreted in different ways depending on the context. It can be evaluated by the speaker and the hearer differently since it depends on the speaker's intention and the hearer's reception. Based on data analysis, the researcher finds that the three characters in the story use different strategies of impoliteness. Positive impoliteness strategies are used more than negative ones, but the negative impoliteness strategy is exploited heavily and changes the flow of the whole story by the use of the subclass of coercion when Margret forces Macomber by her constant reminding and blaming of his cowardice, to change and turn into another man who stands brave and proves his courage. Thus, Macomber's cowardice is the essential point that motivate him to change his personality and he finally feels the taste of manhood.

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