

ABSTRACT

METAPRAGMATICS OF (IM)POLITENESS IN TURKISH: AN EXPLORATORY EMIC INVESTIGATION

Işık-Güler, Hale

PhD., Program in English Language Education

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Şükriye Ruhi

August, 2008, 362 pages

The research at hand maintains an emic approach to understanding (im)politeness¹ (i.e. in its folk sense) within the meaning making processes involved in Turkish. With the intention of reaching an ethnopragmatic theoretical account of (im)politeness, this study investigates tacit knowledge native speakers of Turkish have on (im)politeness and their related perceptions and evaluations. The thesis explores the cultural-conceptual system of (im)politeness in Turkish utilizing three sources: (a) data from an open-ended metapragmatic conceptualization questionnaire probing Turkish native speakers' politeness encounter narratives through seven key metapragmatic politeness terms (i.e. KİBAR, İNCE, NAZİK, DÜŞÜNCELİ, SAYGILI, GÖRGÜLÜ, TERBİYELİ) and eight key impoliteness terms (i.e. KABA, NEZAKETSİZ, DÜŞÜNCESİZ, SAYGISIZ, GÖRGÜSÜZ, TERBİYESİZ, PATAVATSIZ, KÜSTAH), and (b) corpus analyses for the lexical items KİBAR and KABA, (c) (im)politeness encounter narrative interviews with native speakers of Turkish. This research study has been designed mainly as an exploration of what Turkish people consider to be (im)polite, how they express they become (im)polite, and how (linguistic) (im)politeness is interpreted by others in everyday communication, as well as how Turkish native speakers evaluate

(im)politeness through the key (im)politeness lexemes available in the language, what their 'bases of evaluation' are and what views they hold concerning motivations underlying the want to be (im)polite in Turkish. The qualitative thematic analysis conducted on the questionnaire data yielded six bases of evaluation for (the total of 1211) politeness narratives, and eight bases of evaluation for (the 1306) impoliteness narratives. It was revealed that the bases of evaluation for a polite act in Turkish were primarily 'attentiveness to other's emotions, needs and goals' and abidance by 'custom', whereas they were '(quality) face-attack' and '(equity) rights violations' for impoliteness. The corpus analysis and interview data also corroborated these findings. The quantitative cross-mapping of (im)politeness lexemes to (im)politeness themes suggested biases of lexemes for certain themes and themes for lexemes. The motivational and strategic uses of (im)politeness were related more to egocentric tendencies with politeness being motivated predominantly for self-promotion and image management, and goal attainment, and impoliteness motivated mainly by the desire to establish power and project power on to other, to perform an emotive reaction, to hurt other and to reciprocate others' impolite acts to self. The relationship between (im)politeness and the concepts of sincerity, intentionality, historicity, reciprocity and public versus private domain influences are worth pursuing further research on for the Turkish culture. All in all, this study provides Turkish baseline data for later cross-cultural (im)politeness research and suggests that (im)politeness1 (lay) conceptualizations can aid the (scientific) theorizing of (im)politeness2 to a great degree.

Keywords: (Im)politeness, Bases of (im)politeness evaluations, Metapragmatic (im)politeness, (Im)politeness theories, (Im)politeness conceptualizations, Turkish, Emic.