Is Polite Behavior Always Positively Marked? The Role of Sincerity in Politeness in an Arab Context

Cherifa Benkaddour

PhD, University of Relizane, Algeria
cherifa.benkaddour@univ-relizane.dz

ABSTRACT: In this paper, polite/politic linguistic behavior, introduced in Locher and Watts (2005) and which may be used insincerely, was investigated at a first order level of kind. The method followed is that of Spencer-Oatey (2011) who examined the emotions and (im)politeness judgements that people recount in metapragmatic comments and interviews. Thus, the participants of this study were invited to show their own perceptions, and evaluations about polite/politic but insincere linguistic behavior of any individuals behaving with them as such in a purely Arabic context. The responses were analyzed quantitatively. One interesting finding was that this kind of insincere polite/politic behavior was negatively marked unlike what was introduced in the diagram of relational work by Locher and Watts (2005) and which was clearly described as positively marked. This study shows that polite/politic behavior in the spectrum of relational work with judgment (c) ignores the fact that insincerity in polite behavior can generate negative markedness and hence can cause relationship breakup, although it is superficially polite and appropriate.

KEY WORDS: first and second order politeness, negative markedness of politeness, politeness

1. Introduction

The field of politeness studies has drastically developed within the last decades. In this respect, approaches and discussions on how to theorize this topic, especially methodologically, its scope of investigation has also thrived. Among these approaches, Brown and Levinson's model of politeness is the most influential one. However it was criticized a lot for its incompatibility with a lot of cultures when applied. One of the criticisms that proved influential is that of relational work introduced by Locher and Watts (2005). The notion of relational work urges politeness theorists not only to consider the polite variant but should also regard the impolite, non-polite, over-polite variants in the spectrum as a whole. Therefore, Locher and Watts opt for studying the entire spectrum of the interpersonal side of social practice. The notion of relational work is defined as the work people invest in negotiating their relationships in interaction (Locher 2004; Locher and Watts 2005; Locher 2006). Locher and Watts assume that people orient to the norms of behavior which are evoked by frames of expectations in accordance with the social situations and the notions of appropriateness and markedness. Locher and Watts (2005) note that one can think of a certain utterance to be socially appropriate behavior that is socially unmarked (judgment b) and does not evoke any evaluative comments. A behavior that breaks social norms (judgments a and d) is negatively marked and can evoke negative evaluations. Sometimes, relational work could be judged as positively marked and socially appropriate (judgment c) because it follows social norms and does not break or get out of frames of expectations. However, this model has been criticized by Spencer Oatey (2011), who says that it is too narrow to perceive the relational patterns that emerge over time and cannot easily emerge by simply studying recorded data of interaction. This is true, especially at the level of markedness of judgment (c) which cannot always be positive, as introduced in the diagram of relational work by Locher and Watts (2005); and this is due to the intentional aspect of participants when dealing with their counterparts. So the question to be asked here is: 'How can intentionality in politeness affect social markedness of polite/ politic and appropriate behaviour to make it negative and not positive?'

In this respect, I will introduce an example in which social markedness that is evoked over polite/ politic behavior is not positive but negative because of its intentional aspect of insincerity.

In this study, I develop a more contextualized approach to politeness study where the intentional aspect of being polite insincerely can affect our relationships and hence cause relationship breakups because of its lack of truthfulness. The paper is thus organized as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical concept. Section 3 presents the methodology and the implementation of the model. Section 4 presents the results. Section 5 provides a brief discussion concerning the shortcomings of the model at hand when applied. Finally, a conclusion is provided.

2. Literature review

2.1. Politeness theorizing

With the coming of the pragmatic aspect of language use in general, researchers started to focus on language variation according to expressive and stylistic reasons (Locher 2012, 38). Variation in using different ways to convey a message of opening a window could be expressed either directly (open the window) or more softly ('please, would you be so kind to open the window', 'it is cold in here') (Ibid). This discussion was labeled politeness (Ibid). Under this heading, researchers started to be interested in this kind of phenomena. In this respect, a number of approaches have surfaced. The most influential approaches of politeness to date are: Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) and Leech (1983). All of these approaches were influenced and mainly based on the idea of communicative competence introduced by Hymes (1972) and structured on Grice's Cooperative Principle (1975).

Lakoff is said to be the first to explicitly draw a relationship between pragmatic knowledge and politeness use (Locher 2012). Thus, the study of politeness was launched. Politeness has been given a great importance by researchers in the field of sociolinguistics. However, despite the fact that a lot of research has been done on politeness in the last two decades, its definition remains unclear in the sense that its ambiguity and fluidity makes it difficult to come at common agreements on. This is due to the fact that when applying certain theories on specific cultural backgrounds, different types of results appear.

The basic study that underpinned politeness in its first steps was *'the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims'* by Grice (1975). He introduced the Cooperative Principle for the achievement of maximally effective interaction and exchange of information by presenting four basic maxims. They are maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner. Grice believes that when people communicate effectively, they will try to be informative, truthful, relevant, and avoid ambiguity. However, this theory was criticized by Robin Lakoff who asked good questions such as the following: 'why don't people follow Grice's (1975) 'Rules of Conversation'?', 'Why not always speak logically, directly and to the point?' She explained this issue by relating it partly to the need for politeness rules (Lakoff 2004, 152). In this respect, Lakoff's theory of politeness is structured on three basic rules of *Formality*, *Deference* and *Camaraderie*. However and in the same sort of way, Lakoff's politeness theory was criticized by Tannen (1985) who claimed those rules to be unsatisfactory to explain the complex phenomenon of politeness. Watts (2003), in his turn, states that Lakoff's theory of politeness does not explain how speakers come to form sentences which can be classified as polite.

Also, Geoffrey Leech's (1983) theory of pragmatics which is structured on Grice's communication model, is also one of the most known classic works. In his view, politeness is considered a regulative factor in interaction and as a key to indirectly explaining the meaning. The theory of Leech claims strongly for the importance of the communicative goal of the speaker. He emphasizes on "the goal-oriented speech situation in which S uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the H" (1983, 15). He defines the politeness used between individuals as "interpersonal rhetoric" where he sets his three kinds of principles (Hsieh 2009, 41). They are Grice's cooperative principle (CP), his own politeness principle (PP) and the irony principle (IP). Leech claims that his PP is "*designed to minimize (all things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs; maximize (all things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs" (1983)*. Leech's PP consists of a set of Maxims, they are as follows: 1) tact, 2) Generosity and 3) approbation, 4) modesty, 5) agreement 6) sympathyy (see Leech, 1983). Leech asserts that the speaker should always work for the best of the interlocutor (hearer). Leech advocates CP and PP interact with each other. In this respect, he sees the CP maxims are used to explain how utterances are used to express the indirect meanings

of the speaker while PP maxims help us understand the indirectness of the speaker. However, the pragmatic theory of Leech had also been exposed to many kinds of criticizing. For example Fraser (1990) sees that Leech's PP is too theoretical because it does not explain which maxims are to be used, how they are formulated, what their dimensions are, etc. Also, Mey (1993) criticizes the theory of Leech for it does not take the fact of context of situation into consideration. Fraser and Mey prove the failure of Leech's PP because he neglects the cultural and situational context. Not only that, but many researchers point out that Leech leaves open the maxims needed in order to account for politeness phenomenon (see Brown & Levinson 1987; Lavandera 1988; Fraser 1990). Brown and Levinson claim that in creating a new maxim every time to explain politeness, there will be an infinite number of Maxims (1987, 4). Instead, they suggested forming a model to account for politeness choices made by speakers in interaction personally and cross-culturally either.

Brown and Levinson's (1987/1987) theory of Politeness is the most influential theory of politeness to date. Brown and Levinson were the first to systematize the politeness theory by observing some similarities in the linguistic strategies used by people from different language backgrounds: English, Tzeltal and Tamil. Their work consist mainly of two separate parts: the first part is their fundamental theory about the nature of politeness and how it functions in the course of interactions. The second part is a list of strategies known as "Politeness Strategies". The most important concept in the theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson is that of *Face*.

Face is claimed to be the motivation behind politeness behavior. In reality, their politeness theory is influenced by the work of Goffman who introduced the notion of 'Face'. So for a better understanding of this notion, we should refer to the work of Erving Goffman (1967). Goffman defines face as an image "pieced together from the expressive implications of the full flow of events in an undertaking" (1967, 31). In this definition, he stresses the fact that face is constituted in social interactions. That is to say, face does not reside in an individual but it is negotiated in the flow of communicative events. According to Haugh (2013), Goffman (1967, 5) sees face as "*the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken*

during a particular contact" where a line refers to that individual's *"pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this evaluation of the participants, especially himself"* (Ibid).

In this respect, on the ground of what Goffman offers here, one would claim that face is not seen as a static image imposed on individuals. Rather, it is formed during 'a particular contact'. From this point of view, face is seen as the result of face-work during interactions. In this respect Goffman, in turn, defines face-work as *"the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face"* (Goffman 1967,12).

According to Goffman, facework includes what can be said and what can be done either in stating the following *'In other words, facework involves the verbal and nonverbal acts through which an individual expresses evaluations of himself and others that results in the lines underpinning the face of the speaker and others being "maintained", "lost", "saved", or "given"'* (Haugh 2013, 3). This means that face and face-work are inextricably linked with each other (Ibid). Thus on the ground of Goffaman's theory of face and face-work, Brown and Levinson built their seminal theoretical work of politeness. In this sort of way, they expanded the notion of face to the 'positive' and 'negative face' (Brown and Levinson 1987)

Brown and Levinson suggest that all interactants have an interest to maintain two types of face during the course of their interactions. They call them "positive" and "negative" face. Brown and Levinson (1987, 62) claim that positive face is the wish to "be desirable to at least some others" whereas negative face is the wish to have one's "actions …..unimpeded by others". So positive face needs can be said to be the need to be liked and admired whereas negative face needs is considered to be the need for not being imposed upon.

The notion of face in politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) derives another notion in case people try to maintain relationships. This notion is called *"face-threatening acts"*. Brown and Levinson's approach of politeness regards any utterance which *'could be interpreted as making a demand or intruding on another person's autonomy can be regarded as a potential face-threatening act.'* Holmes (1995, 5). This would include even suggestions, advice and requests *'since they potentially impede the other person's freedom of action'* (Ibid). Furthermore, they propose that the degree of threat could be evaluated in relation to three sensitive social variables which are *Social*

Distance between the interlocutors (D), *Relative power* of the interlocutors (P), and *Absolute Ranking* of impositions carried in the act in a certain culture (R). Besides these three variables, one can measure the degree or seriousness of a face-threatening act according to the participants in interaction.

Brown and Levinson argue that individuals try maximally to minimize the threat that can be caused at any given situation or interaction. Therefore, participants in different situations and interactions choose strategies which can suit the needs of these situations and interactions. In this respect, there exist a kind of direct relationship between the seriousness of a face-threatening act and the strategies used by individuals to save their face. This results in considering the fact that the greater the threat of an act, the more polite strategy is required.

On the basis of the belief that face needs exist in any culture, Brown & Levinson's politeness theory (1978) strongly claims that universal rules govern relationships between people so as to be maintained and maintain one another's face (Hsieh 2013, 44). Researchers like Ardnt and Janney (1985, 293) support this claim of universality. They claim that the wish to maintain face and the fear of losing it *are interpersonal universals transcending all sociocultural, ethnic, sexual, educational, economic, geographical and historical boundaries*. However and after a number of attempts by researchers to apply Brown and Levinson's model of politeness, it has become very evident that this theory of politeness cannot account for the different situations in the world's languages and cultures making it clear that the model given by Brown and Levinson is not universal at all.

This model of politeness attracted considerable criticism (Matsumuto 1988; Ide 1989). Not only this theory, but all the traditional theories of politeness study have been criticised because of a number of problems. Grainger (2011) calls them Gricean approaches or the first wave of politeness theorising (Grainger 2011, 169). These approaches were largely criticised by different researchers who call themselves discursive theorists of politeness or postmodern researchers of politeness study. They introduced their new views in works like 'Impoliteness' (Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann 2003; Culpeper 2005), Gender and Politeness (Mills 2013), politeness at work (e.g. Holmes and Schnurr 2005), etc. The discursive turn into politeness criticised the Gricean, mainly Brown and Levinson's approach due to a number of problems. The first

problem in this approach is that it relies on speech act theory where an act like apologising is considered as inherently polite. Mills (2011, 22) gives the example of 'I'm sorry' which *'may not necessarily feature in utterances which are accepted by both speaker and hearer as constituting an apology'*. Mills says that the use of some politeness markers *'which are generally seen within a particular community as indexing an apology may be used when a speaker wishes to indicate a 'surface' apology or even wishes to be impolite'* (Ibid). Thus, the fact of considering some language items or strategies as inherently polite with no account to the context of situation is not adequate. Instead, Coupland, Grainger and Coupland (1988, 255) claim that, *'any empirical work on politeness needs to confront the sequential realisation of politeness phenomena in discourse'*. In this respect, one has to rely on longer discourse fragments within community practices in the evaluations of what is polite and what is impolite. In addition, the Gricean approach seems to neglect the hearer's evaluation of utterance. Eelen argues, *"in everyday practice (im) politeness occurs not so much when the speaker produces behaviour but rather when the hearer evaluates that behaviour"* (Eelen 2001, 109). So judgments and evaluations that can be referred to the hearer are interesting in discursive politeness research. Another important point in the traditional model of politeness is that the analyst decides what is polite or impolite contrary to the discursive approach which gives importance to the participants' decisions of politeness behaviour. This makes a difference between politeness1 which is the participant's evaluation of (im) politeness and politeness2 which is the analyst's evaluation of (im) politeness (Eelen 2001). Another interesting weak point in this theory of politeness is that it is based on face threats and how they can be mitigated in the use some strategies. It is argued that it is not necessary for individuals to use mitigation and that they can use different behaviours such as politic behaviour instead. The discursive approach to politeness (Locher 2006) developed largely to respond to the failings of the Gricean- specifically Brown and Levinson's treatment (Grainger 2011, 170). Grainger (2011) points out that, *'this approach takes the constructionist perspective that meaning is: fluid, negotiable between participants and as such cannot reside in the minds of speakers in the form of 'intention'*. Although this approach was criticized for its lack of clear methodology (Xie et al, 2005, 449), Mills and Van Der Bom later on suggested a clear way of politeness data analysis through interviewing the participants to be the basis for their analysis of politeness (Van Der Bom and Mills 2015).

The approaches of discursive politeness and the interactional model to (im) politeness study have different points of focus in understanding (im) politeness. The interactional approach emphasizes on the construction of (im) politeness during interactions while the discursive approach focuses on judgment and interpretation of (im) politeness behavior by participants. Although different in foci, the two approaches to the analysis of (im) politeness have proved to introduce clear and insightful ways to better understand how (im) politeness works within communities of practice and their contexts as well. Arundale (2006) claims that the two approaches can be considered complementary to each other.

As indicated earlier, the discursive approach to politeness led by, Locher (2004, 2006), Watts (2003, 2005), and Locher and Watts (2005) criticize Brown and Levinson's focus on mitigation of face threatening acts and say one can opt for different behavior like being politic (Locher and Watts 2005). They called this 'relational work' (Watts 1989, 1992, 2003, 2005; Locher and Watts 2005; 2008; Locher 2004, 2006, 2008). In this respect, Locher claims one can also put emphasis on impolite or rude aspects of social behavior.

2.2. Relational work

Locher and Watts (2008: 96) define relational work as "*the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice*". According to this definition, much focus is put on the interpersonal side of communication and the effects of linguistic behavior on our relationships. The term relational work is used instead of Brown and Levinson's one *facework* which is reduced to referring to mitigating behavior only. Relational work, in contrast is '*the entire gamut of interpersonal effects. We can speak of face-enhancing and face-maintaining behavior as well as face-damaging, face-aggressive or face-challenging behavior*' (Tracy 1990). These terms are theoretically second-order ones which can help the researcher to theorize about the interpersonal aspect of language with no reference to more charged terminology such as 'polite' or 'impolite' Locher (2012). Thus, the aim of relational work is to better '*understand how people create relational effects by means of language, comprehend how this process is embedded in its cultural and situated context, and recognize how*

this is interrelated with social and cognitive processes.'(Ibid).These research aims of relational work are theoretical in nature, which motivates the researcher to understand language in use within interpersonal communication elements. According to Locher and Watts (2005), the intention or the perception of a message to be polite or not depends on the hearer's judgments that s/he makes at the level of relational work in situ, and which means during an interaction in a particular setting. These judgments are made on the ground of norms and expectations that people have learnt from similar past experiences of their own or even from others' experiences. This calls for an important notion which is that of 'frame' (Tannen, 1993). This notion is regarded as the cognitive conceptualizations of forms of appropriate and inappropriate behavior that individuals have formulated in the course of their own histories of social practice. Those norms and expectations are achieved over time and are constantly subject to change and variation Locher and Watts (2005).

Locher and Watts (2005) supply the following table to explain what relational work means and people's different judgments about polite behavior when interacting. They assume that people orient to the norms of behavior evoked by frames of expectations in accordance with the social situation and the notions of appropriateness and markedness.

Table 1. Aspects of the spectrum of relational work, exemplified with the lexeme 'polite', in a particular context Y

	LEXEME (first order)	Two of the cognitive domains against which the lexeme is profiled		
Judgement (a):	impolite	inappropriate/ non-politic	+	negatively marked
Judgement (b):	(non-polite)*	appropriate/politic	+	unmarked
Judgement (c):	polite	appropriate/politic	+	positively marked
Judgement (d):	over-polite	inappropriate/ non-politic	+	negatively marked

* The judgement 'non-polite' is unlikely to be uttered.

According to Table 1, Locher and Watts (2005) note that one can think of a certain utterance as socially appropriate behavior of an unmarked kind (judgment b), which does not evoke any evaluative comment. A behavior that has broken a social norm (judgments a and d), is a negatively marked behavior and which evokes negative evaluations like impolite or over-polite. Sometimes, relational work could be judged as positively marked and socially appropriate (judgment c). Locher and Watts follow the interactional approach to (im) politeness (Arundale, 1999, 2006) which is based on the Co-constituting Model of Communication. In general, it sees (im) politeness as interactionally and collaboratively achieved by participants in certain interactions (Haugh, 2007, 309). It perceives (im) politeness as a kind of social practice. Haugh (2007, 310) suggests that politeness and impoliteness should be analyzed out of the responses of the participants in their interactions. Thus, he stresses that analyzing (im) politeness implies focusing on the participants' interpretation, understanding, analysis, negotiation, and evaluation of one another's verbal conduct, which is displayed in the participants' responses. Also, the analysts' interpretation of (im) politeness (second order politeness) should further be strengthened by adopting a first-order politeness perspective to be cross-checked. In this respect, the analyst can further consult the participants for post-facto evaluations for final analytical framework. That is to say, we have to distinguish between lay interpretations of (im) politeness (first order politeness) and (im) politeness as a sociolinguistic technical concept (second order politeness) (Watts 2003).

However, Spencer-Oatey (2011) provides empirical evidence that an exclusive focus on discourse data is too limited in (im) politeness. She claims that 'the relational work' is too narrow to grasp the relational patterns that emerge over time (Locher 2013). Spencer-Oatey (2011) gives the example of a workplace team who described a problem of 'lack of communication' when interviewed by the researchers. This problem would not easily emerge by simply relying on recorded data of interaction. In this respect, Spencer-Oatey (2011,17) claims:

'Since the lack of communication did not usually take place within a face-to-face context nor within an individual speech event but rather occurred over time as the various facets of the project developed, a discourse analytic research approach would have failed to identify these team-related problems.

This suggests that the analytic approaches proposed by theorists such as Locher and Watts (2005) and Arundale (2006, 2010) are too narrow to capture some of the key relational concerns that project members may have and that project managers in the real world need to be aware of and to handle. I would argue therefore that, at least in project partnership contexts, discourse data needs to be supplemented by project members' reflective comments.'

Therefore, and on the basis of the fact that investigating politeness during interaction is not sufficient and that metapragmatic comments derived from interviews are also important, this study examines politeness via direct written interviews with the informants. This is to see their emotions, feelings, and perceptions about insincere politeness use by people with them.

3. Methodology

In collecting my data, I delivered a questionnaire of an open-ended question to thirty individuals. This direct question was about how they would interpret polite behavior of any of their interlocutors when used insincerely. My informants were my first year students of English at the University of Relizane. The data was collected via written answers of their own. The question was asked in the Arabic language. I left the question open so as to avoid any influence of my opinion or my own biases. The informants were a number of thirty students of an age ranging between 17 and 22 years old at most. So the study was a quantitative kind of analysis. This question was a clear elicitation of first-order politeness where real social views could help in the analysis of politeness in general.

4. Results

A totality of thirty answers was collected out of my informants in the elicitation of politeness from a first order level of kind. My informants answered the question directly with either one word or gave an explanation via long expressions. I have to note that my question was about past experiences of insincere politeness use my informants got involved in with their interlocutors acting in this way. This means that I wanted to know the feelings and interpretations of the participants in question during their past interactions with people acting politely and insincerely at the same time

with them. I left the question open so as not to influence them with any of my biases. The question generated a spectrum of answers which gave a clear idea about how the participants thought of politeness use when it got out of truthfulness and many of them related this fact to hypocrisy.

The use of politeness insincerely does have an effect on the feelings and interpretations of people in general and the participants in this study in special. This, in its turn, seemed to have influenced the positive/ negative markedness of the use of polite/politic behavior insincerely of the individuals under study when they got involved in such experiences. When I asked the question, a number of results appeared. Table 1 shows interesting results about the feelings and interpretations of the subjects in question. Surprisingly, more than four fifths (83.33%) of the responses showed negative social markedness about this kind of untruthful polite behavior. The answers ranged between describing this kind of behavior as being hypocritical (36.66%), selfish (20%), exploiting (23.33%), and impolite (3.33%). All those showed a clear negative markedness about someone behaving in this way. On the opposite side of the coin and interestingly enough, it is only less than one fifth of the answers which showed positive markedness considering this behavior to be normal (3.33%), unimportant (6.66%), and understanding that those people might be in need of help (6.66%). Therefore, the results display clear negative of markedness about the use of polite behavior when used out of sincerity although it is socially politic and appropriate. See table 1

Table 1: Elicitation of social markedness about judgement 'c'
of relational work

The question	The answers	The rates
What do you think of people who use politeness for their own benefits?	Hypocrisy	36.66%
	Taking advantage	23.33%
	Selfishness	20%
	Impoliteness	03.33%
	Normal	03.33%
	Unimportant	06.66%
	Might need help	06.66%

5. Discussion

As mentioned earlier, we can consider this investigation as a first order politeness elicitation. The question was about how one would consider others if they used politeness for their own benefits; that is insincerely. The spectrum of answers varied from hypocrisy with the highest percentage followed by the idea of exploitation and the take of advantage and then followed by selfishness with a high rate too. We have to note here that approximately 83.33% of the responses carry negative perceptions of the use of politeness insincerely leading to labeling this kind of behavior different names other than politeness. Only a small proportion of the informants (6.66%) understood the situation and claimed that those acting in this way might need help. The remaining answers of the informants can be seen as neither positive nor negative. The results at hand give us an important idea about social evaluations of (im) politeness use. It urges us not to ignore the intentional side existing between participants in interactions. This is because the intentional aspect that sits behind the use of (im) politeness can influence the evaluations of politeness and hence affect the relationships existing between individuals of the same interaction.

According to this culture under study, these different perceptions do, certainly, not originate from vacuum. They come from complex social environments that exert power on the general thinking of the individuals of this culture and other cultures in general. If we analyse the spectrum of answers, we might come at important conclusions. So, the first answer of hypocrisy originates certainly from society and the culture of these individuals that affects most of them in the society. We have to note that the cultural thinking influences the thoughts of individuals due to the load of discourses and metapragmatics about the use of politeness insincerely. These thoughts are injected in the thinking of individuals of this society since an early childhood stage of life and accompany them to more developed stages of adulthood in life. Thus, it is at an early age that children start to be taught lessons that include the relation of (im) politeness to hypocrisy, selfishness, etc. Most of culture discourses, metapragmatic views are certainly against the use of politeness hypocritically and for one's own benefits. So, this kind of cultural thinking does have a crucial effect on the way my informants think

about polite behavior use insincerely. Hypocrisy has been referred to in one of the previous works of Watts (2003, 2) in saying, 'There are even people who classify polite behavior negatively, characterizing it with such terms as 'standoffish', 'haughty', 'insincere', etc. So politeness relationship to hypocrisy, selfishness, etc is a human universal fact found in all cultures and which takes place in a lot of interpersonal interactions along with sincere polite behavior that is truthful. This generally propagates negative evaluations and markedness of individuals behaving in such a way. So, although some polite behavior appear to be appropriate in the sense of being politic so as not to be negatively marked (according to the notion of relational work), negative evaluations will surface once untruthfulness is noticed whether at the time of interaction or when lately discovered.

In this respect and according to the results at hand, judgment (c) is negatively marked with a high degree in the context under study. This fact can be seen as first-order politeness views of the community practice members under analysis. So, although this polite (politic and appropriate) behavior, which is judgment (c) in the spectrum of relational work supplied by Locher and Watts (2005), can be seen superficially as positively marked, it is in reality negatively marked in this context, and especially at an interpersonal level.

6. Conclusion

All in all, one can conclude that polite behavior which can be used insincerely by some individuals affects social markedness to make it negatively evaluated although that kind of behavior is politic and superficially appropriate. One can conclude also that the intentional (sincere ore insincere) side sitting behind the use of (im) politeness should not be ignored for it plays a role in (im) politeness evaluation and can cause relationship damage if it is insincere. This also helps to develop a more and contextual approach to (im) politeness study which has to adopt the intentional aspect between participants in addition to the context of situation. Another conclusion we can draw from this study is that the diagram introduced in Locher (2005) should be revisited.

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