

## SPEECH FUNCTIONS, POLITENESS AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

### 1. Summons and greetings

Brown & Gilman (1960) defined social relationships in terms of POWER and SOLIDARITY.

Forms which indicate POWER establish who has authority and how great that authority is.

Forms which indicate SOLIDARITY establish the degree of intimacy in the relationship.

SUMMONS: the opening of interactions; it is the verbal equivalent of catching someone's eyes (no conversation is likely to proceed without one or the other).

- It may take many forms and may or may not be combined with an address form.  
*eg.: uh, excuse me, waiter, Joe, Dr. Taylor etc.*
- it has a purpose from the point of view of conversation; it implies that more is to come.

### 2. The functions of speech

GREETINGS:

- may or may not be followed by conversation;
- may also function as a summons;
- mainly social function: establishes the proper level of interaction.

Affective and referential functions of speech: there are several categories relating to these functions – study the list and the definitions with examples on p. 275.

Provide a solution to Exercise #1 on p. 276

2.1 Directives

There are many ways speakers may make the addressee to do something. Factors to consider include:

- power vs. solidarity relationships;
- status and degrees of formality;
- gender and age;
- context.

Identify the linguistic features relating to the above list of factors in the Examples #5-15 on pp. 279-283.

### 3. Politeness and address forms

#### 3.1 What is politeness?

“...politeness involves contributing to social harmony and avoiding social conflict”. (p. 285)

A summons is used to get someone to attend to the summoner; greetings may be used phatically;

Address is used almost solely for indicating *power* and *solidarity*.

Types of politeness:

- (i) *positive politeness*: based on solidarity

Study the Example 18 (p. 285) and the Exercise #5 (p. 283-284).

- (ii) *negative politeness*: based on power relations

Study the Example #11 (b) and (c), p.281.

Interactions are dynamic: the degree of politeness may change!

Study the Example #21 on p. 290.

Social change results in changes in address forms: in China the address form *tóngzhì* ‘comrade’ replaced forms such as *lǎobǎn* ‘protector’. What about *xiansheng* ‘mister’ ?

### 3.2 The pronouns of POWER and SOLIDARITY:

TU (T): familiar form  
VOUS (V): polite form

T and V are used to control social interactions by indicating the *degree* of power and solidarity.

non-reciprocal T/V usage: *power relationship*

reciprocal V usage: *polite*

reciprocal T usage: *intimacy*

## 4. Linguistic politeness in different cultures

Cross-cultural communication problems:

invitations  
polite acceptance and refusal  
address forms  
etc. } different expectations/norms!

**Study the Examples #22, #23 and #24 on pp. 292-293.**

Javanese has a complex system of address forms:  
<http://truevis.com/indon/javaaddress.html>

### 4.1 Greetings

**Study the Example #25 on p. 294. Explain!**

Maori formal greeting ritual:

**Figure 11.2, p. 295**

