35   *Diario 16,* 23, Marzo, 1986, p. 35.
36   *Diario 16,* 29, Septiembre, 1985, p. 2.
37   *Diario 16,* 16, Marzo, 1986, p. 2.
38   *Diario 16,* 2, Junio, 1985, p. 3.

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GRAMMAR AND POLITENESS:

FUNCTIONAL PRESSURES ON LANGUAGE

Ignacio VAZQUEZ ORTA

In our Western culture politeness is the most elaborate and the most conventional set of linguistic strategies for cultural interaction. The most elaborate and the most conventional set of linguistic strategies for cultural interaction. The most salient aspect of a person's personality in interaction is what that personality requires of other interactants; in particular, it includes the desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired.

Language use is the realization of strategies to get to these goals. Realization in terms of the employment of linguistic forms and literal meaning in particular contexts for particular communicative purposes.

The linguistic realizations of politeness are very varied, but we are paying a special attention to *conventional indirectnes in this paper.*

Conventional indirectness is a form for social distancing, and it is likely to be used whenever a speaker wants to put a social brake on the course of his interaction.

Intuition tells us that there is an element in formal politeness that sometimes directs us to minimize the imposition by coming rapidly to the point but at the same time the opposite also holds true. And some compromise is reached with *conventional indirectness.*

In this strategy, a speaker is faced with opposing tensions: the desire to

give the hearer an "out" by being indirect, and the desire to go direct. This tension provides the motivation for that baroque set of ways of constructing indirect speech acts, that is so marked a feature of English usage. Indirect speech acts are certainly the most significant form of conventional indirectness, and have received a good deal of attention from linguists.

Relations between structure and usage

What are the interrelations between grammar and politeness? We propose here that politeness is a powerful functional pressure on any linguistic system, and we put forward the hypothesis that a particular mechanism is to be found whereby such pressures leave their imprint on language structure.

We understand here by "structure" *linguistic form and literal meaning*, and "usage" refers to the employment of linguistic forms and literal meaning *in particular contexts for particular communicative purposes*.

This distinction could be problematic, but it usefully describes polar types of phenomena: morphophonemic rules in a language, for example, may be unaffected by context, while words and phrases like "hey", "O.K.", "thank you" simply cannot be adequately described without reference to their contexts of use.

We make a further distinction between "forms" and "meanings" (which together make up the structure) and "usages", and two interesting relations between them.
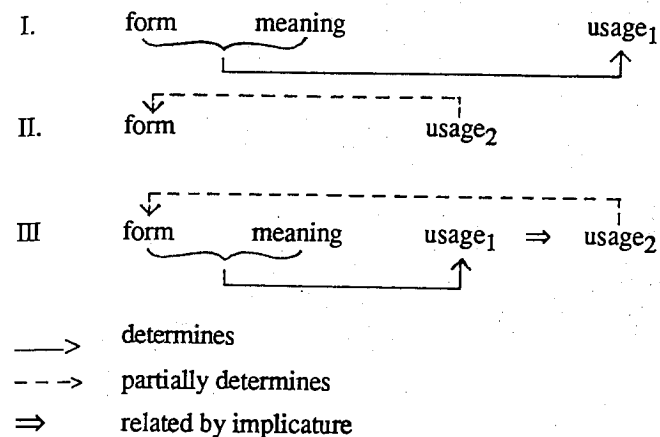
The first relationship is a relation between form and meaning that predicts all the interesting proprerties of that form's usage. Let us call this "structure-determined usage".

The second relationship is a direct connection between form and usage, without the mediation of meaning. Let us call this "usage-determined structure".

We are now ready to propose the mechanism whereby functional pressures may be exerted on grammatical structure. We have characterized two classes of functional pressures: *internal* or cognitive, and *external* or pragmatic. External pressures are the ones we are interested in now. And they operate entirely through the medium of usage.

We make the hypothesis that just some aspects of usage are likely to acquire structural correlates. Two potential routes stand out, along which the ramifications of extended usage may travel into structure: one is that extended usage may change meanings, and the semantic changes trigger form changes.

Alternatively, extended usages may directly trigger form changes via some kind of context-sensitive syntactic or phonological rule. It is this last alternative that is of particular interest to us. This is diagrammed in the following picture:

I. $\quad$ form $\quad$ meaning $\qquad$ usage$_1$

II. $\quad$ form $\qquad$ usage$_2$

III. $\quad$ form $\quad$ meaning $\quad$ usage$_1$ $\Rightarrow$ usage$_2$

$\longrightarrow$ $\quad$ determines

$- - \rightarrow$ $\quad$ partially determines

$\Rightarrow$ $\quad$ related by implicature

Hypothesis

Patterns I and II are often linked together synchronically or diachronically, by implication, into the larger configuration III which superimposes I and II.

Examples of such patterns existing synchronically are almost certainly provided by *indirect speech acts*, where there are some structural feedbacks from extended usages.

Indirect speech acts

It has been claimed that the kind of things that can be *done* by means of utterances are strictly limited[1], and that sentences carry in their structure indications of their *illocutionary force*[2]. Thus syntactic questions are used to request information, assertions to make statements of fact, imperatives to command, and so on. However, it is clear that such direct uses are not the only ones: rhetorical questions can be used to make assertions, imperatives to make offers, assertions to command, interrogatives to make polite requests. Examples:

1. Is that a reason for despair?
2. Have another drink.
3. Ladies will wear evening dresses.
4. Will you post this letter for me?

Such cases constitute the problem of *indirect speech acts,* or conveyed illocutionary force: there is no correspondence between the form of words in a speech act and its illocutionary force. This lack of neat correspondence between them seems to contradict the premise that *"speech acts... are made possible by and performed in accordance with certain rules for the use of linguistic elements"*[3].

A felicity condition[4] is one of the real-world conditions that must be met by aspects of the communicative event in order for a particular speech act to come off as intended. For instance, for a request to be successful, the addressee must be thought potentially able to comply with the request, the requestor must want the thing requested, and so on. It is clearly infelicious for me to ask you to shut the door if you are crippled, if the door is already shut.

What Gordon and Lakoff noticed was that by questioning whether you can shut the door ("Can you shut the door?") or by asserting that I want you to shut it ("I'd like you to shut the door") and so on, one can construct indirect speech acts[5].

Such expressions in English are so idiomatic and conventionalized that it would be strange to render "Can you pass the salt?" a viable request for information. There would be no doubt if you include "please" in:

"Can you please pass the salt?"

Looking just at the indirect speech acts which are expressed by the assertion of questioning of their felicity condition, we can make some generalizations about their relative politeness.

The constraints on conventional indirect requests appear to have to do largely with politeness. For requests, only the forms represented by the following schema are polite as requests status equals:

Questions

1. Can you pass the salt? (Polite)
2. Could you pass the salt? (Polite)
3. Could you possibly pass the salt? (Polite)
4. Couldn't you possibly pass the salt? (Rude)

Assertions

1. You can pass the salt, (please).
   (With "please" it is a very peremptory request and it sounds rude).
2. You could pass the salt, (please)
   (With "please" it is a slightly presumptuous request).
3. You couldn't pass the salt.
   (This can't be a request, unless some possibility notion is added).
4. You couldn't $\begin{Bmatrix} \text{possibly} \\ \text{by any chance} \end{Bmatrix}$ pass the salt, could you?

In short, it looks as if the asserted forms need to be negated, and in addition to have at least a tag or a possibility expression, and, from the point of view of politeness, preferably both: Politeness is the major motivation for being indirect, and consequently it is the reason for using indirect speech acts.

Some linguists[6], trying to describe the semantics or pragmatics of indirect speech acts, have noticed a fundamental politeness element, but *"They have missed the systematic way in which the strategies of face redress[7], like conventional indirectness, are able to predict the internal structure of polite indirect requests, for example, with their possibility operators, subjunctives and negative questions"*[8].

A) *Indirect requests*

Requests are speech acts which normally use the imperative, as a linguistc device of expression. For small requests, where there are implications of status or hierarchy, one will tend to use language that stresses in-group membership and social similarity:

1. Let's have another biscuit!
2. Give us a drink!

For bigger requests, social pressures, such as inequality of status, or social lack of similarity, trigger off the language of formal politeness. And indirect speech acts or apologies for intrusion or hedges are used. So questions, which are a device for seeking information or truth (their report function) are instead used as a vehicle to elicit an action:

1. Might I talk to you?
2. May I come in?
3. Would you please mind not walking on the grass?

In English, conventionalized indirect requests are so common that it is rare to hear a completely direct request even between equals. *"This seems*

the result from the suppression of asymetric power relations in Western dyads"9.

This suppression makes *commands* extreme face threatening acts in our cultures. From this it follows that whatever politeness techniques have been especially conventionalized in a society should give rise to conventional exploitations which would not exist in other societies without this particular conventional association. For example, the fact that indirect speech acts are highly conventionalized in English means that in most circumstances using an indirect speech act implicates that the speaker is trying to respect the hearer"s face. Therefore to say "Would you please mind not walking on the grass?", where the context makes it clear that the speaker is not respecting the hearer's face implicate sarcasm or anger. "Might" is sometimes used in statements as a tentative way of making a request, suggestion or recommendation:

"You might send me a postcard while you're on holiday".

B) *Indirect commands*

We have taken into consideration the use of questions to elicit an action rather than information, that is, questions which are really requests.

One way of influencing people is using a request rather than a command. In fact, with the aim of getting someone to do something, a direct command can be used:

1. Shut the door.
2. Follow me.

Commands are apt to sound abrupt unless they are toned down by signals of politeness, such as "please", as we saw before:

1. Please eat up your dinner.
2. Shut the door, please.

A negative command has the effect of forbidding an action:

1. Don't be a fool.

In addition to the use of imperatives, the verb forms expressing obligation and prohibition, with a second person subject, can have almost the same effect as a command:

1. You must be careful.
2. Yur mustn't smoke.

The construction *be to* plus *infinitive* can refer to a command given either by the speaker or by some official authority:

1. He is to return to Germany tomorrow.
2. You are to stay here until I return.

"Will" in its future sense can sometimes be used with the force of a severe command:

1. You *will* do exactly as I say.
2. Will you be quiet?

Although this "will" has the grammatical for f a quesiton, its falling intonation gives it the force of a command.

We have paid attention to some instances of indirect speech acts. In all the examples, politeness has been the major motivation form being indirect and, consequently, the reason for using indirect speech acts. And modals have been used throughout in connection with, and as a means of, conveying "politeness". But this gives us the topic for another paper.

NOTES

1   Searle, J.R. (1976). In his book, Searle gives a classification of speech acts.
2   Austin, J.L. (1962). Leech, G. (1974) p. 343.
3   Searle, J.R. (1969) p. 16.
4   Ibid.
5   Green, G. (1975), Heringer, J.T. (1972), Lakoff, R. (1974), Searle, J.R. (1975).
6   Id.
7   Goody, E.N. (1978) p. 141.
8   Ibid. P. 273.
9   Id. p. 253.

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NOVELA CONTEMPORANEA:

LA FANTASIA TRADICIONAL

Francisco COLLADO RODRIGUEZ

A lo largo de la reciente historia literaria de Gran Bretaña se ha venido manteniendo una puja -que no podemos calificar de "clara", pues muy pocos críticos se han dedicado a analizarla- entre dos actitudes aparentemente contrapuestas; la una, "realista", la otra, fantástica. Conocidos son los casos, por ejemplo, de la novela gótica, del famoso doctor Frankenstein de M. Shelley, del Jekill- Hyde de Stevenson, o de otras muchas obras y autores que no encajan en ese intento de plasmación de la realidad externa que caracterizaría a la novela británica hasta la llegada del Modernismo. Llegados ya al siglo XX esta semidesconocida vena fantástica se ha seguido manteniendo para venir a intensificarse de manera casi espectacular en las últimas décadas. Hoy en día la fantasía (un término poco claro para sujetarlo a una definición estricta) presenta distintos aspectos revestidos por los elementos del terror, la "ciencia-ficción", la personificación de animales, etc., pero el análisis de todo ello nos llevaría excesivo espacio y, por ello, quisiera limitarme a aclarar algunas ideas en torno a una corriente fantástica aparentemente tradicional que llega a su desarrollo principal hacia mediados de siglo, aunque su importancia será tal que cabe afirmar que es ésta la vena que sustenta el auge de la fantasía que ahora estamos viviendo.