Speech Etiquette in the Russian and Chinese Linguistic Communicative Cultures

Mikhnasa Mikhailovna Atlasova* and Natalia Aleksandrovna Atlasova
North-Eastern Federal University named after M. K. Ammosova, Yakutsk, Russian Federation; mikhnasa@mail.ru

Abstract
This article is devoted to the solution of an important problem of the language - the study of the functions of speech etiquette in the Russian and Chinese linguistic world-images. Language is a part of culture. Culture includes the regulatory elements such as ideals, moral norms, traditions, customs, etc. Together they constitute social norms of behavior, compliance with which is an essential condition for saving the society as an integrated whole. The purpose of the study is to reveal the linguistic peculiarities of speech etiquette in the Russian and Chinese linguistic world-images. The speech etiquette in different communicative cultures is a subject of the study. In accordance with the purpose and subject of the study, we set the following tasks: • To define the content of speech etiquette in linguistic world-images. • To identify the national and cultural identity of speech etiquette in the Russian and Chinese communication cultures. In the course of the study, we used both empirical and theoretical methods of research. The first group included primarily the methods of the source and text studying, classification and the results analysis. The second group included the analysis method, aimed at investigating the overall dynamics of the subject, the system analysis method, enabling to consider the development and structure of the subject in their relationship by the results of the questioning.

Keywords: Communicative Culture, Language, Speech Etiquette

1. Introduction

In the process of socialization, the person, becoming a personality and mastering the language more and more thoroughly, knows the ethical rules of relationships with other people, including the speech relationship, in other words, masters the communication culture. For this, it is necessary to be guided in the situation of communication. Everyone tries to fit not only in the role attributes of the partner, but also in own social attributes. At the same time, everyone strives to meet the expectations of other people, to approach the "pattern", developed in the minds of the native speakers, to act according to the rules of communicative roles of speaker and hearer. When talking, everyone tries to build the text in accordance with the stylistic norms, to possess oral and written forms of communication, to be able to communicate closely and remotely, but also to possess the whole range of means of non-verbal communication. The moral and spiritual achievement of personhood is now considered as an important issue. The world-images, drawn by different languages and cultures, are similar and different in something. The differences between the linguistic world-images reveal themselves in the manifestation of polite relationship to each other in communication, which is reflected in the choice of linguistic means, including etiquette formulas. The interlocutors of communication transmit to each other certain information: they report about something, lead to something, ask about something, so make certain speech acts, that is, the participants of the dialogue come into speech contact. However, before you go to an exchange of logic-content information, persons use certain rules, established in the speech etiquettes of their own people. This happens almost imperceptibly, as these rules are accustomed. Standards of communication and speech behavior are used almost by everyone, and
they are especially useful for people having occupations that are associated with speech. These include teachers, teaching children, teenagers and students, as well as doctors, lawyers, service workers, businessmen, and just parents. These are situations of compellation, greetings, gratitude, congratulations, wishes, sympathy, approbation and compliment, invitations, suggestions, requests, advice and so on.

2. Literature Review

Specificity of the speech etiquette is that it describes both the daily practice and linguistic norm. The elements of speech etiquette are present in the everyday practice of any native speaker, which easily recognizes these expressions in speech and expects their use in certain situations from the interlocutor. On the other hand, speech etiquette can be viewed from the perspective of the linguistic norm. The concept of proper, cultural, normalized speech includes certain representations of the norm in the area of speech etiquette.

Since the main purpose of verbal communication is the exchange of information, that is, the transmission and perception of a certain sense in the form of one or another speech etiquette, it is necessary to identify the factors that should be considered in the course of this exchange. Some of these factors are defined as the principles of verbal communication, which are mandatory for participants of speech interaction. These include communication maxims presented by Paul Grice as a basic principle of cooperation with the following moments: the Maxim of Quantity, that is, the requirement of sufficient informativity of a statement; the Maxim of Quality, that is, the requirement of truth; the Maxim of Relation, the requirement of compliance of a statement with the topic of communication; the Maxim of Manner, the requirement of clarity, that is, the uniqueness, orderliness, brevity\(^1\). These maxims reveal the connection of the speakers’ purpose with their interests, their assessment of the situation of communication and some other extralinguistic factors.

Speech actions must meet a number of socially accepted rules of behavior, correlating the hearer’s expectations and certain speaker’s obligations – the rules of politeness. Some of these rules were characterized by Geoffrey Leech. He proceeds from the fact that the rules or principles of politeness are more important for communication. Politeness is necessary for the social equilibrium; it is expected by friendly relations between the interlocutors interested in cooperation with each other. He formulated the following Politeness Principles (PP):

- The Tact Maxim is a requirement to cause minimum inconvenience and to create maximum comfort to a partner in communication, as well as the requirement of “non-intervention”; the Generosity Maxim implies caring about the partner’s interests to the detriment of own ones.
- The Approbation Maxim is a requirement to minimize the negative assessment of the partner in communication.
- The Modesty Maxim is a requirement to minimize the expression of praise of self and to maximize the expression of dispraise of self.
- The Agreement Maxim is the requirement to minimize disagreements with the partner.
- The Sympathy Maxim is a requirement to express sympathy in relation to the partner\(^2\). These principles require a demonstration of politeness, that is, the respect and complaisance to the partner, the recognition of the partner’s high position, as well as goodwill, gratitude, delicacy and willingness to do something nice to the partner and help him.

The Russian language, as N. I. Formanovskaya states in her study “The theory of communication and speech etiquette”\(^3\), has an extensive grammatical system, numerous forms and structures, which help to express a variety of shades of thought, to build the speech of the most diverse content, conveying the subtlest shades of meaning. The richness of the Russian language is in a variety of stylistic devices, as well. It has not only many words, but also various expressions, verbal turns, syntactic structures and forms of words, which have the same meaning but different syntax coloring. If necessary, you can choose the very same word that is best suited for the expression of your thought. Everyone is trying to know the rules of the literary language and be able to exercise such a choice and organization of linguistic means in the process of communication, which would be the most effective in terms of communicative tasks.

It is impossible to imagine a language culture, which does not have etiquette requirements to speech activity. According to many scholars, like in\(^4\) and in\(^5\) the study of speech etiquette occupies a special position across linguistics, theory and history of culture, psychology, and other humanitarian subjects. Broadly speaking, the speech etiquette characterizes virtually any successful
act of communication. Therefore, the speech etiquette is associated with the so-called verbal communication maxims that make the interaction possible and successful between the participants in the communication process. The act of linguistic communication is considered by pragmatics in terms of achieving some or other purposes by the communication participants. In a narrower sense, speech etiquette can be described as a system of linguistic means in which etiquette relationships appear.

Speech etiquette of the modern Chinese is an integral part of their traditional spiritual culture. The Chinese speech etiquette stipulates the respect for the people who are elder by age and superior by status, the friendly attitude to the people who are younger by age and status. Moreover, the choice of etiquette expressions is subject to the objective of the role exaltation and the status of the addressee and the detraction of the role and status of the addresser. Violation of this rule indicates the addresser's arrogance and bad manners. The most approximate Chinese equivalent of the Russian word for politeness is translated as “polite behavior”. Politeness in modern China has got a new look and new content. Among the etiquette requirements for oral speech, the intonation of statement occupies an important place. When expressing gratitude, the Russians often do not dam up their feelings. The Chinese, on the contrary, avoid straightness and do not show their emotions, they usually prefer not to express gratitude directly and often use indirect gratitude.

However, in comparison with the Chinese, the Russians more often express gratitude. The Chinese, stranded in Russia, are surprised that the Russians say thank you in cases, where gratitude is unnecessary in their view. This applies to both the service sector and other sectors and situations of communication: at work, in the family, in communication with friends, etc. In the Russian community, the role of indirect gratitude is mostly expressed in praise, compliments and wishes. The Chinese use a combination of direct and indirect gratitude more often than the Russians. This allows emphasizing the degree of gratitude and showing the respect for the addressee.

For example, in a restaurant the waiter says to the visitor: It's your tea! Ivan: Thank you. The student pays for his schooling in the bank, the operator says: Well, that's all. Student: Thank you. The father and son are talking at home. Father: Tim, we have a little bread, go to the store. Son: Well, Dad, just a moment. Father: Thank you, son. Friends are communicating on the phone. Kolya: Anya, it's Kolya. How are you? Anya: Oh, Kolya, thank you, I'm okay. I miss you very much. Kolia: So do I. And that is why I'm calling you. I was busy these days. How's your work? Anya: Thanks. I work, nothing has changed, there is nothing new. In these everyday situations, where the Russians usually thank each other, the Chinese rarely use short ceremonious stereotypical cues only with friends. It should be emphasized that the use of stereotypical thanks when communicating with waiters and cashiers is unnatural for the Chinese. For example: In the restaurant (Waiter: It's your tea!) Visitor Min: Well (the cue that is not a direct gratitude, likely, but not necessarily). Friends are talking on the phone: Hua: Jing, it's Hua. How are you? Jing: Oh, Hua, I'm okay. We have not met for a long time. Hua: Yes, I was busy these days. Now I'm free, I'm calling to you, I want to know how is your work? Jing: I made you take care of me. I work, nothing has changed, there is nothing new.

In the Chinese culture, helping and caring are considered so natural for people, staying in close relationships, especially family members, that in such situations it is not accepted to express gratitude, otherwise you may be perceived as a stranger. But in recent years, under the influence of other cultures, family members and familiar people sometimes thank each other, although it is not necessary. In the restaurant and the shop, as already noted, people do not thank because of duties, officially. The Chinese proceed from the fact that gratitude may be no less important than the direct one expressed by words based on the expression of solidarity with the interlocutor. A Chinese proverb, which is literally translated as “kindness without saying thanks”, shows exactly this feature of the Chinese speech and behavior.

In the Russian speech etiquette, formulas of gratitude are used as an expression of attention. Their main pragmatic purpose is in maintaining relations between the interlocutors. The words “thank you” and “I'm grateful” are partially symbolic in such situations.

For example: In the store, the buyer, returning unnecessary things to buy, says: I take just that. The seller says: Thank you. The daughter is going to meet with her friend and her mother gives her advice: Do not forget to take the money for the bus ticket. Daughter: I've taken, thank you. Thus, the gratitude may be either formal or sincere. It is important not to confuse the automatic “thank you” in the fairly formal situations with that one which expresses sincere gratitude, although this distinction is not always easily to establish. In the store,
speech etiquette in the Russian and Chinese Linguistic Communicative Cultures

In the following way: thank you; I must thank you. Kindness is mutual, the Russians answer to the gratitude it is accepted to use the expression “in good health!” If the matter! In response to the gratitude for the food in Russia, to the gratitude: Oh, don’t say that, it’s nothing, a small insignificance of his kindness or act of grace, the formulas used in response to the gratitude, are: you are welcome, not at all, anytime. As gratitude, this statement may be supplemented by one more utterance. Next line of the dialogue can emphasize the interest and attention of the speaker to the addressee: My pleasure; I was pleased to help you. If the respondent wishes to emphasize the impetus of this statement can be implied in both communications. A grateful statement, in turn, can stimulate the next utterance of the addressee.

In the Russian language the most traditional speech formulas, used in response to the gratitude, are: you are welcome, not at all, anytime. As gratitude, this statement may be supplemented by one more utterance. Next line of the dialogue can emphasize the interest and attention of the speaker to the addressee: My pleasure; I was pleased to help you. If the respondent wishes to emphasize the insignificance of his kindness or act of grace, the formulas are followed by emotional and expressive objections to the gratitude: Oh, don't say that, it's nothing, a small matter! In response to the gratitude for the food in Russia, it is accepted to use the expression “in good health!” If the kindness is mutual, the Russians answer to the gratitude in the following way: thank you; I must thank you.

One can draw attention to the fact that the main Chinese unit, marking gratitude, has also the meaning to admit mistakes, apologize, which gives reason to believe that the Chinese gratitude is semantically closely linked with the idea of admission of guilt. It is also significant that the Chinese expressions, which are transmitted by the Russian sentences “I am ashamed, I’m embarrassed”, are used by the Chinese to express gratitude in certain situations.

3. Methods

We adhere to the understanding of the use of words in the etiquette with the national culture acquisition, theoretically grounded in the works of V. V. Vinogradov, V. L. Arkhangelskiy, M. Kopylenko, R. N. Popov, Z. D. Popova, N. M. Shanskiy and other scientists. Speech etiquette appears, is used and developed under the existing or existed models of word combinations, phrases or sentences. Beijing University of Science and Technology (Beijing, China) and North-Eastern Federal University (Yakutsk, The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russia) are chosen as experimental platforms for studying the use of speech etiquette units. In Beijing, the Chinese students of the linguistic faculty were tested with regard to “The current state of the use of speech etiquettes” to find out what words and adverbs are accepted for use in the speech in order to thank, to welcome, to keep the conversation with the interlocutor. For seven years, we have communicated with the native Chinese speakers, taught the Russian language at schools in Beijing. Also, with the same aim of studying speech etiquette in Yakutia, we have conducted interviews and questioning among the Russian students of the North-Eastern Federal University at various faculties and institutes.

3.1 The Method of Questioning

National communication specificity is manifested in social interaction of communicants, implementing social ties in every act of communication, as well as in speech, serving this social interaction. Both verbal and nonverbal communication of communicants is regulated by single social norms, beyond that the verbal communication is regulated by the specific rules for the given language. Means of strengthening in the informal styles of Russian are used more often than in Chinese, as evidenced by the results of our questionnaires. In responses of the Russian...
informants, as the analysis of questionnaires shows, intensifiers are used on average one-half times more than in the responses of the Chinese respondents, which is reflected in the Table 1.

The (direct or implicit) promise strategy behind or in place of gratitude is peculiar to the Chinese communication. When the Chinese people express their gratitude, they often talk about the willingness to pay for the resulting benefits to the interlocutor. In other words, using the promise strategy, they show respect for the interlocutor and the desire to minimize the costs of a partner, to do something useful for him.

### 3.2 Empirical Methods

The Russians, leaving the friends after a visit where they were guests, can invite their friends to them (although it is not considered obligatory): Come to my place. Now I’m waiting for you to visit me. Next Sunday have dinner with us. The next time I will give you a treat. In the Chinese culture, gratitude is often expressed in the form of a dinner invitation as a kind of payment for certain service. An important advantage of a person in communication is the ability to make beautiful and appropriate compliments. Tactful compliment revives the addressee's spirits, winds him up for a positive attitude to the interlocutor, for his proposals, for a common cause. Compliment is said at the beginning of the conversation, at the meeting, dating, parting or during the conversation. A compliment is always pleasant. Only the insincere or overly enthusiastic compliment is dangerous.

### 4. Results and Discussion

For both Russian and Chinese communications, expression of gratitude necessarily implies the application of the attention strategy to the addressee. Demonstration of attention to the addressee among the Russians is the frequency of gratitude expression. As we have demonstrated, the Russians thank more frequently than the Chinese. Attending to the addressee consists of utterances accompanying the gratitude: Good luck! May God give you. Health to you! You've rescued me! You have just saved me! When expressing gratitude, the Chinese more often than the Russians express caring about the partner verbally which also creates an atmosphere of intimacy and trust.

### 5. Conclusion

Thus, our analysis of the speech etiquette formulas in the Russian and Chinese communicative cultures showed that they are characterized by both universal traits and national and cultural peculiarities. As noted by our respondents, such a strategy in the Russian society is possible, but in general it is not characteristic of it. In the Russian language, the strategy of approbations of the addressee’s actions, which is expressed by means of compliments and praise, is often used. Although the compliment is an indirect expression of gratitude, it is the second additional speech means, a kind of repetition. Sometimes it can be the main and first speech act, expressing the emphatic attention to the interlocutor. The Russians often express the wish after gratitude and the Chinese speak out their care about the partner or willingness to repay for the received kindness.

The article has reviewed how conditions of the communication situation (for example, the designation of the characteristics of the addressee’s statement) affect the shift in the use of the formulas of speech etiquette. Using the experimental data, we have not attempted to give the assessment in the manner like “right/wrong”, “it should
be said so/it should not be said so."
The performed study reports how it is customary to talk in this or that social or age environment in a certain communicative situation, and for which group this form of speech etiquette is typical.

There are stable formulas of greeting and farewell, formulas of respectful treatment in relation to the elder people, etc., in the speech etiquette of almost all nations. In any communication, the gratitude with the compliments and positive estimates corresponds to the rapprochement strategy. Compliment reduces the distance between the partners in communication.

6. References

6. Atlasova MM. Obuchenie natsionalnoy kulture narodov Severa. [Training of national culture the peoples of the North]. Moscow. 2015. [in Russian].