

Conceptualization of (Im) politeness of Burmese and Rakhine Native Speakers in Myanmar

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Abstract

The terms "politeness" and "impoliteness" are defined in various ways by different scholars in the field of pragmatics. According to scholars of the discursive approach to politeness, those phenomena mainly differ on the point of actual participants and cultures. This study aimed to investigate the notions of politeness and impoliteness in the conceptualization of speakers of the Burmese and Rakhine languages of Myanmar within the framework of Theoretical/folk-theoretic conceptualizations (second order) by Kadar and Haugh (2013) is the theoretical standpoint of the current research. The qualitative research method was used to find out the required data. Data obtained from the interview of five participants from each ethnic group were analyzed with the help of the discourse analysis method. The most significant finding of this study is the tentative definitions of politeness and impoliteness of Burmese and Rakhine native speakers. In addition, commonalities and differences between the conceptualization of politeness in Rakhine and Burmese were also investigated. Hopefully, this present study will contribute to understanding politeness and impoliteness across cultures by providing universal and culturally distinctive components of (im)politeness in Myanmar.

Keywords: politeness, impoliteness, Burmese, Rakhine,
theoretical/folk-theoretic conceptualizations

Introduction

Politeness as a branch of pragmatics and linguistics is not waning in popularity as a research subject because of its unique diversity in different languages and cultures. Thus, little consensus is seen on the nature of politeness by different scholars such as Lakoff (1973), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), and Leech (1983). The nature of politeness and its description are changed cross-culturally by exemplifying the case of China (Thomas, 1995). The notions of politeness and impoliteness in different cultures are also diverse in some ways from each other (Haugh, 2004; Lin, 2013; Sifianou, 2015).

Sifianou (2015) claimed that people's notions of im/politeness in daily communication should be studied. According to Eelen (2001), politeness as an everyday concept has two different aspects. They are an action-related side and a conceptual side. The first aspect is about the actual phenomena of politeness in communications. The second one is the descriptions of this term's meaning by laypeople. Most of the previous research focuses on the first aspect of notions of politeness in communications. The second aspect is not attained the same attention as the previous one in the study of politeness in Myanmar.

Politeness is studied from many different points of view, such as strategies and conceptual differences among languages and cultures. Description and explanation of those terms cross-linguistically seek researchers' attention in pragmatics and intercultural communication (Kadar, 2017). The strategies and Maxims regarding politeness are also developed by different scholars (Lakoff, 1973; Fraser & Nolen, 1981; Leech, 1983, Brown & Levinson, 1987). On the other hand, impoliteness is ignored and does not earn the same attention as politeness. Regarding conceptualizing politeness across cultures, English & Japanese (Haugh, 2004), Greek (Sifianou & Tzanne, 2010), Hungarian & Polish (Ogiermann & Suszczynsk, 2011), Greek (Sifianou, 2015), Japanese & English (Fukushima & Sifianou, 2017), British English & American English (Culpeper et al., 2019), Greek & English (Ogiermann & Saloustrou, 2020), and Korean & English (Min, 2021) are previously conducted. Among that research, and to be counted on the point mentioned above on impoliteness, only Sifianou and Tzanne's (2010) study focused on conceptualizing politeness and impoliteness. Aydinoglu (2013) also stated that impoliteness is the long-neglected "Poor cousin of politeness." Studies on conceptualizing impoliteness in certain cultures like Myanmar are rare.

In Myanmar, 135 ethnic groups preside with diverse cultures, traditions, and religions throughout different terrains. Among those ethnic groups, Burmese is the majority of the population, along with seven other ethnic groups, including Rakhine. The languages used by those two ethnic groups are so close enough to be decided as the dialects. In this study, the conceptualizations of Burmese and Rakhine upon politeness and impoliteness are to be unraveled, compared and contrasted.

Literature Review

The beginning of politeness comes from Grecian's Cooperative Maxims. By filling the gap between those Maxims, politeness became the prevailing interest of linguists and pragmatists. The study of politeness as a part of pragmatics is commenced by Lakoff (1973). Three rules of politeness, such as "Do not impose, give the receiver options, and make the receiver feel good," are laid out, and Leech (2014) commented that the role of culture is important in prioritizing those three rules.

Brown and Levison (1978, 1987) developed the theory of politeness with the concept of face as the performance of redressive action to minimize face threat. The phenomenon of impoliteness by Culpeper (2005) is also based on the concept of face as impoliteness is to do with how the offense is communicated and taken in which (1) the speaker communicates face attack intentionally, (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking.

Leech (1983) introduces politeness and impoliteness with the concept of beliefs like "Minimize (all things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs; Maximize (all things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs.". Leech (2014) stated eight characteristics of politeness - Not obligatory, Gradations, A sense of what is normal, Depending on the situation, Reciprocal asymmetry, Battle of politeness, Transaction of value, and Balance. Regarding impoliteness, setting a high value on oneself or a low value on another other person is impolite (Leech, 2014).

Kasper (1990) reflected on the works mentioned above by four scholars on politeness: "Politeness is viewed as a rational, rule-governed, pragmatic aspect of speech rooted in the human need to maintain relationships and avoid conflicts." Moreover, Haugh (2004) summarized those definitions of politeness as four "such politeness as 'behavior avoiding conflict and promoting smooth communication,' politeness as 'socially appropriate behavior,' politeness as 'consideration for the feelings of others, and politeness as an 'evaluation of the speaker's behavior by the addressee as polite.'" He also proposed self-oriented politeness (showing good manners or courtesy) and other-oriented politeness (showing one's social class) in his research on conceptualizations of politeness in English and Japanese.

Watts, Ide, and Ehlich (2005) argued two concepts of politeness as the actual speakers' definition of politeness and theoretical definitions of politeness by scholars. The necessity of a clear-cut definition of politeness between commonsense and theoretical understanding is pointed out.

The goal of this paper to explore the actual speakers' definition of (im) politeness is backed by the fourth point of the third-wave politeness theory of understanding politeness by Kadar and Haugh (2013). As provided, Kadar and Haugh (2013) proposed four loci of understanding politeness, such as

Participant/meta-participant understandings (first order)

Emic/etic conceptualizations (first order)

Analyst/lay-observer understandings (second order)

Theoretical/folk-theoretic conceptualizations (second order)

According to them, the first two loci are related to users' perspectives, and the second is to observers' perspectives. To clarify, users' perspectives mean the ways the users of the language assume a certain discourse of politeness. This fact concerns those who are the actual witnesses of a conversation that expresses the (im)politeness. The third focus is generally on the evaluation of politeness. The people in this locus are not the participants or meta-participants in the conversation where (im)politeness arises. They are just the observers who evaluate whether a certain discourse is polite. The fourth focus, the folk-theoretic conceptualizations, will be dealt with in this research.

According to Kadar (2017), politeness research can be shown in three waves. Since the rise of the second politeness research wave, there has been no meticulous framework for expressing politeness. Though second-wave scholars such as Eelen (2001) criticized the Brown and Levison's (1987) framework on politeness for employing the term "universality," keeping only on "face-threatening act," and being a speakers-based framework, they could not able to develop a framework to substitute the supremacy of Brown and Levison (1987) framework on politeness. The second wave of politeness research is mainly based on the theoretical background of discursive

approaches to determine politeness from the evaluative and metapragmatic (conceptualized) points of view. The third wave of politeness research is also not based on the meticulous and detailed methodological framework though it has a more comprehensive theory than the discursive ones. This wave is aimed at getting a common ground between the two waves mentioned above: developing a framework for the evaluation and production of politeness, as well as for describing detailed phenomena of politeness across languages and cultures and in the micro (utterances) and macro (discourse) level of analysis.

Fukushima and Sifianou (2017) investigates the conceptualization of politeness in Japanese and Greek female students using an open-ended questionnaire. The results show significant similarities and differences between the two groups, with politeness being conceptualized as primarily non-linguistic action and mainly expressed as "consideration to others" and "appropriate behavior". Most participants view politeness as conveyed through attentiveness, help, respect, and empathy. Differences were found in the number of participants who mentioned various subcategories, with Greek participants relating a broad sense of "respect" to politeness, while Japanese participants related it to "empathy" and only Japanese participants mentioned "honorifics." The study suggests that politeness is closer to current approaches, expressing concern for the needs and feelings of others, rather than strategic conflict avoidance.

One of the main findings of their study reveals that honorifics are a linguistic manifestation of respect, but they can also be used to show empathy, locate background information, or index the speaker's self-presentational stance. Honorifics can be used to show distance and to express wishes, correct speech, and avoid interrupting and insulting others. Greek participants did not mention the use of the "polite plural" as indicating politeness, and conventional markers of politeness were not considered. Other linguistic manifestations of politeness include wishes, correct speech, and avoiding interrupting and insulting others. The study also found that Japanese participants rated honorifics highly, with 18 writing keigo ('honorifics') and one writing teineigo ('polite language'). This suggests a shift in the conceptualization of politeness in Japanese towards a less hierarchical understanding of politeness.

Sifianou (2015) explores the conceptualization of politeness in Greek using Twitter corpora. It aims to distinguish between lay understandings of politeness and political politeness as a theoretical construct. The research uses real-life interactions and participant assessments to test theoretical issues. It unravels more general values and assumptions, contributing to a deeper understanding of how politeness is conceptualized in Greek.

Sifianou (2015) developed a Greek Twitter Corpus of Greek Politeness (TC-GP) using public text data from Twitter's vast repository. The corpus consists of 345,000 words and 19,550 tweets from February 2009 to February 2015. The data was collected manually through Twitter Search, excluding irrelevant content and duplicates. The TC-GP contains tweets explicitly mentioning the word "politeness" along with other metadata. 195 tweets with the keyword phrases "politeness is/is not" are isolated to identify specific views on what politeness means to posters.

From the review mentioned above of literature on politeness, the mounting research gaps can be shown in the Myanmar context. It can be deduced that the notions of politeness rely on two perspectives: the action-related and conceptual sides of politeness. Here, the latter can be subdivided into the speakers' and scholars' definitions. Another research gap to be addressed in this study is the conceptualization of impoliteness by the real language users (Burmese and Rakhine) which is not rich in the literature of (im)politeness. This paper will deal with the speakers' definitions of politeness and impoliteness in Myanmar.

Burmese Language and Culture

Burmese language (also called as Myanmar) is from the Sino-Tibetan language family (Sino-Tibetan > Burmo-Qianguic > Lolo-Burmese> Burmish> Southern Burmish > Mranmaic > Nuclear Mranmaic> Burmese) (Campbell et al, 2017). This language is spoken in Myanmar (Burma), Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh and Tripura state in Northeast India. It is an official language and lingua franca in Myanmar and the native language of Burmese people. Burmese people is the majority of the population along with seven other ethnic groups including Rakhine. 36.39 million speak this language as the 1st language, and 13 million is as 2nd language out of 51 million (Department of Population, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, 2014). It is a tonal, pitch-register, social-register, & syllable-timed language (Chang, 2003). It is a monosyllabic and agglutinative language with a subject-object-verb word order (Wun, 1958), having different grammar in colloquial language and written language. It is mentioned that circle shaped Burmese alphabets are descended from the Brahmic script.

Regarding Burmese cultures, it is typical in the Burmese community that people conduct all economic, social, and religious cases in group, help each other in every occasion of joy or sorrow, pay respects to the elders and care the young, help to the poor, and share their assets with the whole household (Same traditional customs of the ethnicities, 1975). Since Burmese are greatly influenced by Buddhism, astrology and Nat (deities) worship (A kind of animism), and its society and social structures are greatly linked to them. Five gems known as Buddha, his teachings, monks, parents, and teachers are the leading figures of the society (Tin, 2000). Among them, Buddha passed away and left his teachings and clergy. As mentioned in the previous session, people live with his teachings. Monks influence every human in the society regardless of their status, and situation. Monasteries in the past were performed as the universities and schools in Burma (Tin, 2000). They educated people of different classes and almost every occasion in the society is still linked to them. In the time of Burmese kings, monasteries produced several scholars and officials to the imperial courts. Currently, the monasteries still run the schools that guarantee the access to education especially people from the rural areas.

Parents have the great dominant not only over their offspring but also over their in-laws. They are assumed as the first teacher to the children. Sons and daughters are obliged to take care of everything about their parents and their parents-in-laws. They rarely go against to the words and actions of their parents. The last of the five gems is the teachers. Burmese highly think of the teachers, pay the deeply respect to them, and assume them as the great benefiter ranking with the Buddha. According to Tin (2000), teachers are even the community leaders in the rural areas.

The society stands on the collection of households (Same traditional customs of the ethnicities, 1975). In a typical Burmese household, the father is the head of the household, and the duty of the mother is to keep the household. When the off springs become adults, they help in the business of the household. Since the father has the right and final say to decide every case of household's social affair, and economy. Among the siblings, the eldest son and daughter are assumed as the second father and mother for them. But in terms of inheritance, the eldest son is the priority. In the past, the posts of village headman, and some local governors' posts were hereditary like the royal families. Even the kings and the imperial court had no right to interfere the hereditary process. The eldest son also has the responsibility to care his siblings. Nothing is much different about inheritance nowadays.

The aged men in the community are assumed as its leaders. They organize the community affairs from name-giving ceremony to funeral, decide disputes among the people, and lead the festivals. A Burmese must respect and give priority to all elders in the society regardless of their status. A Burmese man has to care all younger than him and treat with kindness and benevolence.

Rakhine Language and Culture

Rakhine is a Tibeto-Burman language that is predominantly spoken in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. The language, closely associated with Burmese, is mostly spoken by the Rakhine people. Having several similarities between Rakhine and Burmese languages, it is commonly regarded as a dialect or variant of Burmese. Due to the lack of universally agreed upon criteria for differentiating between a language and a dialect, there is often disagreement among scholars and other interested individuals regarding the linguistic, historical, and social standing of Rakhine. Its writing system is Burmese script (Davis, 2014).

The Rakhine people, who reside Myanmar, are mostly followers of Theravada Buddhism. They are one of the four major ethnic groups in Burma that practice Buddhism, with the Burmese, Shan, and Mon people. The Rakhine culture bears resemblance to the dominant Burmese culture, although it exhibits a greater degree of Indian influence. This can be attributed to its geographical separation from the Burmese mainland by the Rakhine Mountains and its closer closeness to India. Rakhine culture still retains remnants of Indian influence in various categories, including as literature, music, and gastronomy. The traditional Rakhine kyin wrestling holds significant cultural significance in the region. Rakhine mont di, which is made using rice vermicelli noodles, is widely enjoyed throughout Myanmar.

Research Questions

In order to fulfil the research gaps mentioned in the literature review section, this study aims to investigate the notions of (im)politeness in Burmese and Rakhine native speakers. The research questions are as in the followings:

1. How do people in Burmese and Rakhine cultures conceptualize the terms politeness and impoliteness?
2. Are there any commonalities and differences in politeness and impoliteness across those cultures?

3. How do the people in those cultures integrate the concept of politeness and impoliteness into language use, especially in apologizing or requesting something?

Research Methodology

Data Collection Method and Procedure

Grainger and Mills (2016) mentioned that this emic approach (conceptualization) to politeness has mostly been used for interactional data, and it has been supplemented with interviews and questionnaires that ask participants to rate their encounters. A structured interview was employed as the qualitative research method for this study. The interview is conducted via an in-person meeting, phone, and Viber application. Each interview lasts around 30 minutes. The responses to the interview are recorded in the agreement of the respondents. The six interview questions in the following were developed by the researcher and deployed to elicit the required data for this study.

Interview Questions

1. How is politeness defined in your culture?
2. How is impoliteness defined in your culture?
3. What is polite/impolite language use?
4. How is politeness important in your community?
5. How do you say in situations such as apologizing and requesting politely and impolitely?
6. What linguistic (or other) behaviors are considered polite and impolite in the community?

The reason for deploying the interview as the research method is based on the cognitive semantics of the virtue of its principles. In cognitive semantics, language is assumed as an attribute of human cognitive ability. In other words, the world is depicted in how people think (Croft & Cruse, 2004). It is mentioned that the users of language varieties in different cultures think and conceptualize the world differently. Here, politeness and impoliteness will be construed from the perception of two different groups of language users.

Participants

Five participants from each ethnic group of Burmese and Rakhine are purposely selected for the interview to guarantee data collection from the intended participants. The criterion of the participant is between 18-60 years old and has at least a degree from the university. In terms of five informants in each ethnic group, it is normal for the extent of the research paper because Kerkam (2015) used 25 informants from Libyan and English people to define politeness and impoliteness via a questionnaire in the Ph.D. thesis and Hodeib (2022) used only ten informants for the Ph.D. thesis to define (im) politeness.

Data analysis method and procedure

Discourse analysis is used as the data analysis method since Delve and Limpaecher (2023) mentioned that this analysis helps the researchers comprehend the underlying meaning of what and how people say it and investigate language beyond the utterances. The data analysis procedures are:

1. Listening and relistening the recorded responses of the participants
2. Transcribing the responses of the participants in Myanmar language
3. Translating these responses into English language
4. Using back translation procedure to make sure the precise translation
5. Finding the recurring concepts of (im)politeness from the responses
6. Categorizing the concepts
7. Analyzing patterns and meanings in the responses
8. Interpreting and writing the concepts with justifications

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted by following the research ethics, ensuring informed consent and participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Before the interview, the interview's context and the researcher's consent not to use the data and the respondents' personal facts for other purposes are explained, and the respondents' personal information are also reconfirmed to check whether it meets the criteria of the participants. Concerning the privacy of the participants, this research ensures data security.

Results and Discussion

In order to examine the notions of (im)politeness by Burmese and Rakhine, the responses (discourse) of each native speaker group obtained from the interview are analyzed first. Then, the underlying specific characteristics of (im)politeness notions beyond the responses are uncovered and deduced, presenting the conceptualization of (im)politeness of each group of native speakers.

Conceptualization of Politeness in Rakhine

Based on the interviewees' responses, the concept of politeness in the Rakhine native speakers is found in the following.

1. Cooperation in communication

When speaking, it normally contains at least two people. Not even for the Rakhine people, it is polite to cooperate among interlocutors. In the impoliteness section of this paper, it is mentioned that interruptions to others' turn to speak are inappropriate.

2. Religion and the teaching of the elders and parents

Buddhism is the foundation of the Rakhine community. The teachings of Buddha make people of Rakhine polite, and that is made stronger by the guidance of the elders and parents. Politeness mainly resides in communication with the people who are higher in some ways than the speaker.

3. Thinking about others and the community

A person is regarded as polite based on his thoughts, considerations, and actions towards others and the community, not himself.

4. Social standards of people

Normally, persons with higher social standards are assumed as more polite ones. Being educated is having politeness, and one has to be polite to others when he is educated. He should be polite to others regardless of their status.

5. Different dialects and places

Dialectal and place differences mainly contribute to considering politeness and impoliteness. Some words are acceptable as polite ones in one place but not in another, or a dialect is assumed to be polite in a certain place but is counted as impolite in a different place.

6. Using "Sorry" in an apology

Using "sorry" in the apology is normally considered a reckless way of apologizing in Myanmar. One uses that word of apology, showing reluctance and mere will to apologize. Nevertheless, in Rakhine, this word is mostly neutral and not assumed to the impolite ones since many words of English are used in their community due to prolonged British rule in their state.

7. Word choice

The choices of words play a very important role in defining whether the utterances are polite or impolite. These words include using politeness markers such as "yoon" and "par". Especially the marker "par" is the most essential one. Rakhine and Burmese languages are so close enough, and it is sometimes regarded as Rakhine is the dialect of the Burmese language. In the Burmese language, the word "Hote Kae (yes)" is taken as polite usage, but in the Rakhine language, the word "Hote Kae Par (yes)" is polite. Using the politeness marker "par" in sentences or utterances is crucial in dealing with the Rakhine people.

8. Interlocutors' Status and Intimacy

The politeness and impoliteness are too subtle to discuss their relationship with the speakers' status and intimacy among speakers. A word may be polite among speakers with the same status. However, it would be impolite to use it with the elders like the word "way " (a word used in responding or grabbing others' attention.)". Moreover, some words, such as "hay (a word used in giving a response or in grabbing others' attention)" are polite if the elder uses them. However, the intimacy with the elders, in speaking, does not permit them to use some words that are especially impolite in using with them. Politeness is found in dealing with elderly people and people with higher social status.

9. Behaviors

Besides polite language use, well-behaved behaviors are also counted as polite ones. The language uses accompanied by certain manners is regarded as politeness.

10. Intonation, body gestures, and facial expressions

Language alone does not constitute the construe of politeness in communication. Other factors, such as intonation, body gestures, and facial expressions, can reinforce or deplete the sense of politeness. Although the language is about the apology, the real intention of the speaker is reflected in the softness of the intonation, body gestures, and expressions, sometimes which is impolite.

11. Politeness is contextual (formal & informal)

The use of formal words in the Rakhine language, for example, in the case of a request to higher social status people, can be seen to guarantee politeness in communication. However, politeness does not need to be shown in the same speech act with the friends. In other words, being polite in Rakhine depends on whether the context is formal.

Conceptualization of Impoliteness in Rakhine

Based on the interviewees' responses, the concept of impoliteness in the Rakhine ethnic group is found in the following.

1. Different dialects and places

When the two dialectal speakers meet in the talk, the atmosphere of impoliteness usually pops up due to different lexicons and intonation. A word in the Rakhine language may be a polite one or an acceptable one in certain places. However, this does not deduce that it is polite in other places of the Rakhine region. The concept of impoliteness is also revealed in the case of urban and rural areas. The way of speaking in rural areas is considered impolite in urban areas, but it should not always be counted because their way of speaking is acceptable in their contexts. For example, in the case of the words "Ngar (I) and Kyama (I)," the use of the word "Ngar(I)" is impolite. In the northern Rakhine, when the elderly persons call the younger ones, they respond as "Payar (yes)," which is a very polite and euphemistic term only used for monks, nuns, and royal persons. However, in the southern region, the response may be different as "Kinbyar (yes) and Shin (yes)" not as "Payar." Not using the word "Payar" here does not mean impoliteness in the southern region. It is only about different places.

2. Interlocutors' status

Generally, the two cases, such as poverty and lack of education of the speakers, are assumed to be the root causes of impoliteness. Poor and uneducated people are typically thought of as impolite ones. If a person is poor enough to fulfill his basic needs, he has little time to be educated. It is thought that being polite comes from the teachings of the monastery, school, and environment. This finding is not to be deduced that they are the lower ones; it is only about language use.

3. Word choice

This category is the most prevalent in deciding an utterance or conversation is impolite. Apart from it, using or not using politeness markers and formal words decides the case of impoliteness. Politeness markers are mentioned above. Using certain particles such as "bu" is impolite (Twar mal (I will go) and Ma Twar bu (I do not go)) though that is acceptable in the Burmese language. Here, the closeness among the speakers does not allow for to use of impoliteness-prone words like "Aw (yes)." Whether a word is polite or not also depends on the interlocutors' status. Replying by using the word "shin (yes)" to a call of your name is polite when an interlocutor is an elderly person, and it would be sarcasm to your friend.

4. Behaviors

Regarding non-linguistic behaviors of impoliteness, showing something with a foot and touching the head and interruptions, the speakers are counted as impolite in any situation.

5. Intonation, body gestures, and facial expressions

The impoliteness is shown apparently or obscurely by the tone, intonation, body gestures, and facial expressions. How much the word is ornamented with makers of politeness and polite terms those behaviors can also be indicated the real intention of the speakers.

Conceptualization of Politeness in Burmese

Based on the interviewees' responses, the concept of politeness in the Burmese native speakers is found in the following.

1. Language Use in Line with the Context

Depending on the context, a certain word or phrase is designated as polite or impolite. However, based on context, most phrases and words can be polite or impolite. The context refers to places, time, and the interlocutors we speak to.

2. Thinking about the Others

The concept of Burmese people to politeness greatly links with thinking about others. Technically, it is keeping a low value to self. Politeness relates to the emotion of the interlocutors, making communication smooth.

3. Social Standard

Burmese people normally assume that the polite person is well-bred and has a higher social standard. Being courteous and using polite language can upgrade one's image. It is highly thought that success in social interaction directly links to being polite. A respondent in the interviews even believes that there is no standard society when there is without politeness.

4. Seniority

Buddhism is the foundation of the Burmese community. The two tenets of Buddhism like "Gunawoatti Wayawoatti (All those higher in prestige and age should be respected.)" and "Gatawallsa Niwartawsa (Paying respect to all who deserve it.)" firmly show that politeness must go to the elders. Rude behaviors and displeasing or wronging of the elders should be avoided. Politeness in the Burmese community mainly occurs when dealing with the elders. Age is a factor to be careful in speaking the Burmese language, although intimacy can deplete the principles of politeness.

5. Word Choice

Using formal words, polite usage, politeness markers, or words that follow social interaction guarantees the installment of politeness. In the interview, a respondent describes the words "eat" formally and informally as "Thoungsaung" and "Sar." He describes the difference between them in using different occasions. Moreover, there is also a word "eat" for impoliteness: "Myoesoat." Moreover, the politeness markers such as "par (particle)," "khinbya (yes/masculine)," and "shin (yes/feminine)" are also there. In short, the specific features of politeness in the Burmese language reinforce the intensity of the role of word choice in the community.

6. Behaviors

The polite behaviors in Burmese cover using a soft tone while speaking and being attentive. The while-speaking behaviors include not shaking body parts like legs and keeping attentive to the speakers.

Conceptualization of Impoliteness in Burmese

Based on the interviewees' responses, the concept of impoliteness by the Burmese native speakers is found in the following.

1. Language Use in Line with the Context

In the Burmese community, a word has several pragmatic functions. For instance, the phrase "Sar Par Own (Please eat!)" is polite in the informal context, like the interaction between a visitor and the house owner; the owner invites the visitor to eat the food. However, when this phrase is used towards the monks in the ceremony of alms offering, it would be impolite.

2. Using a single form of the certain word

The Burmese language has a range of pronouns that show polite, impolite, formal, informal, gender, and intimacy. For example, the first-person pronouns in the Burmese language for "I" is "Kyanaw (I/masculine)," "Kyama (I/feminine)," "Ngar (I/informal/impolite used to elders)," and "Kyanout (I/formal)," and "Ngartotka (We used as I/collective noun)," and euphemistic terms (showing the relationship "Thar (masculine), Thamee (feminine), etc.) as well as describing the status (Sayar (masculine), Sayarma (feminine), and terms used in religion or royal occasions. However, when people from different cultures speak, even those from ethnic groups in Myanmar, they use one pronoun to refer to "I" with "Ngar". That is impoliteness usage for most of the people in the Burmese community. Sometimes, family background and the region where someone is raised hinder one not to know what is polite or impolite.

3. Behaviors

Sometimes, the words can be polite, but other behaviors or manners indicate the speakers' reluctance to perform speech acts such as apologies and requests. The impolite behaviors include intonation, intentional doing of something, interruptions, ignoring, and lack of attention when someone is speaking about something. Regarding those behaviors, the tone plays a crucial role since most of the sense of impoliteness comes from the tone of the speakers though the language they use is the same between politeness and impoliteness. For example, in the speech act of apology, the sense of apology can fade away when the speaker uses a hard or strong tone. Normally, it can be extrapolated without politeness, without apology. The pitch of the tone can squash this tenet. Rude body behaviors can be counted here in which the speakers normally shake their hands or legs or heads.

4. Word Choice

Insulting, bossy language and informal and colloquial words are impolite to use in the Burmese community. In other words, all words or phrases spoken without considering the hearers are impolite. Impoliteness is the word choice inappropriate for the hearers. It is mainly related to formal and informal word choice regarding context and time. Moreover, the use of imperative in communication, even for the younger ones, is thought of as impolite, and it even shows the ignoble character of the speaker.

Commonalities and Differences between the Phenomena of Politeness and Impoliteness in Two Cultures

The conceptualizations above of politeness and impoliteness in the two cultures of Rakhine and Burmese are presented with lists of characteristics in the respective concepts.

Table 1

Commonalities and Differences between Conceptualization of Politeness in Rakhine and Burmese

Conceptualization of Politeness			
No.	Rakhine	No.	Burmese
1.	Cooperation in communication	1.	Language Use in line with the context
2.	Religion and the teaching of the elders and parents	2.	Thinking about the Others
3.	Thinking about others and the community	3.	Social Standard
4.	Social standards of people	4.	Seniority
5.	Different dialects and places	5.	Word Choice
6.	Using "Sorry" in an apology	6.	Behaviors
7.	Word choice		
8.	Relating to interlocutors' status and intimacy		
9.	Behaviors		
10.	Intonation, body gestures, and facial expressions		
11.	Politeness is contextual (formal & informal)		

According to Table 1, the concepts of politeness in Rakhine and Burmese language users are shown. More concepts of politeness can be seen in Rakhine rather than in Burmese. The similarities shown in yellow colors in the table can be found among these two language users, although there are differences.

Table 2

Commonalities and Differences between Conceptualization of Impoliteness in Rakhine and Burmese

Conceptualization of Impoliteness			
No.	Rakhine	No.	Burmese
1.	Different dialects and places	1.	Language Use in line with the Context
2.	Interlocutors' status	2.	Using a single form of the certain word
3.	Word Choice	3.	Behaviors
4.	Behaviors	4.	Word Choice
5.	Intonation, body gestures, and facial expressions		

Table 2 describes the conceptualizations of impoliteness in two groups of native speakers. Unlike politeness, only two out of all concepts of impoliteness are the same.

In terms of commonalities of politeness in two languages, the characteristics of the concept such as "Word Choice," "Behaviors," "Politeness is contextual (formal & informal)," "Language Use in line with the Context," "Thinking about the Others as well as community," and "Social Standard" is the same. These similarities between two language users may be because of their closeness in languages, as mentioned before, and because they are in the same religion. The main difference between the two languages is that the Rakhine native speakers' concept of politeness is more diversified in certain facts than Burmese. For example, in the case of interlocutors, their politeness concept stays on dialect, the place they live, status, and intimacy. Moreover, in the case of behaviors, they provide more detailed information about facial expressions, intonation, and body gestures.

Conversely, regarding the elders, the Rakhine people focus more on politeness coming from superior ones. Here, "superior" means the one whose attributes, such as education, business, etc, are higher. Burmese people focus more on politeness coming from younger ones. The younger the one is, there should be more polite.

In the case of impoliteness between two ethnic groups, the two characteristics of concepts such as "Word Choice" and "Behaviors" are the same. In order to avoid impoliteness in the Burmese language, the language has to be used according to the context. The concept of "Using a single form of a certain word," like using the single form word like the pronoun "I," is the most prevalent impoliteness causation. In the Rakhine language, impoliteness can be avoided when the speaker watches out for the dialect he spoke, his interlocutors and their region, and manners such as intonation, facial expressions, etc. To summarize this section, "Word Choice" and "Behaviors" are the most prevalent concepts in both politeness and impoliteness of two language users.

Based on the discussed findings, the (im)politeness definitions of Burmese and Rakhine can be deduced to the overall findings as follows.

1. Politeness in Burmese means using appropriate words and non-verbal behaviors, which cannot deviate the proposition's meaning impolitely, in line with the addressee's age, social status, and context.
2. Politeness in Rakhine refers to considering the other's social status and age, abiding by the teachings of the religion, and cooperation in communication.
3. Impoliteness in Burmese encompasses using the language against the context and with the impolite intention, using impolite words, and mock polite words reinforced by non-linguistic behaviors.
4. Impoliteness in Rakhine refers to using language variety mismatched with the context, using inappropriate words along with disrespectful para-linguistic behaviors.

As per Haugh's (2004) statement, universal shared ness can be seen in the basic concepts of politeness. However, language-specific differences might be there, and the (im)politeness conceptualizations of Burmese and Rakhine native speakers oversee certain differences. The concept of "respect" in both languages manifests, but Rakhine politeness is more oriented to "following the religious teachings." In addition, "contextual" in Rakhine also counts as "using the right language variety in line with the place where the interlocutors are speaking." Regarding "non-verbal" behaviors, Rakhine is more sensitive than Burmese. In other words, the "non-verbal" politeness feature is more overtly associated with Rakhine than Burmese. Though the concept of

"respect" mentioned above, this concept of "respect" is not the same as that in Japanese in terms of the connotations (Haugh, 2004). The concept of "respect" in Burmese and Rakhine is mainly concerned with "elders," and it is shown not only with "lexical item" but also with "non-linguistic behaviors."

On the one hand, Min (2021) found that Koreans associate politeness with acquaintances and friends and American people with strangers. It can also be counted on being self-respect since the native speakers of both languages point out that showing politeness is like showing one's status. Their politeness is heavily reflected in dealing with "elders or the people who are higher than the addresser in some way." On the other hand, the Japanese concept of "respect" in politeness is "status-sensitive respect" (Kadar and Haugh, 2013). In this regard, Burmese and Rakhine's concept of "respect" can be indicated as "age-sensitive respect." This finding supports the warning about the politeness of Kadar and Haugh (2013), in which the surface equivalences of politeness do not mean conceptual equivalences but similar ones.

Haugh (2004) presented that the politeness of English and Japanese consists of showing one thinks well of others (other-oriented politeness) and showing one does not think too highly of oneself (self-oriented politeness) by pointing out the underlying differences among those notions. In Burmese and Rakhine, generally, it can be discussed that they also have other-oriented and self-oriented politeness. However, the underlying notions are not the same in the detailed discussion. As discussed earlier, these two groups of native speakers' other-oriented politeness focus on the age of the addressees, and self-oriented politeness is not widely mentioned by the respondents. Superficially, the finding of this research in the case of other-oriented politeness overlaps with Kerkam's (2015) finding of "consideration for others." This other-oriented politeness in Libyan Arabic and native speakers of British English is through good manners, unlike with the "age" in Burmese and Rakhine.

Politeness and Impoliteness in Apology (Rakhine)

Normally, the employment of the word "Sorry" means a sense of impoliteness. However, this is not impolite in the Rakhine language because of its prolonged British occupation. Some respondents in the interview still try to avoid this word. Instead of it the usages "Katot, Katot," "Sate Ma Shi Par Nae (please do not mind it.)", "Katot Naw," and "Ma taw lot naw (It is an accident.)". Here "Katot" does not mean to be worshipped by them. It means the addresser will pay respect to them. (Katot means respecting others by making certain body movements like bending the waist and bowing to them by holding the hand together.). Sometimes, the apology is attached with bodily gestures like paying obeisance with the hands clasped palm to palm.

Politeness and Impoliteness in Request (Rakhine)

The polite request in Rakhine people comes with a soft tone, soft intonation, certain physical behaviors, and politeness markers like "par." Like the Burmese language, the imperative is impolite in making the request. Saying politely is the most requirement and the degree of being polite depends on the interlocutors, whether the elders or friends.

Politeness and Impoliteness in Apology (Burmese)

Generally, it is polite when the addresser apologizes. In this language, apology belongs to the essence of politeness. However, this does not mean the Burmese language has no impolite apology. For example, saying, "I came to apologize. Do you satisfy? I am not capable if you are not satisfied" in the request is impoliteness. This

sort of apology is a mere apology showing the reluctant mind of the addresser. In Burmese culture, in apology, the addresser has to be polite. This language should be attached with a low tone. Here, word choice is still important to succeed in the speech act. The language for the compensation to the addressee, such as "What can I do for you?" is also used. Sometimes, an impolite apology can happen among the interlocutors who have close relationships with each other.

Politeness and Impoliteness in Request (Burmese)

Employing politeness markers such as "par (particle)" and "Kyayzupyupee (please)" are mentioned by the interviewees as their actions to the request. Moreover, the Burmese language has minimizers such as "Darlay (little)" for polite requests. The choice of words has to be careful in the Burmese language since some words are polite and impolite depending on the addressee. For example, even if the politest request to ask for something from the elders, such as teachers or monks, is used, it is impolite due to the addressee.

The "Imperative" form used for the request is impolite in the Burmese language. A mere request is also impolite. Since it is the request function, it has to be polite. The tone is also a thing to be careful in making requests not to be impolite. In making the request, having the essence of "thinking about the others" in the language is polite.

Regarding the implications, since this research area is mainly concerned with pragmatics and sociolinguistics, the results and discussion are hoped to help deliver lectures in these courses. Especially these two linguistics subjects are unique for their focus on diverse communities, context-bound topics, and speakers' meaning. There are no descriptions of the pragmatic facets of Southeast Asia ethnic native speakers in the linguistics books. It is aimed to include some parts in this study in such kinds of books or monographs. This result may be attributed to the context of language teaching about Burmese and Rakhine, which are intertwined with its people, culture, and pragmatic features.

This paper can be assumed as an extension of Haugh (2004), in which he suggests a further study to clarify which components of politeness are truly universal across cultures and which are more culturally distinctive. He pointed out that efforts should be made to find both the universal and more culturally unique aspects of politeness worldwide, moving beyond the dispute between universality and cultural specificity. Common elements of politeness and culturally specific elements of politeness along with impoliteness in Rakhine and Burmese are provided by comparing with findings with the previous studies (Haugh, 2004; Sifianou & Tzanne, 2010; Kerkam, 2015).

One of the significant findings in this study is that Burmese and Rakhine native speakers' conceptualization of (im)politeness endorsed the fact that politeness is depicted by the inclusion of both verbal and non-verbal behaviors in the discursive approach (Watts, 2003; Mills, 2005; Locher, 2006). "Good manners" is the most mentioned concept of Korean and American English speakers (Min, 2021), and this is in line with the present research finding in which the respondents focus on non-verbal behaviors. Theoretically, it shows the need to consider the "manners or behaviors" category when discussing (im)politeness. However, unlike Sifianou and Tzanne (2010), whose results show that Greeks' conceptualization of politeness is mainly associated with non-verbal behaviors. Non-verbal behaviors complement verbal behaviors in

politeness in Burmese and Rakhine. The Greek participants' concepts of politeness: kindness, selflessness, and generosity, are different from the concepts of politeness in Rakhine and Burmese. The inclusion of impoliteness conceptualization in Burmese and Rakhine in this study may contribute not only to the third-wave research trend of Theoretical/folk-theoretic conceptualizations (second order) by Kadar and Haugh (2013) but also to the field of impoliteness study.

The results pave the way for the agreement with Haugh's (2004) statement that upholding the notion that politeness can be described uniformly across cultural boundaries is challenging. On the superficial and surface level, the notions can be regarded as "word choice" or "behaviors," but those concepts differ to a certain extent in terms of connotations. All in all, this research can be counted as the one that fulfills the literature of not only third-wave (im)politeness but also second-wave (im)politeness research and theory, which are heavily based on the qualitative approaches to collect the required data for the compilation of the paper.

Recommendations

The recommendations here mainly dealt with pedagogical implications of the research. Since this research area is mainly concerned with interlanguage pragmatics, pragmatics and sociolinguistics, the results and discussion are hoped to be helpful in delivering lectures in these courses. Especially, these two linguistics subjects are unique for their focuses on diverse communities, context bound topics and speakers' meaning. There are no descriptions about the pragmatic facets of Southeast Asia ethnic races in the linguistics books. It is aimed to include some parts in this study in such kinds of books or monographs. This may be contributed to the context of language teaching about Burmese and Rakhine which are intertwined with about its people, culture, and pragmatic features. All in all, this research can be counted as the one that fulfills the literatures of the third wave (im)politeness research and theory which are heavily based on the qualitative approaches to collect the required data for the compilation of the paper. Further studies could be conducted to explore those concepts in depth using the scholars' politeness or impoliteness strategies and maxims, not only qualitative and quantitative methods.

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