

Discernment and Volition: Two Aspects of Politeness

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Abstract

This study is titled "Discernment and Volition: Two aspects of politeness". It aims at examining two problematic concepts (Discernment and Volition) by presenting how they have been considered in the politeness studies and how they can be enriched with new senses that can enable them to be applicable in all languages.

This study consists of seven sections. At the very beginning, it gains deeper insight into the concepts of Discernment and Volition to be critically reconsidered. Then, it compares them to their closest concepts politic and Polite to present the points of similarities and differences between them. After that, both Discernment-dominated and Volitional dominated cultures will be considered. This study also moves on to identifying the elements that constitute Discernment, and those that constitute volitional interactions, as well as clarifying the process of their interpretation within the context. Finally, this study comprehensively introduces the methodology that can work for examining Discernment and Volition, clarifies the process of data collection and illustrates the process of data analysis.

Keywords: Discernment, Volition, Culturally-recommended utterances, Honorifics, and Rationality.

1. Introduction

Discernment and Volition are two aspects of language use that they function as two bases of making polite interactions. The first is associated with the impact of culture on interactions, and the latter with the interactants' freedom of choice. The advent of these two concepts dates back to the eighties of the last century, when they were introduced by (Hill et al.,1986) in their study "Universals of Linguistic Politeness: Quantitative Evidence from Japanese and American English". Ide (1989) further developed these two concepts to challenge Brown and Levinson's (1978,1987) universalistic approach which associates the production of politeness with a strategic observance of certain communicational rules or maxims. Intrinsically, Japanese linguists formulated Discernment and Volition to make a distinction between two different ways of producing polite interactions: the one that draws on applying a specific system (such as using honorifics), or using culturally recommended patterns, and the one that results from interactants' choice of a suitable strategy.

Recently in (2013), Dániel Kádár and Sara Mills have published a remarkable study that aims at re-theorizing the notion of Discernment. This reconsideration by Kádár and Mills has paved the way to examine the processes of examining Discernment and Volition across languages. The reason behind conducting this study has based on the hypothetical assumption that Discernment and volition exist in all language but the degree of their use may vary from a language to another, from a community of practice to another, from a situation to another and from a person to another. For example, I hypothesise that English people use volition more, whereas Kurdish people use discernment more in their polite interactions. This hypothesis has been derived from the fact that English culture is regarded as one of the individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 1984), whereas Kurdish culture is a one of the most collectivistic cultures. This means that Kurdish people observe cultural norms more and consequently use Discernment more.

This study aims at: 1. investigating the notions of Discernment and Volition by showing how they have been used in the politeness studies and how they can be enriched with a new sense to be applicable in all languages and cultures, and 2. recommending an accurately clarified and supported methodology for conducting such kind of studies in different languages.

2. Discernment and Volition

Discernment and Volition are used first to recognize the impact of cultural diversity on the process of producing polite interactions. Hill et al. (1986: 248) consider Discernment as the most significant aspect that brings about politeness in Japanese, whereas the Volitional strategy "predominates in the polite use of American English". Ide (1989: 223) further elaborated that Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) universalistic approach ignored the impact of culture on daily interactions although each culture has particular norms and/or recommends particular linguistic patterns to produce polite interactions. So, she challenges Brown and Levinson's (1987) universalistic theory in examining politeness in various cultures through recommending Discernment and Volition.

2.1. Discernment

Discernment is the closest English word to stand for the Japanese word *wakimae* that examines politeness in accordance with culturally recommended patterns (Hill et al, 1986:

348). According to Hill et al. (1986: 348), *wakimae* 'Discernment' is "the almost automatic observation of socially-agreed-upon rules and it applies to both verbal and non-verbal". Associating discernment (as an English match to the word *Wakimae*) to "socially-agreed-upon rules" does not represent the actual scope of the concept Discernment. Discernment may result from the use of culturally recommended expressions and terms that their use are governed by contextual factors rather than by linguistic rules, such as conventionalized utterances (section 5) and address terms (section 5.2) as well as from the use of culturally recommended linguistic patterns, such as honorifics. Honorific is a term that stands for the Japanese word /keigo/ which consists of two characters in which "the first signifying 'to respect, to honor' and the second 'language' or 'speech', and commonly rendered in English as 'polite language' or 'honorific language'" (Pizziconi, 2011: 47). According to Oak Kim (2011), honorifics are found in different forms of words, prepositions and suffixes that are originated to show politeness.

Ide (1989, 1992a and 1992b) argues that the early studies that were carried out on politeness namely by Lakoff (1973, 1990), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987, 1987) mainly fall under politeness₂ (a theoretical approach to politeness), so she proposed *wakimae* to stand for *politeness*₁. Ide associates *wakimae* (Discernment) with culturally recommended portion of politeness₁ (everyday interactions) and volition with politeness₂ (linguistic concepts) (Eelen, 2001: 56-7). This standpoint is criticized by many linguists. Kádár and Mills criticize Ide's perspective towards *wakimae* by stating that "neither its status nor its relationship with volition is entirely clear" (2013:137). Although discernment exists in all languages (ide, 1992: 303), it is formulated according to the nature of the Japanese interactions with regard to the use of the honorific system. Therefore, discernment is not coined in accordance with observing differences in linguistic systems and norms in different languages and cultures. Thus, the concept of discernment has been revisited in terms of its scope, use and interpretation.

Ide is neither clear nor constant in identifying the concept of discernment and in explaining its constitutional process. Unlike her claim that discernment is free from interactants' choice, Ide (1989) acknowledges that interactants also play a role in constituting discernment interactions, because of the following two reasons. First, according to Ide (1989:227), "while the use of strategies allows a potentially unlimited number of linguistic expressions, the use of formal forms is a matter of choices among a limited set of forms". Simultaneously, Ide (1992a: 117) argues that "The choice of formal linguistic forms in pronouns, address terms, honorifics and other lexical items according to these interactions and situational factors is essential for achieving the *wakimae* kind of linguistic politeness in Japanese and other honorific languages". In general, Ide (1989: 231) states that the linguistic aspect of 'discernment' is "realized mainly by the use of formal linguistic forms". This view might be applicable for the East Asian languages, because honorifics is one of the essential elements of politeness in Japanese (Haugh and Obana, 2011), in Chinese (Kádár and Pan, 2011), in Korea (Oak Kim, 2011), in Vietnamese (Lay Chew, 2011) and in the rest East Asian languages. This inconstancy in identifying discernment by Ide has resulted from her ignorance to the nature and the use of discernment in other languages and cultures. She states that discernment exists in all languages, whilst she is fully aware that many languages do not have honorific system or a system that looks like honorifics. Practically, speakers usually construct their interactions

basing on their own vision and perception to the situation and the place of interactions as well as considering the power and the gender of interactants and the nature of relationship among themselves. Thus, interactants determine how to interact, which aspect of language need to choose and which strategies need to follow. In the other words, even discernment interactions result from the awareness of interactants to the importance of considering cultural norms, which means that they are not completely free from the interactants' choice.

The nature of relationship between wakimae and volition is another issue that should be reconsidered. Drawing on the ide's definition of wakimae, one can elucidate that "if wakimae has an opposite term, it is certainly not... volition" (Kádár and Mills, 2013: 139), because Ide (1992: 303) states that "in wakimae, politeness is oriented to social norms, while in volition it is oriented to the face of the individual addressee". This distinction, as Kádár and Mills (2013:139) clarify, "is clearly improper", because interactants may observe each other's face when interacting in accordance with culturally recommended patterns. This, means that wakimae "is about the observance of social norms, which cover a boarder phenomenon than simply politeness" (Kádár and Mills, 2013:139). Therefore, the concept of discernment should be craved in a way that makes the endeavor of using polite interactions runs parallel with the significance of considering cultural influence.

2.2. Volition

Volition is another aspect of language use that is concerned with the interactants' freedom of choice. It is defined as "the aspect of politeness which allows the speaker a considerably more active choice, according to the speaker's intention, from a relatively wider range of possibilities" (Hill et al., 1986: 348). Considering volition as a universalistic concept (politeness²) is one of the shortcomings of Ide's (1989) Discernment-volitional theory, because volition results from interactants' choice of a suitable strategy which may vary from one culture to another. This claim even contradicts with her explanation that associates volition with the use of strategies like making joke, seeking agreement, being indirect, using interrogative sentences and others that are essential elements of producing daily interactions. Therefore, *volition* is also connected to *Politeness1*. This means that both *Volition* and *Discernment* are associated with politeness¹, because they are two aspects of language use that represent daily interactions.

Volitional utterances usually result from interactants' intention of choosing appropriate expression that softens interactions among the addressers and the addressees without using culturally recommended patterns (i.e. interactants use preferred strategies and utterances to produce polite interactions). Ide (1992a: 117) states that *volition* is considered as "the speaker's strategy to save the faces of the interactants, which is performed according to the speaker's intention". Japanese linguists associates volition only to the strategy of producing polite interactions, whereas the assessment of volitional utterances draws on contextual factors and recipients' interpretations, i.e. the context and the addressee determine whether a volitional utterance is polite or not. However, the strategies that interactants use to produce volitional interactions may vary from one culture to another and from one person to another.

Discernment and Volition are two crucial aspects of language that cannot be separated by drawing a boundary between them across cultures. According to Ide (1989: 231), "Discernment and volition are points on a continuum and in most actual language usage one finds that most are neither purely one nor the other, but to some extent a mixture of two". These two aspects of language use exist in all cultures and are used by everyone but in different degrees.

3. Politic and Polite Behaviour in Relation to Discernment and Volition

The concepts of *politic* and *polite behaviour*, which are proposed by Watts (1989, 1992, and 2003) are into some extent similar to the terms of *Discernment and Volition* that developed by Ide (1989). Both linguists pay attention to the role that cultural norms play in constructing daily interactions. Therefore, what they show is the importance of cultural differences in using language by introducing the concepts of *discernment* and *politic behaviour*. However, they still admit that personal ideology and choice also play a role in constituting interactants' behaviour and speech through introducing *Volition* and *Polite behaviour*.

Watts defines *politic behaviour* as "that behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction" (2003:21), whereas he defines *polite behaviour* as "behaviour beyond what is perceived to be appropriate to the ongoing social interaction, which says nothing about how members evaluate it" (2003: 21). The point that distinguishes Watts from Ide is that Watts "associates politeness with Volition only, while Discernment is associated with politic behaviour" (Eelen, 2001: 19).

Simply, for Watts, the point where *Discernment* differs from *Politic behaviour* is that the former is about using these rules and expressions that are culturally recommended to bring about polite interactions, whereas the latter is about interacting in a way that is acceptable from the perspective of culture, but not necessarily considered as polite. However, for two obvious reasons, I believe that neither Discernment nor the politic behaviour is free from interactants' effort to produce polite utterances. The first reason is that, the observance of cultural requirements is for the sake of interactants' rather than their culture; therefore, any failure in this respect may cause offence. The second reason is that achieving cultural acceptance requires experience, awareness and effort from the interactants to fulfill the needs of polite interactions. Therefore, both politic behaviour and discernment result in polite interactions.

Concerning *Volition* and *Polite behaviour*, both of them places emphasis on the interactants' choice, because: *Volition* is the selection of a polite strategy among a plenty number of them (Hill et al., 1986: 348), whereas *Polite behaviour* results from "those features of interaction which are socio-culturally marked by the speech community as being more than merely politic" (Watts, 2005: 51). However, Watts (2005: 52) states that Japanese people do not have the freedom to either make use of honorifics or avoid them in their interactions. So, it would be more suitable for them to use linguistic patterns that are "politic behaviour", but he adds that if these patterns are not used correctly, they may cause offence to the hearer. Watts (2005:57-8) points out that "politic behaviour which is culturally determined and is "generated" from underlying universal principles, is transformed into polite behaviour under

certain marked social conditions". Thus, according to Watts, the intentionality of using patterns determines the aspect of language use (polite or politic), whereas no indication is given by Ide that discernment could be transformed to volition. For example, according to Ide (1989: 229), the use of humble form besides honorifics makes the utterance more polite, but the utterance still remains discernment. However, I believe that it is the role of the interactants not the researchers or observers to differentiate discernment utterances from volitional utterances, because only the interactants (speaker and recipient(s)) can provide the right information about the nature (intention and interpretation) of their interactions. Therefore, both the speaker(s) and the recipient(s) are required to engage in the process of recognize discernment utterances. (See methodology).

Thus, discernment/volition and polite/politic are four aspects of politeness use. They result from the observance of cultural norms (as in discernment and politic) or from t individuals' choice of a suitable strategy in constituting their interactions (as in volition and polite). These aspects of language use exist in all cultures and are used by everyone. However, the structure and degree of the use may vary from one culture to another or from one person to another.

4. Discernment-dominated and Volitional-dominated Cultures

Generally, eastern cultures are categorized as discernment cultures, whereas western cultures tend to be recognized as volitional cultures (Kádár and Mills 2013: 133). This claim stems from the fact that the eastern people observe cultural norms more compared to the western people although Kádár and Mills (2013: 133) state that "this polarization is problematic and does not capture the way that politeness works". It is hard to draw a line between discernment cultures and Volition cultures for three main reasons: 1. The degree of the impact of culture on its people usually vary from a society to another; 2. Within the same society, the degree of the observance of cultural norms may vary from a geographical area to another, from a community of practice to another, and from a person to another; 3. The status, the age, the gender, and the mentality of the interactants, the context of the interactions, the nature of the relationships among interactants, and the topic of the interaction determine the degree of using discernment utterances. Despite all these facts, to understand the notions of discernment and volition, we also need to gain insight into both so called discernment and volitional dominated cultures to find out how cultural diversity contributes in identifying these two aspects of language.

4.1. Discernment-dominated cultures:

Discernment-dominated culture is a culture that its members, into a considerable extent, construct their interactions in the light of cultural norms in a way that interactants either directly use culturally recommended patterns or at least observe customs, traditions, and/or religious principles. Ide (1992: 303) argues that in discernment cultures: a. interactions are constructed according to "social norms", b. "participant is recognised as a member of society", c. "the participant is assumed to be different in status, age, role and gender, and the relationship among participants are determined in terms of complex factors". As Ide states it, the observation of social norms by interactants is one of the basic characteristics of Discernment cultures; however, using cultural norms is more appropriate than *social norms*. Concerning the point (b), categorising people that belong to Discernment cultures as members

of society gives the implementation that those people that do not pay attention to the social norms are not regarded as members of that society which is not logical. People are always regarded as member of a culture that they belong to although people from discernment cultures are probably more socialised. In (c), Ide demonstrates the importance of social and personal variables only in discernment cultures, whilst these variables are significantly considered in all cultures although they are more dominant in Discernment ones. People in discernment-dominated cultures tend to be socialized more, more restricted, and more sensitive to social and personal variables, as it could be observed in Collectivist culture that could be regarded as another form of discernment culture. According to Triandis (1995:xiii), “in collectivist cultures...people think of themselves as parts of their collectives and in most situations subordinate their personal goals to those of their collectives”. In Discernment cultures, like in collectivistic cultures, the voice of group can be easily heard from the individuals’ interaction, because interactants usually try to observe cultural norms and use culturally recommended communicative patterns. However, Gudykunst (1997: 335) states, “both individualistic and collectivistic tendencies exist in all cultures, but one tendency tends to predominate in specific sphere”. A culture can simultaneously gather different trends in terms of constituting interactions, but usually one of them is more widespread.

4.2. Volitional-dominated Cultures

Volitional culture is recognized by giving freedom of interacting to its members into a great extent. In volitional cultures, people usually pay less attention to customs and traditions; consequently, they make less use of the culturally recommended patterns. According to Ide (1992: 303), in volitional cultures: firstly, interactions are generally “oriented to the face of the individual addressee”, secondly “participants is recognised as an individual”, thirdly “individuals are supposed to be equal under egalitarian idealism”. The notion of individualism is unequivocally noticed in volitional cultures, and its members enjoy a wide extent of freedom to construct their interactions accordingly. However, in volitional cultures interactants may also observe cultural norms in addition to observing social and personal variables beyond the notion of egalitarianism.

Mainly, in volitional culture, members have more freedom; the phenomenon of individualism is outstanding; the use of culturally recommended patterns is limited; the impact of cultural norms is restricted; and social and personal variables are less effective. Triandis (1995: xiii) states that in “individualistic cultures people are more detached from their collectives. They feel autonomous, and their social behaviour maximizes enjoyment and depends on interpersonal contracts”. Thus, in volitional cultures each person enjoys his/her distinguished entity in a way that their interactions are constructed according to their personal experience and perspective. Although “in individualistic cultures, the needs, values, and goals of the individual take precedence over the needs, values, and goals of the in group” (Gudykunst, 1997: 331), the traces of using discernment and volitional expressions is noticed in every interaction.

5. The Production of Discernment and Volitional Interactions

The process of producing discernment interactions differs from that produces volitional interactions. According to Ide (1989: 232), interactions that are associated with discernment usually fall under “honorifics”, “pronouns”, “address terms”, “speech levels”, “speech formulas” and many others, whereas the interactions that are considered as *volition* are usually associated with verbal strategies that result in seeking “agreement”, making “joke”, being “pessimistic”, “question”, “minimizing the imposition” and many others. Generally, interactions that are free from personal efforts are usually connected to Discernment, whereas the interactions that involve interactants’ effort are categorized as volitional aspect. Ide indicated the devices of producing discernment and volitional interactions in accordance with Japanese language, but the nature of languages are not similar. Consequently, the methods of producing these two aspects of politeness may vary from one language to another.

East Asian languages, such as Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thai mainly draw on honorifics to bring about discernment interactions. However, honorifics, or a system that looks like honorifics does not exist, for example, in Middle East languages like Kurdish, Persian, Arabic, or in

European languages: English, Italian, Germany and some others. So, researchers may draw on different elements, such as conventionalized utterances, common linguistic patterns and many others to examine the impact of culture. This diversity is also applicable in producing volitional utterances. For example, Israelis, Argentinean, and Spanish prefer directness strategy to communicate politely, whereas French and English prefer indirectness strategy (Blum-Kulka, 2005: 262). Therefore, the elements that take part in constituting discernment and volitional interactions may vary across languages and cultures.

To clarify how the production of Discernment and Volition are culturally determined, English and Kurdish could be as two good samples for this study. These two languages are different from each other and they are different from Japanese as well in terms of producing discernment and volition and in the degree of using the elements that constitute these two aspects of the language use. Unlike Japanese neither English nor Kurdish has honorifics system, so they draw on the elements like address terms, culturally recommended linguistic patterns, formal linguistic patterns, Conventionalized utterances and speech levels to produce discernment interactions. Concerning the production of volitional interactions, languages are similar, because volition is the consequence of choice (i.e. it is not rule governed). However, the degree of using of the strategies may vary from a language to another, from a community of practice to another, and from a person to another. Therefore, any utterance that is regarded as the outcome of the interactants’ choice (e.g. making joke, using interrogative patterns, seeking agreement, being indirect, selecting suitable descriptive words, praising, observing interesting points and many more personal strategies that interactants prefer) brings about volitional interactions.

However, the issues which are associated with the aspects of *volition* or *discernment* overlap, so they cannot be easily distinguished through interactions. Observers and analyzers may be able to easily recognize recommended linguistic patterns, honorifics and address terms to categorize them as discernment interactions, but it is hard to examine Discernment and

Volition by drawing on, for example, conventionalized utterances. Formulaic utterances are classified into optional and compulsory in which the latter is categorized as Discernment. Therefore, it would be hard to distinguish compulsory formulaic utterances from optional one; consequently observers and analyzers may not successfully distinguish Discernment utterances from volitional ones. Yet, to clarify the process of distinguishing discernment from volitional utterances, this study considers the role of rationality and the contribution of address terms in identifying these two concepts.

5.1. Discernment and Volition in Accordance with Rationality

One of the issues that distinguish Discernment from Volition is the role of interactants' rational contribution in producing polite interactions. According to Ide (1989: 244), "the volitional aspect is the most rational and the discernment aspect is the least rational. Thus, volition and discernment represent the two extreme ends of the continuum of rationality in the Weberian typology of action". For Ide, Discernment is absolutely free from interactants' rational contribution, because as Hill et al. (1986: 348) argue, interactants "submit passively to the requirements of the system", whereas Volition is the outcome of the individuals' rational choice. Watts (2005:57-8) further points out that "polite behaviour which is culturally determined and is "generated" from underlying universal principles, is transformed into polite behaviour under certain marked social conditions". The point of agreement between Ide and Watts is that Discernment interactions are free from interactants' choice and intention. However, I believe that this claim exceeds the reality, because: 1) people are not robots to interact without the contribution of rationality; 2) even the realization of the importance of observing cultural norms results from interactants' rationality.

This crucial deprivation from the interactants' intentionality questions the existence of Discernment. Human being is not a robot to be absolutely free from rationality in their communication, because even the appropriately use of discernment utterances, such as honorifics requires personal efforts and awareness from interactants. However, this distinction may vary from one culture to another. These two concepts, Discernment and Volition, overlap in utterances that result from both speakers' attitude and culturally recommended patterns. Discernment is not always completely free from interactants' consciousness because even the interactants' use of culturally recommended patterns is associated with their awareness to the significance of observing cultural norms. To prove this argument, Even Ide (1989:227), in contrast to her regular argument that discernment is just a matter of using culturally recommended patterns, states that "the use of formal forms is a matter of choices among a limited set of forms". Ide (1992a: 117) adds that "The choice of formal linguistic forms in pronouns, address terms, honorifics and other lexical items according to these interactional and situational factors is essential for achieving the *wakimae* kind of linguistic politeness in Japanese and other honorific languages" (Ide, 1992a: 117). Simultaneously, Ide (1989: 231) categorizes formal linguistic patterns as discernment. This means that Ide did not absolutely separate discernment from interactants' choice.

Interactants sometimes need to choose among more than one culturally recommended pattern (discernment utterances). For example, Kurdish has two conventionalized expressions that people use them for morning greetings which are (*sala:mw aleiku:m* =peace be upon you), or

offence. For example, people that belong to one of the sheikhs' family usually expect others to use the address word /*še:x/* = sheikh before their names; old men expect the address word /*xa:l/*; PhD holders expect the address term Dr.; Stonemasons expect the address term /*wasta:/*, and many more address terms the interactants expect others to use them before mentioning their names. Although the use of address terms is compulsory among Kurdish interactants in some particular context, it is not enough to have a polite interaction, because the appropriate use of them is also required.

The system of using address terms in English may differ from Kurdish in the respect of type, use and the consequence of ignorance. According to Nevela (2004: 2126), in English, the nature of interactants' relationship as well as the sort of their social status are taken into account to either appropriately use or to ignore address terms. Dickey (1997) conducted a study on the use of address terms in family and academic interactions. She states that within families the use of kinship terms is important to address, for example, elder family members, parents and grandparents (such as, dad, mum, etc.) although "these terms were sometimes avoided or modified in reference, especially in families with an unusual structure resulting from divorce or other causes" (Dickey, 1997: 261,2). Concerning academic interactions, Dickey (1997: 64) argues that the interactants that have the same academic level usually do not use titles to address each other except in certain formal interactions among distant interactants.

Thus, the use of address terms, and the consequences of their ignorance or failure to use them appropriately vary from a culture to another, from a community of practice to another, and from a context to another. As a consequence, the degree of recognizing address terms as Discernment or Volition may vary across languages and contexts.

6. Views towards the interpretation of Discernment and Volitional utterances in connection to politeness.

There is no consensus among linguists about the interpretation of discernment and volitional utterances. According to Ide (1989), both discernment and volition produce polite interactions, whereas Watts (2005:52) believes that "wherever volition supersedes discernment in the choice of specific linguistic forms such as honorifics, terms of address, ritualised expressions, etc., we are dealing with politeness phenomena". That is, politeness occurs in all cultures if the intention of interactants to be polite coincides with the process of choosing particular linguistic patterns to express politeness. Watts only associates politeness with the use of the volition, whereas he regards discernment as politic behaviour which is not marked as polite interactions by the recipient because they are free from interactants effort to produce polite interactions. However, to sort out whether discernment is considered as polite or not, researchers should draw on the interpretations that given by the recipients.

According to the discursive approach to politeness the assessment of interactions draws on recipients' interpretation which bases on personal, cultural, situational and contextual influences (Mills, 2003, 2009, 2011; Watts, 2003; Culpeper, 2011), because (im)politeness "is not located at the level of the utterance, as it seems to be for Brown and Levinson" (Linguistic Politeness Research Group, 2011: 2). Thus, the use of formulaic utterances that

once recognized as Discernment may also result in impoliteness. This perspective is not applicable to the use of discernment, because whenever discernment utterances are used to exceed their actual purpose, hence they are no longer discernment. In the other words, if a discernment utterance is used to represent a metaphorical meaning other than its actual meaning, it would not be recognized as discernment, because it is not used compulsorily to fulfill the impact of culture but it is volitionally used to indirectly convey an intentional meaning. For example, the Kurdish ritualised utterance /dastit xoş be/ = may bless your hand is compulsorily used to someone that hands you something, does you a favor, supports you, and in many more cases (Shams, 2006: 62). But, if it is used ironically to criticise someone for being unhelpful, it loses its function as discernment and becomes volition.

Contrary to Watts claim, discernment utterances may be marked as polite as well as politic. For instance, Kurdish has hundreds of compulsory conventionalized utterances (shams, 2006: 62) that could be categorized as discernment utterances. These utterances need to be used appropriately in the right context to avoid causing offence (Fattah, 2014). However, it is not easy, even for a mature person to manage the use of these compulsory conventionalized utterances appropriately. For example, funeral ceremony has several conventionalized utterances that attendants need to use them correctly to offer condolence. The attendants need to observe the age of the dead person, the reason of the death, and their nature of relation with the dead person's families to use the appropriate utterance. If the dead was an old person, we must say / xwa: âafwy ka:/ = May God forgive him/her; if the dead was a child, we must say /xwa: sabwrita:n da/ = May God commiserate you; if the reason of death was killing, we must say that / xwa: hâqi: bka/ =May God revenge for him/her; and many more conventionalized utterances. This variety in using appropriate conventionalized utterances is applicable in all national, religious and social events. This complexity impedes interactants to master the process of using conventionalized utterances appropriately. Consequently, if these utterances are correctly used, they may be marked as polite interactions by the recipients.

7. Methodology for conducting studies on Discernment and Volition

Studies on Discernment and Volition should draw on the discursive approach. Discursive approach "brought contextual factors into the analysis of politeness" (Pan, 2011: 71), because discursive theorists believe that it is impossible to assess the nature of interactions by drawing on the generalized frameworks. Therefore, researchers need to observe all the factors that affect interactional constitution and interpretation, such as personal, cultural, situational, and contextual influences (Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003; Culpeper, 2011). Discursive theorists agree that politeness or impoliteness "is not located at the level of the utterance, as it seems to be for Brown and Levinson" (Linguistic Politeness Research Group, 2011: 2). This study recommends the discursive approach for carrying out the studies that examining the extent to which languages use discernment utterances, and the extent to which they use volitional utterances. To fulfill this aim, such kind of studies should engage all the participated interactants (speakers and recipients that their interactions are recorded) in the process of the data analysis.

Such studies are qualitative which aims at perceiving, describing, elaborating and getting insight into the collected data (Sogunro, 2002: NP). For data collection, such kind of studies

should draw on the recording authentic interactions, then making interview with the participants that their interactions are recorded.

7.1. The process of the data collection and the data analysis.

The researchers should consider the following steps:

Recording several separate authentic interactions at different settings and occasions. Engaging participants of different gender, age, educational background, and social status in order to collect a reliable data that can represent the authentic daily interactions.

After collecting the data the researcher(s) should transcribe the recorded data.

The researchers should indicate all the utterances, phrases, patterns, address terms, strategies, etc. and ask :

- The concerned speaker to state the reason behind using these utterances.
- The concerned recipient(s) to indicate all the polite utterances.

Notice: to distinguish discernment from volitional utterances we have to examine each utterance separately, but we cannot fulfill this purpose unless the interactants indicate the polite utterances that we need to examine them. Therefore, the interactants will be asked the above request as it is clarified in the process number (5).

Both the speaker and the listener should approve the indicated polite utterances in order to examine them one by one to find out which polite utterance is made in accordance with the discernment attempt and which one is made in accordance with the volitional attempt. To fulfil this purpose, researchers should back to the concerned interactants to play to him/her the concerned recorded interactions and simultaneously ask the concerned speaker the following questions:

Asking the concerned speaker the following questions:

1. Is there an alternative polite utterance, term, way, etc. to use it instead of the polite utterance, term, strategy (.....) in this context? Yes/No
1. 1. If (Yes) give the alternative utterance, strategy, etc. (.....)
1. 2. If (No), acknowledge that this is the only way to respond in this context.

If the speaker answered the question (1) by (yes) and s/he could give an alternative to the used utterance, pattern, etc., so this utterance, pattern, address term, etc. would be regarded as volition, whereas if the speakers' answer of the question (1) was (No) and acknowledged that it is the only choice, then researcher should go to the recipient(s) to make sure that the same answer could be achieved in order to be approved as discernment. For this purpose, the question may be formulated in this way.

Asking the concerned recipient(s) the following questions:

1. Is there an alternative polite utterance, term, strategy, etc. that could be used instead of the utterance, term, strategy (.....) in this context ? Yes/No
1. 1. If (Yes) give the alternative utterance, strategy, etc. (.....)
1. 2. If (No), acknowledge that this is the utterance that you expect from the speaker in this context.

Discernment utterances require approving from both the speaker and the listener(s).

6. All the approved polite utterances should go under the same process that clarified in the step number (5).

7. Finally, researchers should count the number of volitional utterances and the number of discernment utterances to infer the proportion of discernment utterances and volitional utterances in the examined language in a particular language, culture, geographical area, or in a particular community of practice.

7.2. A Case Study:

Some information about the data

1. Participants: Three Kurdish students. A is MA. Holder, but (B) and (C) are BA. Holders.
2. Setting = (A)'s home.
3. Transcription conventions:

[]	overlapping utterances
O:::	lengthened sound
(1:5)	pauses in seconds (e.g. one second and half)
(-)	short pauses
<i>Italicized</i>	decreased volume than usual
and underlined	The utterances that are indicated by interactants as polite utterances.

The transcription of the data

A: tka:ya¹, bismila ka² - n, ewa
Please, in the name of God do - you, you
Please, start to dine by stating the name of God

B: mamosta³ (A), (-) wara to: - ê [danisha⁴, bra - m⁵]
Teacher (A), come you - too take a seat, brother- I
Mr. (A), take a seat too brother

C: [xwa: afw: t - ka⁶] da
danisha⁷
God forgive - you - v. emphasis sound
sit down

May God forgive you, do take a seat

A: awa ha:t - m, tw xwa:⁸ ewa bismila ka⁹ - n, awa bas awa maya
teyka-m
Just come - I, for God you in the name of God, v- you this only this left,
pour - I
Please start, I am coming in a second, only this is left to pour

C: da wara¹⁰, awanda - \hat{s} zyada
emphasising sound come, this amount - even too much
Come in, take a seat, even what you have served is more than the needed.

(2:4)

C: *aw - a lera by bash - tra*
This- one here v. good - comparative
This is better to be here

(1:7)

B: himmmmm¹¹ (:7) , ba dl - y mn - a¹²
sound for deliciousness, Preposition heart possessive I - v.
himmm, I like it

(5.8)

A: *aw - a - \hat{s} - yan \hat{s} lay - qaisy*
This – one - more - plural soup - apricot
This is the apricot soup as well.

C: *$\hat{s}la$ -y - qaisy:::, [xxxxx]*
Soup- prepos. Apricot
Apricot soup!.

B: [dast - t xosh - bet¹³]
hand – yours bless - v.
May bless your hands

C: [dast-t xosh bet¹⁴]
May bless your hands
(3:2)

A: bbw:r¹⁵ - n tw - xwa¹⁶, (:6) farmw¹⁷ bismila ka¹⁸ - n
Forgive - you for – God , deign in the name of God do - you
Forgive me for God, please, start to dine

B: mamosta¹⁹, ba - xwa²⁰ awro, zo:r - man azyat - da²¹ - y
Teacher, by - God today, very - we inconvenience - v. – you

Mr., I swear to God we cause you a lot of inconvenience today.

C: a \hat{s} hadw²² waya, [hhhhhhh]
Hidden subject testify true, laugh
You are right

B: [hhhhhhh]
Laugh

A: [hhhhhhhh]
Laugh

A: č - m na krd - va²³ bra²⁴ , la xzmat - da²⁵ -
m
Something – I neg. do – present perfect brother, in service - present simple -
I

I have done nothing, brother; It is my pleasure.
(4:6)

A: Ka:k²⁶ (b) awa baš brzha - wa
Sir (b) this well grill - present perfect
Sir (b), this one has been grilled well

B: to azyat - ma - xo²⁷ mamosta²⁸, (1:4) [dast - t xosh bet²⁹]
you inconvenience neg. - do teacher, hand - yours bless v.
Mr., do not bother yourself, (2.1) may bless your hand.

A: [azyat - n - va: ³⁰]
Inconvenience - Neg. – present v.
It is my pleasure

A: ka::k³¹(c) [xxxxxxx]
Sir (c)

C: bbwra³² mamosta³³ , xom dast radakeš - m³⁴, (2:) ooohh zora awa , dast - t xosh bet³⁵
Sorry teacher , myself hand stretch – I, exclamation sound, very this, hand
-you bless v.
Sorry Mr., I do serve myself , it is too much, may bless your hand.

A: a:fe:tt - an - bet³⁶
healthy - you - v.
Bon appetite
(5: 6)

B: barasty zor ba tama³⁷, (:7) dast - t xosh - bet³⁸
Really very prepos. delicious, hand – your bless - v.
Actually, it is very delicious, may bless your hand

A: a:fe:tt - an - bet³⁹

healthy - you - v.
Bon appetite

C: xwa:rdn - y mamosta⁴⁰harwa xosha⁴¹., dameka bir -v daka-
m⁴²,hhhhh

Food - possessive teacher always likewise delicious, long ago miss- it v. - I,
laugh

Mr.'s food is always delicious; I have missed, hhhhhhh

A: awa boya wa ba asany razibw⁴⁴ - y, hhhhh, (-) ya xwa⁴⁵, afet - tan
bet⁴⁶

that because like that easily accept - you, lough Asking God, healthy - plural v.
That is why you accepted the invitation easily! hhhhh , asking God, (-) it may be healthy

7.3. Data Analysis

As it has been explained in the methodology:

1. After the indication of all the polite utterances, patterns, address terms, phrases, etc. by the interactants, then I examined all of them one by one as the following three samples.

The utterance /tka:ya¹/ = please

I asked the concerned speaker

1. Is there an alternative utterance to use it instead of the utterance /tka:ya¹ / in this context?
Yes/No

1. 1. *If (Yes) give the alternative utterance (... ..)*

1. 2. *If (No), acknowledge that this is the only way to respond in this context.*

The answer was (yes)

And he gave two alternatives (/ha:wreya:n/ = friends; /twxwa:/ = for the sake of God).

Drawing on the concerned interactant's response we can elucidate that the utterance (tka:ya¹) has been chosen among a range of suitable utterances. Therefore, the utterance (tka:ya¹) is regarded as volition in this context.

The utterance (bismila ka²)

I asked the concerned speaker

1. Is there an alternative utterance to use it instead of the formulaic utterance /bismila ka²/ in this context? Yes/No

1. 1. *If (Yes) give the alternative utterance (... ..)*

1. 2. *If (No), acknowledge that this is the only way to respond in this context.*

The answer was (yes), and he gave the alternative (/farmw/ =deign).

Drawing on the concerned interactants' response we can elucidate that the utterance /bismilaka²/ has been chosen among a range of suitable utterances. Therefore, the utterance /bismila ka²/ is regarded as volition in this context.

The address term /ma:mosta:³/

I asked the speaker

1. Is there an alternative utterance to use it instead of the address term /ma:mosta:³/ in this context? Yes/No

1. 1. *If (Yes) give the alternative utterance (... ..)*

1. 2. *If (No), acknowledge that this is the only way to respond in this context.*

The answer was (no) and he has acknowledged that this is the only way to respond in this context

Drawing on the concerned interactant's response, we can elucidate that there is no an alternative to use instead of the address term /ma: mosta:³/ in this context. Therefore, this utterance is regarded as Discernment.

7.4. Findings

The analysis of the following short recorded interaction has brought about these findings:

1. (46) utterances, patterns, address terms, phrases, etc. have been indicated as polite attempts by the concerned interactants in this piece of interaction.
2. (10) out of (46) utterances have been approved as discernment which are the utterances number (3, 13, 14, 19, 28, 30, 33, 39, 40, 46). The discernment utterances maintain the address term (ma:mosta = *teacher = Mr.) five times; the formulaic utterance (datxoê = may bless your hand) two times; the formulaic utterance (âa:feta:n bet = bon appetite) two times; and the formulaic utterance (azyatnya = it is not inconvenience = it is my pleasure) once.
3. (36) out of (46) utterances have been approved as volition which are the utterances number (1, 2, 4,5, 6, 7, 8,9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27,29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45).
4. The same utterance (e.g. âafeta:n bet) in this short recorded interaction somewhere is approved as discernment (e.g. in 39 and 46), whereas it is approved as volition somewhere else (e.g. in 36). Therefore, I asked the interactants for the reason and the answer was “ in 39 and 46, I was obliged to use the utterance (âafeta:n bet = may be health), because the invitees states that the food is delicious, whereas in 36 I just liked to used it”.

7.5. The result

In this piece of recorded interactions, approximately %22 percent of the attempts by interactants were made in accordance of using discernment, whereas approximately %78 of the attempts were made in accordance of using volition.

Notice: This result just represents around 10 minutes of Kurdish recorded interactions in a particular occasion at a dinner time at home which we expect the use of culturally recommended patterns more comparing to another occasion or in a different context, because there many factors that can affect the result such as the setting, the nature of the occasion, the gender, the cultural background, social status of the interactants, educational backgrounds, the age of the interactants, and many more issues.

8. Conclusions

1. The concept of Discernment can represent both culturally recommended patterns and culturally ritualized utterances to be able to operate in all languages and cultures.
2. Discernment interactions result from the awareness of interactants to the importance of considering cultural norms, which means that they are not completely free from the interactants' choice.
3. Although Discernment is the result of the observance of cultural norms, it is regarded as one aspects of politeness.
4. Volition is just associated with the interactants' willingness to show politeness.
5. Only interactants themselves can accurately recognize Discernment utterances from Volitional utterances.
6. The utterance that is recognized as discernment in a particular context can also be recognized as volition in a different context.
7. Discernment and Volition are the most adequate aspects to be engaged in the process of examining the degree of the impact of culture on daily interactions.
8. Discursive Approach is the most appropriate approach to examine the degree of using Discernment and volitional utterances in any language.

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