



Understanding Impoliteness in Interaction: Social Structure and Power Dynamics in Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*

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Abstract— By drawing on theoretical models proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), Culpeper (1996, 2011), Bousfield (2008), Mills (2013) and Bourdieu's (1979) sociological theory of practice, this paper explores the continuum of politeness and impoliteness within the framework of linguistic pragmatics. It examines how class hierarchies, cultural capital, and power asymmetries manifest in interpersonal interactions, particularly between the characters of Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton through a close textual analysis of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989). After problematizing the notion of '(im)politeness' it proceeds towards foregrounding the relational nature of im/politeness by using a discursive approach, and emphasizes the role of context, intentionality, and face management in the interpretation of speech acts. The analysis illustrates how impoliteness is not merely a deviation from politeness norms but a situated, strategic act that reflects and potentially disrupts social structures and creates social disharmony. The paper integrates linguistic theory with socio-cultural analysis to offer a nuanced understanding of how politeness functions as both a communicative and ideological practice within class-conscious societies.



Keywords— politeness, impoliteness, face theory, discursive approach, distinction, cultural capital, class hierarchy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of impoliteness in interaction has become increasingly significant in pragmatics and discourse analysis, particularly as it relates to the negotiation of power and the maintenance of social hierarchies within hierarchical and class-conscious societies. Rooted in cultural norms and socio-linguistic expectations, these concepts reflect how individuals manage face, maintain social harmony, or disrupt it. Traditionally impoliteness was overshadowed by the classical politeness model. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theoretical framework, with its emphasis on face-threatening acts and superstrategies, provides a foundational lens through which to examine the intricate workings of politeness. After a considerable period of neglect, impoliteness is now recognized as a complex and contextually bound phenomenon, embedded in broader

sociocultural structures and has emerged as a critical area of study, especially in understanding confrontational or norm-defying interactions. Scholars such as Culpeper, Bousfield, and Mills have emphasized the importance of contextual and intentional dimensions in identifying impoliteness, advocating for a more nuanced, discursive approach. The discursive theory draws upon the hermeneutical tradition and explores how social inquiry interprets rules and conventions in a social context. It views meaning as the historical product shaped by specific systems of rules. It interrogates construction of social practices and the ways in which discourse constitutes social reality. Historically, discourse refers to the system of meaning forms subject identities, social relations and practices. This involves viewing the relations between the different participants in the social structure and the ways in which it leads to changes. Discursive suggests that the meaning depends on

a socially constructed system of rules and signifying practices. Included in the paper is Bourdieu's notion of distinction to explore class structure, habitus and power dynamics in interaction. The negotiation that takes place between individuals, communities of practice and the associated appropriateness reflects the societal norms. The dynamic nature of the practice and the ways in which speech acts functions, in different situations, leads to negotiation of meaning. This paper draws on subsequent developments by Culpeper (1996, 2011), Bousfield (2008), Mills (2003) and Bourdieu (1979) to examine the interplay of politeness and impoliteness through an analysis of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*. It explores how class structures, habitus, and linguistic exchanges between characters—especially Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton—demonstrate the relational dynamics of face management, power, and social capital and investigates how impoliteness functions as a discursive resource through which social order is both upheld and challenged.

II. FROM POLITENESS TO IMPOLITENESS

Face-oriented model - Brown and Levinson's (1987) Superstrategies

Politeness is a reflection of the finesse and culture in which a person has been initiated. It involves utterances which are in compliance with the needs of acceptable behaviour specific to a particular culture and community. One of the most influential studies in politeness is Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-oriented model. It involves 'face' or an act of self-image which a participant likes to maintain. Brown and Levinson write that 'it is intuitively the case that certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face.' (1987, p. 65) They argue that people have two faces: a positive face, i.e. the desire to be liked and appreciated, and a negative face, i.e. the desire not to be imposed upon. According to them, certain acts (e.g. orders, threats, criticisms) run counter to one's positive face, the want to be approved of, and/or one's negative face, the want to be unimpeded. The face threat of the act, thus, becomes consequential. A threat to face is termed as Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) which is mitigated by using certain strategies. Brown and Levinson have proposed five strategies which are termed as superstrategies for performing an FTA. These are:

- i. Positive politeness – it is the strategy designed to redress the addressee's positive face wants. It is used show solidarity and compatibility between the participants.
- ii. Negative politeness - it is the strategy designed to redress the addressee's negative face wants. It is concerned with a certain distance to avoid imposition on the hearer.

- iii. Bald on record - it is unmitigated FTA without redressive action performed 'in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible.' (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 69)
- iv. Off record – it is indirect FTA performed in such a way that 'there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention so that the actor cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent.' (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 69)
- v. Withhold the FTA.

The superstrategies are systematically related to the degree of face threat where Bald on record is associated with least face threat and the Withhold with the highest.

Impoliteness in relation to Politeness – The Beginning

Research on impoliteness has finally come of age after several fitful beginnings. In fact, compared to linguistic politeness, it has not received significant attention despite the fact that several disciplines gravitated towards impoliteness with different labels without the modifier "linguistic" (even where they each deal with language). (Culpeper and Hardaker 2017) Politeness research has moved on from a purely 'classical' Brown and Levinson line of argumentation, which had systematically overlooked impoliteness – long neglected "poor cousin" of politeness – and neglected understanding it from different theoretical stances. (Locher & Bousfield 2008, p. 2)

Politeness and impoliteness cannot be seen as being absolute and opposite of each other, where the former becomes unmarked and the latter becomes marked. Culpeper (1996) defines impoliteness as the use of utterances or actions that attacks one's interlocutor and causes disharmony and/or social disruption. It is a type of linguistic behaviour which overlooks the accepted social norms and practices or causes a threat to the hearer by being 'impolite.' According to him, the idea of extending the scope of politeness theory to include 'antagonistic or confrontational communication' is not new. (1996, p. 350). In fact, Craig et al (1986), Tracy (1990) have, in the past, argued in favour of hostile as well as cooperative communication, which are in sync with Brown and Levinson that: '... politeness has to be communicated, and the absence of communicated politeness may, ceteris paribus, be taken as the absence of a polite attitude.' (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 5), and Leech (1983) that 'some illocutions (e.g. orders) are inherently impolite, and others (e.g. offers) are inherently polite.' (cited in Culpeper 1996, p. 350) But the subsequent studies did not 'focus comprehensively on impoliteness' and, therefore, Culpeper argues for considering 'inherent impoliteness' and the contextual factors that are associated with it, for any evaluation of

(im)politeness outside the theorist's vacuum will take context into account. (Culpeper 1996, p. 350) In furthering his argument for 'inherent impoliteness' and the context he quotes Fraser and Nolan who had previously pointed out that '... no sentence is inherently polite or impolite. We often take certain expressions to be impolite, but it is not the expressions themselves but the conditions under which they are used that determines the judgment of politeness.' (1981: 96)

Culpeper emphatically argues that 'outside the theorist's vacuum' assessment of impoliteness must take context into account. (1996, p. 351)

Assessment of Impoliteness – Possible Situations

Impoliteness involves the study of intentionality of the speaker which can be assessed by viewing the different situations. In fact, assessment of impoliteness is an important component in an impolite act. A number of situations can arise by which one can assess the cline of impoliteness. The possible situations are:

Situation 1 : If the speaker intends to hurt and damage the face of the hearer and the hearer perceives it as such, then it is impoliteness.

Situation 2 : If the speaker has the intention to damage the hearer's face but this is not viewed as damaging, then it cannot be categorised as impoliteness.

Situation 3 : If the speaker's intention is not to damage the face but is construed by the hearer as being offensive.

Situation 4 : If the speaker's intention may not be to cause face damage but may be construed by the hearer as being done unintentionally.

Impoliteness Strategies

An important aspect in impoliteness is the concept of face. Considering impoliteness as a 'parasite of politeness', Culpeper (1996) builds a framework for impoliteness superstrategies in relation to Brown and Levinson's (1987) model. According to him, each of Brown and Levinson's politeness superstrategies has its opposite impoliteness superstrategy 'in terms of orientation to face' and instead of enhancing or supporting face, that are oriented towards attacking face' (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356) and thus treats it as 'a device of expository convenience' in categorising impoliteness as:

i. Bald on record impoliteness: The intention is not to damage the face of the hearer. There is no damage to the face of the hearer. 'FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimised.' (p. 356)

ii. Positive impoliteness: 'The use of strategies designed to damage the addressees face want.' (p. 356)

iii. Negative impoliteness: 'The use of strategies designed to damage the addressees face want.' (p. 356)

iv. Sarcasm or mock politeness: This is close to Leech's (1983) conception of 'irony'. Here 'FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere and thus remain surface realisations.' (p. 356)

v. Withhold politeness: 'The absence of politeness work where it would be expected.' (p. 357)

III. FROM MAINTAINING TO ATTACKING 'FACE' – PROBLEMATISING IMPOLITENESS

In addition to his concern with face-aggravating linguistic behaviour Culpeper also focuses on questions such as: When are we (im)polite? When does a polite behaviour become impolite? What part of politeness is impolite? People's cooperation in maintaining face in interaction depends upon the mutual vulnerability of face. Several factors contribute differential response to impoliteness, such as power imbalance, conflict of interest, strategic withdrawal, intimacy, etc. Power inequality gives leverage to a powerful to either reduce the ability of the less powerful participant to become impolite or prevent indulgence in retaliation; conflict of interest in some circumstances that may not be in a participant's interest to maintain the other's face; strategic withdrawal by consciously employing short-term impoliteness strategy to achieve long-time goal; intimacy where the impoliteness occurs in equal power relationships in an extremely intimate situations.

Impoliteness has been viewed as an impolite and rude action, which 'involves communicative behaviour intending to cause "face loss" of a target or perceived by the target to be so.' (Culpeper, cited in Locher and Bousfield 2008) It is suggestive of using language which disrupts harmony and challenges the equilibrium of a relationship. Although Beebe looks at it as the 'pragmatic failure of politeness' (Beebe 1995, cited in Mills 2003, p. 132), Eelen (2001) takes different position. She argues that instead of viewing impoliteness as a failure, it can be seen as a form of competence, whereby, a certain objective is achieved. It is a 'non-performance of an act, as the lack or absence of something.' (Eelen 2001, cited in Mills 2003, p. 133).

Impoliteness has been explained as that which, 'constitutes the communication of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal face threatening acts which are *purposefully* delivered: (i) unmitigated [...], and/or (ii) with *deliberate* aggression [...]. ' (Bousfield 2008: 72). It is seen

as an attack on the face and certain speech acts like threats maybe perceived as being intentional.

Recent definitions of impoliteness proposed by Bousfield (2010) and Culpeper (2011a) reflect a shift in the field. Bousfield (2010) proposed four prototypical features of impoliteness, and then plotted 12 possible impoliteness scenarios against these features. The four prototypical features are:

- i. speaker intent/projectability;
- ii. speaker awareness of possible face-damaging effects of their utterance(s);
- iii. hearer perception/construction of the speaker's intent/hurtfulness of their words, leading to;
- iv. hearer face actually being, or not being, damaged.

(Bousfield, 2010, cited in
Culpeper and Hardaker 2017, p. 4)

A revised definition of impoliteness proposed by Culpeper's (2011a) as:

Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and /or beliefs about social organisation, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. *Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered "impolite" – when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be.* Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence.

(Culpeper, 2011a, cited in Culpeper and Hardaker 2017, p. 4; emphasis in original)

This definition overly emphasises both the perspective of the speaker and the role of intentionality.

According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness is not just a manifestation of a different use of language, but its impact on the hearer is of considerable significance. It threatens the face of the hearer by using language which transgresses the accepted norms and boundaries between the status, role and class of a person. He categorises impoliteness under four headings:

- i. Personalised negative vocatives
- ii. Personalised negative assertive
- iii. Personalised negative reference
- iv. Personalised third person negative reference

Some of the features of impoliteness are the following:

- i. Intentionality which involves the intention of the person who displays a rude behaviour.
- ii. Face attack which targets the positive face or the negative face of the hearer.
- iii. Social disruption which creates a discord because of the violation of norms in conversation

IV. INTENTIONALITY AND EMOTIONS

Although 'face-aggravating in a particular context' emerges as a common behaviour for defining impoliteness that cuts across different theoretical positions, 'the role assigned to the recognition of *intentions* in the understanding of impoliteness' is seen as one of the main differences among the researchers. (Locher & Bousfield 2008, p. 3, emphasis added) For instance, some have made the hearer's understanding of the speaker's intentions the key for impoliteness, while there are others who maintain that the recognition of intentions constitutes 'rudeness' rather than impoliteness. There are still others who have brought in negatively marked evaluated terms of face-aggravating linguistic behaviour such as such as 'impolite' or 'over-polite' or 'rude', 'aggressive', 'insulting', 'sarcastic', etc. in the conceptual space of impoliteness. (Locher & Bousfield 2008, p. 4) This make it evident that the study of intentionality of the speaker is involved in impoliteness and it is an important element, for it helps us in distinguishing an act of politeness as either being intentional or accidentally caused offence.

Gibbs' (1999) study offers a systematic overview on the intricate issue of intentions that is usually attributed to people and intentionality that is generally attributed to actions, and the differences between what is intended and what is said. Though intentions and intentionality are important but sometime they either get overlooked or abandoned. This, according to Gibbs, occurs because "our interest in communing with the intentions of others is so deeply a part of how people construct meaningful interpretations of artifacts that we sometimes feel that the search for intentions is optional and therefore can be abandoned if desired." (Gibbs 1999, p.16)

Just as intentionality is bound to context and is not free from cultural conditioning, emotions are also linked to contexts and are factored by cultural conditioning, although very little empirical research within linguistics has focussed on the emotions that are associated with impoliteness. A study based on reports of face-related events has identified descriptors of emotions such as *embarrassed*, *humiliated*, *stupid*, *hurt*, and *upset* which are said to produce either face-related impoliteness experience (e.g. being called a moron) or rights-related impoliteness experience (e.g. someone

jumping ahead of them in a queue) by the target. (Culpeper 2011a, cited in Culpeper and Hardaker 2017, p. 5)

A speaker's intention is a significant part of speech theory. Intention has been studied and debated by theorists at various levels. Instead of viewing impoliteness as an intrinsic disqualification, Sara Mills (2003, p 122) looks at it as an assessment of behaviour and analyses the speaker's intentions. This, further, questions the assumption of speech acts as being inherently impolite, for it is the context and the relationship which accounts for this generalisation. For example, speech acts like interruptions, may be seen as being vibrant and fruitful in an academic discussion. Intentionality has been questioned in terms of being motivated and unmotivated impoliteness. (Keinpointer 1997, cited in Mills 2003, p. 123) Impoliteness makes it significant to assess the intentionality of the speaker. Commonly perceived acts of impoliteness may not necessarily be impolite, in certain contexts, though it may seem as being impolite. The study of politeness cannot be decontextualized, for, it has to be understood as being part of a particular community of speakers, which can be contested, objected or questioned.

Impoliteness can be attributed to someone if one perceives that it was intended to threaten the face. They view the discursive role of participants, context, tone, relationship. This takes us to involve a discursive approach in the study of impoliteness.

V. DISCURSIVE APPROACH

Following the critique of Brown and Levinson and other politeness theorists, the discursive approach views im/politeness as a more situated model where the context assumes significance. It does not just categorise the utterance but examines the various contesting relationships among the participants and views politeness from a relational and a social aspect. The discursive approach examines the impact of the utterance and tries to negotiate the most plausible explanation. It views the situatedness of an utterance in examining its meaning and focusses on the way the context, resources and social forces determine the possible meanings and interpretations of politeness.

This involves a relational work. This 'relational work refers to all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice.' (Locher and Bousfield 2008, p.5) The discursive approach questions the aspect of 'one' meaning, the context and its impact on the emergent meaning.

Discursive approach to impoliteness does not factor intentionality because the followers of this approach believe

that 'intentionality and intentions generally have been tainted by classic work in linguistic pragmatics, which tends to treat them as stable and knowable.' (Culpeper 2017, p. 4)

VI. INTERSECTION OF BOURDIEU AND IMPOLITENESS

Politeness has also been examined from Bourdieu's theory of practice in which capital and symbolic resources are used to understand politic behavior. Bourdieu describes difference of status as a manifestation of social class and looks at the connection between class location and habitus. In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979), Pierre Bourdieu views the difference between social class and status group. Bourdieu asserts how class analysis has an economic as well as a social dimension. In his view, difference of status may reflect social class difference. Habitus as a set of related practices constitutes social collectivities or 'status groups' and establishes boundaries in the class structure. One of the features which Bourdieu stresses on is that it is embodied and its acquisition requires an investment of time.

Bourdieu's *Distinction* argues that social class is not solely determined by economic capital but also by cultural capital cultural capital (tastes, preferences, education) and has, thus often been used to explain the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational attainment. His concept of "Distinction" and impoliteness are related through their shared focus on social hierarchies and the ways individuals navigate and perform their social positions. While for researchers like Culpeper and others impoliteness can be a strategic tool for challenging or subverting the established social norms, Bourdieu's "Distinction" focuses on how cultural tastes and preferences are tied to class, and highlights how they are used to establish and maintain social boundaries.

VII. ABOUT THE TEXT

Kazuo Ishiguro, a Nobel Laureate, who initially won the Booker prize in 1989, published *The Remains of the Day* in 1989. It is a contemporary classic that provides a rich narrative terrain for exploring aspects of social hierarchy, social status and "proper behavioural conduct." (Mills 2003, p. 151) It deals with the aristocratic class of the English society in the early twentieth century. It explores the complexities of the rigid social structure of Britain in the early twentieth century. It shows the gradual decline of the British aristocracy and depicts the formal, formidable background of the English upper class. The novel is about an English butler reminiscing about his past and the services rendered in Darlington household in 1956. It provides a

vivid account of an account of professionalism and dignity of the life of an archetype English butler, Stevens, who is the chief of staff of Darlington household. His ageing father had served as a butler earlier. Stevens' role as a butler and his relationship with Miss Kenton and the other inmates have been explored in the text.

Im/politeness is depicted among the different class of society in *The Remains of the Day* (TRotD). This paper studies the ways in which politeness is viewed in terms of relationships which exists among the various characters. The genteel society, represents the standard by which norms were governed and depicts the culture and habitus of the class of people. Politeness, is affiliated to a community of speakers, who are the 'bearers' of words of a particular class, which is the aristocracy and they are the custodians of power. (Eckert and McCornell, cited in Mills 2003, p. 73) The community of butlers, with their lineage and background, have been shown to be an indispensable part of the aristocracy. Stevens refers to his profession as having a 'decent butler's skills' (TRotD, p. 5). He has an entitlement, on account of the legacy, which has been bequeathed to him. Having to some extent inherited, and cultivated this legacy, Stevens is part of the habitus which governs the functioning of the butlers. The notions of social behaviour constitute the habitus and the behaviour of this community of butlers which is a reflection of the class which they serve. The collective practices of the small community of butlers, with their credentials, distinguishes them, in terms of their habitus and culture, to which they belong.

VIII. ANALYSIS

The present study attempts to look into the class differences of the aristocracy in Britain in the early twentieth century. It shows the English oppression with class and the way it impacts speech and interaction. The text has been analysed to demonstrate how the normative values play a role in the class relationships. Politeness governs the working of the various class and any deviance is unacceptable and is labelled as impoliteness.

The analysis takes into account the conversation between Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton. This conversation between the two takes place over the way in which Mr. Stevens senior (William Stevens, father of Mr. Stevens) has been addressed by Miss Kenton. It is an offensive and an affront, to Mr. Stevens to hear his father being addressed in such a casual manner. He seeks to redress this, by confronting Miss Kenton and by interrogating her. In total seven conversations have been included here for the analysis. (TRotD, Pp. 55-56)

The conversation begins on the note of mock impoliteness. Stevens redressal of grievance is a form of face attack

towards Miss Kenton for her behaviour which, for him, is in violation to the expected norms of society. Miss Kenton's use of bald on impoliteness is aimed at the accusations labelled against her by Stevens and her offensive in countering her behaviour as being normal. The conversation between Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton starts by referring to an incident which had occurred in the past, and been as 'a small matter'. The 'small matter' relates to the affront which has been felt by Stevens regarding the form of address, in relation to his father, William Stevens.

Stevens: In fact, since you are here, there was a certain matter I wished to raise with you.

Kenton: Oh, really, Mr. Stevens.

Stevens: Yes, Miss Kenton, just a small matter. I happened to be walking past the kitchen yesterday when I heard you calling to someone named William.

Kenton: Is that so, Mr. Stevens?

Stevens: Indeed, Miss Kenton, I did hear you call several times for "William". May I ask who were addressing by that name?

Kenton: Why, Mr. Stevens, I should think I was addressing your father. There are no other Williams in this house, I take it.

Stevens: It's an easy enough error to have made. *May* I ask you in future, Miss Kenton, to address my father as "Mr. Stevens"? If you are referring to him as a third party, then you may wish to call him "Mr. Stevens senior" to distinguish him from myself. I'm most grateful, Miss Kenton.

Kenton: I am afraid I am not quite clear what you are saying. I have in the past been accustomed to addressing under-servants by their Christian names and saw no reason to do otherwise in this house.

Stevens: A most understandable error, Miss Kenton. However, if you will consider the situation for a moment, you may come to see the inappropriateness of someone such as yourself talking "down" to one such as my father.

Kenton: I am still not clear what you are getting at, Mr. Stevens. You say someone such as myself, but I am as far as I understand the housekeeper of this house, while your father is the underbutler.

Stevens: He is of course in title the under butler, as you say. But I am surprised that your powers of observation have not already made it clear to you that he is in reality more than that. A great deal more.

Kenton: No doubt, I have been extremely unobservant, Mr. Stevens. I had only observed that your father was an able underbutler and addressed him accordingly. It must indeed

have been most galling for him to be so addressed by one such as I.

Stevens: Miss Kenton, it is clear from your tone you simply have not observed my father. If you had done so, the inappropriateness of someone of your age and standing addressing him as "Williams" should have been self-evident to you.

Kenton: I am most indebted to you for your advice, Mr. Stevens. So do please tell me, just what marvellous things I learn from observing your father?

The matter that Mr. Stevens 'wished to raise'-refers to the incident in the past, when he had heard Miss Kenton, referring to his father by the first name, which he feels is a personalised negative assertion. Stevens tries to assume a casualness, by beginning with a polite interrogative. The reference to 'someone named William' has aggravated Stevens' humiliation. The intention of the speaker, Stevens, is to evoke a sense of remorse or an apology from the hearer, Kenton, for the wrong committed by her while referring to Stevens senior. It is an indirect face threat which has been mentioned in an almost casual manner when he says, 'I happened to be walking' and 'calling to someone' makes it sound casual and therefore, the question 'Is that so' which follows is quite unexpected. The response, by Stevens, in the form of an interrogative is a face saving device, to help her maintain her face. Intensifier 'indeed' has been used by Stevens in the beginning, before stating how the name 'William' had been called out many times by, Miss Kenton. This direct attack on the hearer, evokes an answer from Miss Kenton who tries to save her face, by saying sarcastically, that there were 'no other "Williams" in this house'. This is a form of bald impoliteness by Kenton and is followed by the expression, 'I take it' which is a consultative device which involves the addressee to bid for a cooperative behaviour. Stevens, begins with an accusation and mitigates it by using an understater when he says, that it was an 'easy enough error' which had been made. It is followed by an interrogative by Stevens, beginning with the modal 'may' which functions more on an advisory note, with the expected redressive actions in an attempt to inculcate the values of politeness and decorum. The 'error' which needs to be rectified has not been accepted by Kenton as error. Stevens states, that in the presence of a third party, Miss Kenton needs to make a further distinction, by referring to his father, as 'Mr. Stevens senior'. This sentence begins with the conditional 'If' in giving the speaker a choice, of referring to his father as 'Mr. Stevens Senior' and ends politely by stating, "I'm most grateful, Miss Kenton".

Sarcasm, is equated with mock politeness and is 'a politeness strategy that is obviously insincere and, thus, remains surface realisations.' (Culpeper 1996, p. 60) The

use of sarcasm, as a strategy of mock politeness, is intended to show the displeasure felt by Stevens. Mock politeness has been referred to as a second order of politeness and is seen as a face threatening act. It is unmitigated, for it seeks redressal and an explanation from the hearer, for an act, which is unacceptable by the standards of normativity. This is followed by the expression 'I take it' which is a consultative device and involves the addressee to bid for cooperative behaviour. It is followed by a bald on attack by the Stevens, who begins with an accusation and mitigates it using an understater by saying that it was an 'easy enough error' which had been made. It is followed by an interrogative, beginning with the modal 'may' which functions more on an advisory note, with the expected redressive actions in an attempt to inculcate the values of politeness and decorum.

Stevens, further, stated, that in the presence of a third party, Kenton needed to make a further distinction, by referring to his father, as, 'Mr. Stevens senior'. This sentence begins with the conditional 'if' in giving the speaker a choice, of referring to the father as, 'Mr. Stevens Senior' and ends with a play down by stating, "I'm most grateful, Miss Kenton". Here the main issue is the lack of deference while addressing someone; this is made explicit by alluding to her 'power of observation', which overlooked an important variable, in relationship, which is age. The redressal by the speaker shows the attack on the sociality rights which have infringed and damaged the family honour. Kenton tries to maintain her Quality Face, (Oatey 2008, cited in Culpeper 2011, p. 28) which is associated with one's self esteem by maintaining a defensive stance and by stating her position, in retaining her identity and rights by saying that she was the 'housekeeper' while 'your father' was the 'underbutler'. This is a bald attack of impoliteness strategy, which is a personalised negative reference, made towards senior Stevens. The remark has been deployed in direct way, towards the speaker, in an attempt, to redefine her position in the Darlington household and to assert power supremacy. The interactants' perception, of the communicator's intention is a determining factor, in assigning it as impolite and Stevens is affronted on hearing his father being referred to in a casual manner. Stevens is distraught to hear his father being referred to in this manner but adds by redressing a corrective, and states how limiting her 'power of observation' had been, for it viewed the relationship, only in terms of position, overlooking age. The habitus governing Stevens finds it difficult to compromise with such depersonalised negative reference, leading him to state that his father was in 'reality' much 'more than that' which is a corrective to the personalised reference.

Miss Kenton, uses understaters, like 'I am afraid' and 'I am not quite clear', which are used to tone down the

perlocutionary effect on the speaker, with the intention of underrepresenting the propositional content of the utterance. It follows a reassertion and justification of her position, which seeks to justify the address form instead of viewing it as an 'error'. The social identity face of the hearer had been attacked, by levelling the charge against her. Miss Kenton, maintains her face by asserting her rank hierarchy and states that she is 'accustomed to addressing under servants by their Christian names' and, therefore, fails to account for any act of negligence. The politic behaviour in this emergent dialogue seems to conform to the objectified structures of the field of interaction which has formed her habitus. Her habitus, therefore, was in conformity with these social structure and expected behaviour which lead her to perceive the social world. This was reflected in the habits which were reflected in her disposition and behaviour, towards her subordinates. The maintenance of the face has been defended, in the background of the past experience, where the 'Christian' names were used without honorifics to display rank and authority.

Kenton's redressal, is in the form of self-deprecation, when she refers to herself as 'extremely unobservant' and states that it must have been humiliating for his father, to be 'addressed by one such as I'. The use of 'such as myself' and 'such as I' is also a way of asserting herself and voicing her grievance and to tell Mr. Stevens of the impoliteness in the way in which she had been referred to, by him. She negates herself by using mock sarcasm when she says that 'I have been extremely unobservant'. This self-accusation is a retaliation to her face threat and is followed by the statement of how she had observed the senior Stevens as 'an able under-butler' and therefore, the address term was not meant to dishonour him. Stevens, further, comments on the 'tone' used by Miss Kenton, which is clearly impolite, while referring to the father. The tonal change, which has been alluded to, by the speaker substantiates the verbal response of Miss Kenton and attributes her failure, to observe and to be sensitive, to a person who is much above her in rank, age and status.

IX. DISCUSSION

This interaction of verbal and kinesic is significant, in understanding the interactants perception of im/politeness. Arndt and Janney (1987) comments on how utterances become meaningful through an interaction between verbal, prosodic and kinesis factors. The use of sarcasm, throughout, as categorised under mock politeness has been looked as a superstrategy which is used for performing face threatening acts. The face threatening strategies are performed with mitigators used at times, though, it does not seem to lessen the attack in any way. A number of factors

are responsible for this disharmony. The offence by Stevens regarding the inappropriacy of the term of address is on account of the insensitivity displayed by Miss Kenton. Ironically, Stevens too showed a similar insensitivity towards Miss Kenton while referring to her as 'someone such as yourself' and a display of the power which he exerts over her in terms of rank and position. The disbalance of power relationship, manifests itself in a way in which Miss Kenton addresses the senior Stevens and also, in the way, in which it is exercised by Stevens. Power, here, can be viewed in terms of the socio-structural positions which the interactants inhabit and which is conveyed, not only in terms of an objective external force, but emerges through the dynamics of the interaction which takes place.

Ishiguro's *TRotD* is viewed in the social context and has been studied in terms of the emerging social practice during the period in which it had been set. It depicts the inherited legacy in terms of manners, and expected practices associated with the class of butlers.

The analysis has been undertaken from the discursive aspect in order to study the complex dynamics of the interactants relationship and habitus. Taking the discursive aspect the study at the microlevel has viewed the emerging discourse among the participants and the various contexts in which it takes place. The relational work considers the entire continuum from politeness to impoliteness. The various contexts show the aspect of negative politeness in most of the interactions in Steven. The discursive emphasizes how politeness is subject to discursive struggle. It views the centrality of the perspective of the participants and stresses on the emergent meaning.

The analysis of the text shows the way in which negative politeness strategies have been used in most cases as far as Stevens is concerned and is characterized by formality, restraint and dignity. The distinctive characteristic of the butler is reflected in the ways in which the face threats are countered. The different contexts show the ways in which the power reversal, at times, leads to an imbalance and an attempt is made to restore the imbalance. The politeness norms are strictly maintained when the power differentials operate at the level where the speaker is on a hierarchical which is superior as compared to the listener as in the case of the Mr. Farraday and Stevens. This differs in the interaction between Stevens and Miss Kenton where traces of impoliteness can be seen among the participants as the attempt to restore the imbalance is sought. Culpeper's contention that not all impoliteness is intentional can be substantiated by the reassertion of identity and the effort at rapport management in the dialogue between Stevens and Miss Kenton. Situated behaviours are considered impolite when they conflict with the expected norms. The

relationship between Stevens and Miss Kenton has been viewed in this view of im/politeness and the use of strategies for face management where the most crucial aspect which was 'dignity' was sought after in the career.

The cultural capital in TROT, as embodied in Stevens is an embodiment of a particular distinctive profession to which he belonged and the lineage which he carried. Cultural capital as an institutionalized form with an 'embodied competence' is reflected in its hereditability. The class of butlers in the text confers a symbolic and a historic distinction and views the practices as symbolic, for they reflect a set of distinctive practices associated with this particular class. The discursive practices and the habitus are affected by and also reinforce the social structures. *The Remains of the Day* depicts the legacy of politeness bestowed on Stevens and, on the class of butlers and is an important determiner for the cultural practices. Bourdieu's work provides a framework for understanding how impoliteness can be a tactic used by individuals or groups to challenge the established social order and the power dynamics embedded within it. By recognizing the social construction of taste and the strategic use of cultural capital, one can see how impoliteness can be a way to disrupt the smooth functioning of social hierarchies and expose the underlying power relations.

X. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated how impoliteness functions as a critical discursive strategy in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, revealing the subtle ways in which language reflects, reinforces, and occasionally disrupts established power dynamics. By examining the linguistic interactions between Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton through the lens of impoliteness theory and Bourdieu's sociological constructs, this interdisciplinary research situates impoliteness within the broader framework of social structure and ideological control.

The role in identity formation, boundary maintenance, and power negotiation have been focussed here and not just the aspects rudeness or social deviance for interpreting impoliteness. The delineation of silence, evasiveness, and indirect confrontation of TROT clearly shows how impoliteness can function in covert, emotionally charged, and institutionally constrained contexts. The engagement with a discursive approach has in the analysis has allowed the study to underscore the extent to which communicative behavior is shaped by class habitus, institutional authority, and internalized social norms.

By highlighted the importance of context, interpretation, and social positioning in evaluating linguistic (in)appropriateness, the study provides an understanding of

how the social structure, power dynamics and class positions interact in complex ways. The Darlington household depicts the working of the early British society among the aristocracy. The behaviour and manner of the formal society lead to questions and norms regarding politeness and impoliteness leading to a disequilibrium in the relationships. This is, further, associated with the question of power and authority and the inequity, which leads to a tension in the relationship among the characters.

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