

ON LANGUAGE ETIQUETTE AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

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Every language contains a certain set of indispensable simple everyday things the knowledge of which helps us to avoid cultural shocks and misunderstandings of different kinds when we find ourselves inside an English – speaking cultural community. The things in question are called communicative etiquette behavioural patterns. They differ in various cultural communities due to a multitude of historical, economic, cultural, psychological, traditional, and other factors. Very often it is not so much language errors but errors in communicative behaviour that mostly impede successful communication. Besides they may cause very strong negative reactions if they break some accepted etiquette norms of interpersonal communication. Mastering such etiquette norms is no less important than mastering the language learning itself.

Communicative etiquette behaviour penetrates absolutely all the areas of human activities and embraces all the typical situations of communication, intercourse, and interaction in different human communities. Just like any behaviour, it follows certain socially, culturally, and traditionally established norms. Thus it can be structured according to certain patterns, comprising different components (verbal, non – verbal or both). The latter and their peculiarities of usage make up the subject matter of the present article.

People use language not only as a means of communication, but also to help their social relationships. For example, when you ask someone to do something for you, you want to do this politely. Politeness is often about taking care of feelings and emotions – your own and other people's. Be open and friendly even at the first meeting. Openness and friendliness are combined with politeness.

BE FRIENDLY

If you are in the UK, try to mix with the local population. Going to a pub for a drink is normal in British culture. Once you get friendly with some local people you will feel accepted therefore more relaxed and happier. You may even start to enjoy yourself.

PLEASE

This is, perhaps, the most important word in English! If you don't use it when you ask for something you can easily upset people. Use *please*:

At the beginning of invitations:

- Please come in.
- Please take your coat off.

At the end of requests:

— Could you pass the sugar, please.

— Four of those apples, please.

In the middle, with a heavy stress it often means the speaker is asking for the second time, or is slightly annoyed." You should usually avoid using it in the middle — unless you are annoyed!

Please comes at the beginning of written notices.

PLEASE AND THANK YOU

British and American parents often tell their children that 'please' is **the magic word**: if the children remember to say 'please', their parents are more likely to give them the things they ask for. 'Please' is used in many situations. People generally say 'please' whenever they ask for something, whether it is for goods in a shop, for help, for a favour or for information.

People are also taught to say '**thank you**' or '**thanks**' when somebody has given them something or done something for them. In a shop many British people say 'thank you' several times at the checkout, e.g. when the operator tells them the total cost of their goods, when he or she gives them their change or gives back their credit card, and sometimes again before they leave.

If you have been served by a waiter or waitress and you want to pay, ask:

Could I pay now, please?

Could I have the bill, please?

The bill, please.

Remember that **please** is very important.

EXCUSE ME

• Use **Excuse me**:

— *before* you disturb somebody, for example to get past.

— to attract somebody's attention when you do not know their name.

Say this loud and on a high pitch.

— *after* you have sneezed, coughed, etc.

SORRY

• Use **Sorry**:

— if you have slightly inconvenienced somebody.

— with your voice going up at the end to ask someone to repeat what they said.

Here you can also use **Pardon?** or **I beg your pardon?** (but you cannot use Excuse me here).

Remember the basic rule for **Excuse me** and **Sorry** is:

Excuse me *before* we do something.

Sorry *after* we have done something.

• To apologise for something more serious, **sorry** on its own is not enough. Use:

I AM sorry. (stress am)

I'm extremely sorry.

- When you answer an apology for something small and unimportant, you say **sorry** too. For example, someone bumps into you:

They say: Sorry.

You say: Sorry.

CONTROLLING YOUR TEMPER

It is important to be able to control your temper. In some countries you need to shout or raise your voice to get work done. However, in the United Kingdom this comes across as quite offensive, and the result may be unwelcome. Instead, discuss any problems politely. You will win a lot of friends if you can be 'diplomatic'.

EYE CONTACT

In many cultures looking directly at the person's eyes while speaking is considered disrespectful. However in British culture having shifty eyes or not looking at the person you are speaking to is taken to show that you have something to hide or you are not telling the truth. Try to develop the habit of making steady eye contact — but don't stare at them.

KISSING HANDS

A ceremony for newly appointed privy councillors and government ministers. The hand is the monarch's, held out to be lightly kissed on the back of the fingers by the kneeling official. A new prime minister (as also a British ambassador or governor general appointed to a new post abroad) is described in the court circular as having 'kissed hands', but in this case the ceremony as such does not take place; the phrase is merely used for a particular type of royal audience.

MISS AND MRS

Both words are abbreviations of 'mistress', from the time when that word was the feminine of 'master'. Since the late 17C unmarried women have been called 'Miss' and married women 'Mrs' (pronounced 'missis, though the written form is an abbreviation of the full 'mistress'). Both titles were at that time limited to women of the upper and middle class, likely to become mistress of a household employing servants. In most European countries unmarried women above a certain age are addressed as married women (*madame* rather than *mademoiselle*). The British have rigidly kept to 'Miss' regardless of age, making the elderly spinster a characteristic figure of national life and literature. In the 1970s and 1980s the American 'Ms' was often used to avoid this intrusive distinction, but a more recent

trend has been to dispense with prefixes altogether, addressing people by their given and family names (Mary Smith rather than Ms Smith).

Lady in the UK, the formal title of the daughter of an earl, marquess, or duke, and of any woman whose husband's rank is above that of baronet or knight; the title 'Lady' is prefixed to her first name. The wife of a baronet or a knight is also called 'Lady' but uses the title by courtesy only, and has it prefixed to her surname.

SHAKING YOUR HEAD

Moving your head constantly when a senior is talking to you is a norm and sign of respect in some cultures. However, in British culture people are expected to treat others, whether seniors or juniors, as equals. Moving your head frequently during a conversation could be a distraction. It is important to listen to the person carefully and express your views honestly rather than agreeing to everything that has been said.

RESPECTFUL TREATMENT OF OTHERS

In some cultures it is taken as an offence if you do not stand up every time your senior stands up. Once again, in the United Kingdom it will be seen as a nuisance rather than as a sign of respect.

Instead, you show your respect to others by being polite and using words such as **'please'** and **'thank you'**.

FORMAL MANNERS

Formal manners are part of the British stereotype. British people used to make polite conversation on general topics, but otherwise remain distant. Men used to take off their hat when a woman passed, walk on the outside of the pavement/sidewalk when with a woman so that she did not get splashed by traffic, and hold doors open for her. Keeping feelings under control was also part of good manners, and it was not thought appropriate to show anger, affection, etc. in public. Now, fewer people stand on ceremony (= behave formally) and even in formal situations most people are friendly and relaxed, and concerned to put others at their ease.

INFORMAL MANNERS

Good manners do not have to be formal. It is friendly as well as polite to say 'hello' or 'good morning' to somebody you meet, to say 'please' and 'thank' to family and friends as well as to strangers, and to apologise if you hurt or upset somebody. A warm tone of a voice and a smile are also important.

People shake hands when they are introduced to somebody for the first time but, except in business, rarely do so when they meet again. Nowadays, unless there is a great age difference, most adults use each other's first names straightaway. In shops and banks, on aircraft, etc. customers are often addressed respectfully as 'Sir' or 'Madam' to show that they are important to the company. People are expected to arrive on time for both business and social events and it is considered bad manners to be late or not to telephone to let people know if you are delayed.

PRIVACY

Respect for privacy underlies many aspects of British life. It is not just privacy in your own home which is important. Just as important is the individual's right to keep information about himself or herself private. Despite the increase in informality, it is still seen as rude to ask people what are called 'personal' questions (for example, about how much money they earn or about their family or sex life) unless you know them very well. Notice that the conventional formula on being introduced to someone in Britain, 'How do you do?', is not interpreted as a real request for information at all; the conventional reply is not to 'answer the question' but to reply by saying 'How do you do?' too.

AS A GUEST

When invited to a meal at somebody else's house people often take a bottle of wine or chocolates or flowers, as a gift. Apart from this, it is not usual to give presents to people you do not know well. It is not considered polite to look round other people's houses without being invited to do so and people usually ask where the toilet is rather than going to look for it. Many people do not smoke and visitors should ask permission before they smoke in somebody's house. Close friends are much less formal in each other's houses and may get their own drinks and help clear away the meal.

GESTURES

Drumming your fingers. i.e, tapping them repeatedly on a desk or table, suggests impatience. **Scratching your head** suggests you are not sure what to do. These gestures may also be a sign that a person is nervous.

Shrugging your shoulders shows impatience or lack of interest, it can also be used to indicate that you do not mind which of several things is chosen. A person who stands with their elbows close to the body and forearms spread, with the palms of their hands upwards and their shoulders raised, does not know what is going to happen. Often, the head is held slightly to one side.

People sometimes **tap their feet** (usually only one foot) on the floor in time to music, but more often the gesture shows that they feel impatient. Children sometimes **stamp their feet** when they are angry.

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Winking at somebody reminds them of a shared secret or is used as a private signal. **Raising the eyebrows** with the eyes wide open, or **blinking** (= closing and opening both eyes very quickly) several times, expresses surprise, shock or sometimes disapproval. The phrase **eyebrows were raised** is often used metaphorically.

Frowning may suggest concentration, but is often a sign of disapproval or annoyance. **Wrinkling the nose** (= moving it up and to one side) suggests there is a bad smell, but if your nose **twitches** and you take a few quick breaths this means you can smell something nice, especially food cooking.

Children **stick their tongues out** to show they do not like somebody but this is rude. **Pursing the lips**, making them very small and tight, is something people may do if they are concentrating hard. Sometimes, however, it shows a person is angry but trying hard to control their anger.

FINGERS AND THUMBS GESTURES

Thumbs up is a gesture showing approval or success. It is usually made with the thumb of only one hand. The thumb points straight up while the fingers are curled into the palm. The gesture is used to tell somebody that they can go ahead and do something, or to indicate that the person making the gesture has succeeded in something. To **give somebody the thumbs up** is to give them permission to do something. **Thumbs down** is a similar gesture but the thumb points down towards the ground. It is used by somebody to indicate they have failed to do or get something.

People **thumb a lift** (= try to get a ride in a passing vehicle) by holding their arm out with the thumb up and slightly forward. **Twiddling your thumbs** (= holding the hands loosely and letting the thumbs rub gently against each other) suggests boredom or impatience. The phrase is often used metaphorically to mean 'having nothing to do'.

Pointing with the forefinger (= first finger) at somebody or something shows which person or thing you want or are talking about. But in both Britain and the US it is considered rude to point.

Fingers crossed is a wish for good luck. In Britain people give a **V-sign** by holding the index finger and middle finger apart like a V and curling the other fingers and the thumb into the palm. If the palm is held outwards the sign means 'victory'; if the palm is turned inwards the gesture is rude and offensive. In the US people use the V-sign with the palm outwards to mean 'peace' but the rude version is not used. **Giving somebody the finger** (= holding the middle finger straight up and curling the other fingers into the palm) is used instead.

People can indicate that they think somebody is mad by pointing one finger at the side of their forehead and turning it. If you hold two fingers at the side of your forehead like gun you are pretending to shoot yourself for doing something silly. A finger held to the lips indicates 'Sh!' (=Be quiet!).

THE V-SIGN

Nobody knows for sure where the V- sign came from, but many English people have chosen it as a national icon. During World War II it was used to mean *victory*, and it was used again by hippies in the 1960s and 1970s to mean *peace*.

As the symbol of peace, it has become universal, while the 'V for Victory' will forever be associated with the wartime prime minister, Sir Winston Churchill.

THE BEST MEDICINE

Laughter may be the best medicine, but even smiling is a powerful happiness booster. Researchers have discovered that your mood improves every time you turn up the corners of your mouth – even if it's only to hold a pen between your teeth.

Seeing a smiling face can have a similar effect, and frequently leads to a matching smile which increases the benefit.

Резюме

Стаття присвячена особливостям мовного етикету та окремим моделям ввічливої комунікативної поведінки. Значна увага приділяється аналізу як вербальних, так і невербальних форм комунікативної поведінки, їхньої специфіки в англomовних культурах та правил уживання.

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ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНО-КОММУНИКАТИВНАЯ СУЩНОСТЬ КОМПЛИМЕНТА В КУЛЬТУРОЛОГИЧЕСКОМ АСПЕКТЕ (НА МАТЕРИАЛЕ АНГЛОЯЗЫЧНОГО ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННОГО ДИАЛОГА)

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