

with some even neglecting to specify where the study took place (the reader is left to make assumptions based on the language found in the transcript examples). Also, there is no section describing the contributors or their institutional affiliations. These details are necessary in a volume of international scope such as this one. In addition, the reader may be distracted by spelling and grammatical errors and editorial inconsistencies. Despite these limitations, the book is a useful addition to our understanding of the fundamental role narrative plays in human communication, sense-making, and the interactive construction of reality.

## REFERENCE

Ochs, Elinor; & Capps, Lisa (2001). *Living narrative: Creating lives in everyday storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

(Received 6 July 2006)

*Language in Society* 36 (2007). Printed in the United States of America  
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404507070789

ROBIN LAKOFF AND SACHIKO IDE (eds.), *Broadening the horizon of linguistic politeness*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia :John Benjamins, 2005. Pp. 342. Hb \$144.

Reviewed by SARA MILLS  
*Linguistics, Sheffield Hallam University*  
*Sheffield S10 2BP, UK*  
*s.l.mills@shu.ac.uk*

The essays in this collection were first presented at a conference held in Bangkok in 1999. The strength of the essays as a whole is that they concentrate on analyzing politeness in a range of different languages: Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Greek, Australian English, Spanish, Irish, and Swedish.

The introduction by Robin Lakoff & Sachiko Ide sets out to question the notion of LINGUISTIC politeness – whether what we are analyzing consists of linguistic elements at all and can be considered under the general heading of linguistics (strictly defined). They foreground one of the key concerns of theorists such as Ide, that politeness performs a number of different functions apart from avoiding confrontation and conflict; they suggest that “the fact that you and I are polite to each other signifies to each of us that we are well-bred members of the same culture” (p. 4) They suggest that there are no theories that try to analyze both of these two aspects (avoiding confrontation and signaling awareness of cultural norms) together. They argue, as others have, that Asian cultures tend to foreground discernment or *wakimae*, the social kudos that one can accrue through the use of politeness, and they state that it is not “that [Asian cultures] utilise completely different systems, but that each system places different amounts

of emphasis on FTA avoidance or *wakimae*" (10). They ask, "Can a single system be devised that incorporates the intuitions of both FTA-avoidance and *wakimae* and is applicable to all cultures?" (11). However, there are several occasions in this essay where, despite arguing against universalized generalizations on the basis of English, they suggest that "in daily interaction when faced with a choice between clarity and politeness, people normally opt in favour of the latter" (8). One might ask if this is even the case in general in English. They also assert that politeness is largely a question of indirectness, and while this is clearly true in certain English-speaking communities, it is not necessarily true in languages such as Arabic or Hebrew.

There are three general overview plenary papers, by Robin Lakoff, Sachiko Ide, and Bruce Fraser. Lakoff's "Civility and its discontents" is rather a confused and unfocused discussion of civility that is only tangentially tied in with the focus on politeness; this paper constitutes more a discussion of perceived changes for the worse within society (most notably multiculturalism), rather than of politeness per se. Sachiko Ide's plenary paper, "How and why honorifics can dignify dignity and elegance," constructively builds on her earlier work, discussing the role that honorifics play. For many Westerners, honorifics appear pointless and obstruct conversation, creating unnecessary distance and verbiage, but here Ide shows that in fact honorifics represent part of a very different worldview within Asian cultures, whereby one's assessment of one's own standing in society and relation to others must be constantly indexed in language. Honorifics are also analyzed in the paper by Magumi Yoshida & Chikako Sakurai, "Japanese honorifics as a mark of sociocultural identity." They analyze how speakers can shift from a plain use of honorifics to a formal level in order to index what they consider a change of role within the interaction; they note that this ties in with the importance within Japanese culture of performing a role well. Bruce Fraser, in his plenary paper "Whither politeness?" asks some difficult questions of politeness theory. He suggests that there are two possible directions for politeness theory post-Brown & Levinson – an optimistic one that believes it is possible to construct a more adequate model than theirs, and a pessimistic one that believes politeness is far more complex than previously imagined and that therefore it is impossible to construct a model at all. This paper serves as a good overview of some of the criticisms of Brown & Levinson and suggests some ways forward, while not itself proposing a model or direction for a model.

Mikiko Takekuro's paper on the use of routine formulas in Japanese is insightful in analyzing how a formula takes shape and comes to seem the automatic option within a range of contexts. Christopher Conlan's "FTAs, primary FTAs and the management of discourse" focuses on the distinction between Primary Face Threats (acts that truly threaten face) and speech acts that prepare the way for face threat. Analyzing the difference in usage by Thai and Australian students, he shows that Thai students do not necessarily do the preparatory and mitigating work in relation to face threat and may consequently be thought of as

impolite. Andrew Burke & Satoshi Uehara's "Japanese pronouns of address" charts how pronouns have been used since the 8th century, noting that Japanese has had more than 140 pronoun forms, only six of which are currently in use. This paper attempts to discuss how the process of pronoun loss has arisen, insightfully focusing on how taboo forms such as pronouns develop from terms referring to distant location; gradually these euphemized terms themselves become tabooed and new terms are developed.

Some of the papers, such as Margaret Ukosaku's "The significance of face and politeness in social interaction as revealed through Thai face idioms," Martha Mendoza's "Polite diminutives in Spanish," Wilaiwan Khanittanan's "Origins and development of linguistic politeness in Thai," and Deeyu Srinawat's "Indirectness as a politeness strategy of Thai speakers," are rather descriptive, but useful in providing insight into politeness in other languages. Others, such as Ekaterina Koletaki's "Women, men and polite requests," make ungrounded generalizations about gendered use of politeness on the basis of discourse completion tests and questionnaires. Mark Le's "Privacy: An intercultural perspective" foregrounds the fact that impoliteness may be judged to have occurred in cross-cultural interaction because of different cultural perspectives on privacy, but does not refer to research on the subject.

There are some very interesting papers in this collection, and certainly the focus on Asian languages is productive and moves us significantly away from the anglophone or European focus of much work on politeness, but the collection as a whole could have done with some pruning (some of the papers needed to be edited more carefully, or indeed omitted). Thus, the overall focus of many of the papers on a difference in what constitutes politeness, and on how to signal one's role to others in Asian cultures, is important in helping Western theorists of politeness to move away from generalizations about politeness that are primarily informed by Western views of the world.

(Received 17 July 2006)

*Language in Society* 36 (2007). Printed in the United States of America  
DOI: 10.1017/S0047404507070790

ARTHUR HUGHES, PETER TRUDGILL AND DOMINIC WATT, *English accents and dialects: An introduction to social and regional varieties of English in the British Isles*. 4th ed. London: Hodder Arnold, 2005. Pp. xiii, 159. Pb and accompanying CD £24.99.

Reviewed by JOAN C. BEAL  
*National Centre for English Cultural Tradition, University of Sheffield  
Sheffield, S10 2TD, UK  
j.c.beal@shef.ac.uk*

*English accents and dialects* has been the standard introductory textbook on varieties of English in the British Isles since it first appeared in 1979. It is well

*Language in Society* 36:5 (2007)

795