

Lesson Plan – Politeness and Time

Introduction (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The lesson begins with a short introduction of today’s topic – Brief brainstorming about the importance of politeness and time within our everyday lives (assess the student’s expectations and knowledge).
PowerPoint presentation (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Show examples of different relevant cultural norms from around the World. – Introduce various ways people express politeness (E.g., the use of honorifics in East Asian countries). – Show different historical methods of timekeeping and phrases relating to the given culture’s attitude towards time (such as the “Trinidad time”).
Discussion (15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Break up the class into several groups. – Based on the assigned reading, the groups talk about these questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What did you find the most interesting about the provided excerpts? 2) Can you think of your own examples of how politeness is expressed in your native language? 3) How could one “lose face” and what can be done about it? 4) Are the causes of “losing face” the same in all cultures? Try to compare. 5) How do you feel about the phrase “Time is money?” 6) How would you assess the “work vs. leisure” situation in your own country? 7) Is your own culture more “clock-oriented” or “event-oriented?”
Summary (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Asking about the students’ findings and observations. – Answering questions.

Reading 1: Politeness

LANGUAGE AND POLITENESS

Since language reflects the culture of the language owner, so in their speech performance people at the same time express their cultures. One of the cultures reflected in language is politeness.

Spolsky (2001:19-20) sees politeness as the recognition of the listener and his or her rights in the situation. Each language may have certain formula to show politeness. For example, in English requests are made indirectly as a question such as “could you possibly pass me the salt?” or a statement like “I think that is the salt beside your plate”, or by adding formula like ‘Please’ and ‘if you would be so kind.’ In Javanese the difference in social status between a speaker and a listener will determine the choice of expression used. For example, the expression “Apa pada slamet?” and “Menapa sami sugeng?” both meaning “Are you well?” but the first is used to greet a subordinate and the second is used to greet a superior (Ohoiwutun, 1997: 87). In line with Spolsky, Holmes (2001: 268) states that politeness involves taking account of the feeling of others, so being polite means to make others feel comfortable. Linguistically, being polite means to speak appropriately based on the relationship between the speaker and the listener. In other words, in speaking to one another people have to select their words carefully according to the situation in which they are speaking. For example, when someone wants to say something, he or she will choose an appropriate way to say it since inappropriate words choice may be considered rude. Moreover, politeness according to Yule (1997: 60) is “the means employed to show awareness of another person face.” The term face means a person’s self image. In Brown and Levinson’s term (in Cook, 1992: 34) acknowledge the face of other people means that “people both avoid intruding upon each other territory (physical territory, a particular field of knowledge, a friendship) and also seek to enlarge the territory of others.” Yule (ibid) states that awareness showed to another person’s face when he or she is socially close is called friendliness, camaraderie, or solidarity. In everyday communication people may often unwittingly offend each other by saying something that threat one’s expectation regarding public self image (face want). This is called face threatening act. Alternatively, one may say something that lessens the possible threat to save other people face. This is called face saving act. When one intends to save another’s face, he or she should pay attention to the hearer’s negative face wants that is the hearer’s need to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be imposed by others. He or she should also pay attention to the hearer’s positive face that is the need to be accepted by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others (Yule, 1997: 61-62).

Source: <https://core.ac.uk/download/229331112.pdf>

Reading 2: Time

TIME AND CULTURE

It is said that “time is money” in industrialized economies. Workers are paid by the hour, lawyers charge by the minute, and advertising is sold by the second (US\$3.3 million for a 30-second commercial, or a little over \$110,000 per second, for the 2012 Super Bowl). Remarkably, the civilized mind has reduced time—the most obscure and abstract of all intangibles—to the most objective of all quantities: money. With time and things on the same value scale, we can establish how many of our working hours equal the price of a product in a store.

This way of thinking about time is not universal, however. Beliefs about time remain profoundly different from culture to culture. Research shows that cultural differences in time can be as vast as those between languages. In one particularly telling study of the roots of culture shock, Spradley and Phillips asked a group of returning Peace Corps volunteers to rank 33 items concerning the amount of cultural adjustment each had required of them. The list included a wide range of items familiar to fearful travelers, such as “the type of food eaten,” the “personal cleanliness of most people,” “the number of people of your own race,” and “the general standard of living.” But aside from mastering the foreign language, the two greatest difficulties for the Peace Corps volunteers were concerned with social time: “the general pace of life,” followed by one of its most significant components, “how punctual most people are” (Spradley & Phillips, 1972). Cultures may differ on many aspects of social time—its value, meaning, how it should be divided, allocated, and measured. The following dimensions are particularly prone to different cultural, as well as individual, interpretations.

Work versus Leisure

There are cultural differences in the value placed on work, on leisure, and upon the balance between the two. Although some balance is universal, the preferred formulas differ both across cultures and between individuals in each culture. The differences are marked even within highly industrialized countries. The United States and Japan are famous for long work hours, as exemplified by the terms “workaholic” and “karoshi” (“death by overwork”) (Levine, 1997). European nations tend to also emphasize work, with many differences among countries, but generally put greater emphasis on preserving nonwork time than do people in the United States and Japan (Levine, 2012).

Time spent within the workplace also varies across cultures. People tend to spend more of their work time on-task in some cultures and more of that time socializing—informal chatting, having tea or coffee with others, etc.—in other cultures. Studies have found wide cultural variation in answers to the question: “In the companies for which you have worked, what percent of time do people typically spend on tasks that are part of their job description.” For example, people working in companies in large cities in the United States tend to report in the range of “80 percent task time, 20 percent social time.” On the other hand, people working in companies in India, Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia, and some Latin American countries tend to give answers closer to “50 percent task time, 50 percent social time” (Brislin and Kim, 2003).

Clock and Event Time

The most fundamental difference in timekeeping throughout history has been between people operating by the clock and those who measure time by social events (Lauer, 1981). This profound difference in thinking about time continues to divide cultures today. Under clock time, the hour on the timepiece governs the beginning and ending of activities. Under event time, scheduling is determined by the flow of the activity. Events begin and end when, by mutual consensus, participants “feel” the time is right (Levine, 1997).

In event-time societies, modes of time-reckoning tend to express social experience. Sometimes activities occur in finely coordinated sequences, but without observing the clock. For example, anthropologists have described how participants at an Indian wake move from gathering time to prayer time, singing time, intermission, and mealtime. They move by consensual feeling—when “the time feels right”—but with no apparent concern for the time on the clock.

Many countries exhort event time as a philosophy of life. In East Africa, there is a popular adage that “Even the time takes its time.” In Trinidad, it is commonly said that “Any time is Trinidad time” (Birth, 1999). In the United States and much of Europe, by contrast, the right way to measure time is

assumed to be by the clock. This is especially true when it comes to work hours. Time is money, and any time not focused on-task is seen as wasted time.