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Honorifics in Newspapers: The Announcement of Queen Elizabeth Death. A Pragmatic Study

ABSTRACT

The significance of words is not based on sensory input but in terms of what that input means when it is perceived. This is the basis of social relationships, and it is the basis that reflects the social knowledge. Politeness is realised through the choice of suitable language expressions according to the situational and social context. Honorific forms are the typical linguistic expressions for exhibiting politeness since their use presumes pragmatic agreement with the situation. Honorifics are a politeness method in a specific language which may be particular words, or sentence structures. The current study aims to find out how the newspapers announced the death of Queen Elizabeth and how they honored her by using different types of honorific expressions. Ten newspapers (five from The United Kingdom and five from The United States of America) have been chosen to be analysed based on Levinson's (1983) model. According to the findings, most newspapers use referent honorifics and authorised recipient kinds to indicate the nature of the speaker's regard for the person being referred to.

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التكريم في الصحف: إعلان وفاة الملكة إليزابيث. دراسة تداولية عبارات

رؤى حمدالله خديار/وزارة التربية/مديرية تربية واسط
الخلاصة:

لا تعتمد أهمية الكلمات على المعنى السطحي للكلمة ولكن من حيث ما تعنيه تلك الكلمات عند إدراكها. هذا هو أساس العلاقات الاجتماعية، وهو الأساس الذي يعكس المعرفة الاجتماعية. يتحقق التهذيب من خلال اختيار التعبيرات اللغوية المناسبة وفقاً للظروف الاجتماعية للسياق. عبارات التشريف هي التعبيرات اللغوية النموذجية لإظهار الأدب لأن استخدامها يفترض اتفاقاً اجتماعياً وعملياً مع الموقف. عبارات التشريف هو أسلوب مهذب بلغة معينة قد تكون كلمات معينة، أو تراكييب جمل. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى معرفة كيف أعلنت الصحف عن وفاة الملكة إليزابيث وكيف تم تكريمها من خلال استخدام أنواع مختلفة من التعبيرات التشريفية. تم اختيار عشر صحف (خمس من المملكة المتحدة وخمس من الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية) ليتم

تحليلها بناءً على نموذج ليفينسون (1983). أظهرت النتائج أن معظم الصحف تستخدم عبارات التثريف المرجعية وأنواع المستلمين المصرح لهم والتي تستخدم لتأكيد احترام العلاقات بين المتحدث والشخص المشار إليه.

1.1 Introductory Note

It's no secret that the language someone speaks reflects their worldview. The use of respectful language between individuals clearly demonstrates this. Conventional honorifics are used to specify the social status of the participants in verbal interaction and to communicate signs such as courtesy and respect; they are manifested in all languages. Using honorifics and honorific forms to communicate the meaning of the term honorifics, which comes from the Latin word honorificus, meaning showing honour (Bussmann, 1996). Honorifics are “a grammatical encodings of relative social status between participants and persons or things referred to in the communicative events” as described by (Brown & Levinson 1978, p. 276). Therefore, by analysing certain features of speech events, such as speaker context and addressee, the speaker might infer the nature of the relationship between him and the receiver. The usage of titles such as “Mr., Mrs., Miss, Queen, your Honor, your Majesty, Doctor, Lady, etc” , are all examples of honorifics.

There are languages that have a complex system of honorifics, for instance, Japanese, Hindi, and Arabic. English, instead, has no difficult system of honorifics, nevertheless, there are a few cases of compound honorifics; e.g. professor doctor, dear sir, etc.. . The selection of honorific words is determined by both the grammaticality, and social acceptability of the words since honorifics grammatically translate the social position and the “level of intimacy between the speaker, hearer, and others. All honorific markers function like English tense markers, mood markers, and word order determinants. The choice of honorifics relates closely to grammatical and pragmatic obligation in the light of social conventions” (Cho, 2008, P.5).

2.1. Defining Honorifics

Irvine defined honorifics as “means of expressing respect (or disrespect) which are manifest in especially conventionalized forms which signal deference in a way that also entails some more set of shared considerations about the expression’s importance and pragmatic prospective”

(Irvine 1992, p. 251). Instead, (Verschuere, 1992, p. 21) gave a more accurate definition; focused on the linguistic representatives of honorifics stating “honorifics are language forms such as pronouns, vocative expressions, titles of address and the like, used to encode the high status of the interlocutor” .

On the other hand, (Shibatani, 1999, p. 192) and (Grundy, 2000, p. 273) confirmed that the term “honorifics” referred to certain linguistic forms used as sign of respect specified to the addressee. The definition indicates that honorifics can be given to people other than the addressee whereas (Watts 2003, p. 274) assigned honorifics to the grammatical level of the language in a way comparable to that of Brown and Levinson. He similarly focused on its verbal side, closely agrees with Irvin's. He said “honorifics are grammatical forms used to express the social status of the participants in the verbal interaction including levels of politeness or respect”. Oppositely, (Agha 2007, p. 404) stressed the literal and the semantics meaning of honorifics by arguing that “honorific should be taken in inclusive sense of pertaining to honor or respect” and not just in the sense of positively “conferring honor or respect”

A systematic study of honorifics involves a two divided approach. To describe honorifics as grammatical practices is one thing and is fairly easy to attain at, but the description of their actual use entails wider pragmatic along with sociolinguistic perceptions that take into concern elements of a conversational situation, for instance the relationship between the speaker and the addressee, besides the functional part that honorifics play in communicative interaction.

2.2.The Function of Honorifics

Although honorifics are only titles, they are nevertheless attain at formal events. Most importantly, a language's honorifics allow its speakers to convey respect to one another in a variety of ways. (Heromassa, 1990). According to (Garnick, 1996, p. 527), honorifics convey a distinct kind of respect, one that might lead to feelings of closeness and familiarity. The significance of each succeeding one depends largely on the status of the recipient. (Fowler, 1993, p. 170) maintained that “honorifics, like any other linguistic forms are socially governed” . Another notable aspect of honorifics is meaning. That is honorifics may in fact signify certain meanings.

Honorifics can be put in the realm of deixis, (i.e. social deixis or indexicality). Social deixis contains the marking of social relationships in linguistic expressions, and defined by (Levinson, 1983,p. 89) as “the term for those aspects of language structure that encode the social identities of participants, or social relationships between them, or between one of them and persons or entities referred to” . Honorifics is “resources for indexing the relative position of interlocutors, referents and bystanders either in the lexicon or the morpho-syntax of a language” (Brown, 2011, p.19). Honorifics have its place in the realm of expressive meaning (Potts, 2005). He (Potts, 2005, p. 182-185) posited that the expressive meaning of honorifics is the expression of “social superiority”.

3.1. Politeness Strategies of Honorifics

The politeness indicates “being suitable, acceptable and appropriate in the conversation of a particular culture” (Cho, 2008, p. 9-10). It justified either linguistically or non-linguistically. Thus, honorifics are standard forms which signify social respect between the speaker and the listener. It is believed that the honorific forms have organised the social etiquette given that the social aspects that gave people identity depended on their sex, age, social class, and official position. Honorifics are sensitive to the social and cultural society. (Goffman, 1967, p.60) commented “deference behavior on the whole tends to be honorific and politely toned, conveying appreciation of the recipient”

(Lakoff, 1972, p. 58) defined honorifics “as a practice used to express the idea that the speaker is being polite to the listener” . He noted that where every language seems to have ways of stating politeness, only specific languages have well-developed honorifics. For instance, Japanese displays a variety of wide honorific systems in its grammar. In rather, the English language illustrates neither obvious nor implicit honorifics in the grammar.

An crucial part of any language system that can adequately account for the many things happening in the world is the ability to express a personal preference for how to talk about those things. A speaker's linguistic style is a variable of the language they use. But when they transition from one setting to another, people's speech patterns are always shifting. It may take

on a variety of shapes and sounds depending on the speaker and the context in which they're used.

(McCreedy,2019, p.6-7) argued that the theory of honorification can be separated from the theory of politeness since “honorification does not necessarily indicate politeness, and...politeness does not require honorification. If these claims are correct, then it is possible to separate politeness from honorification, and a full theory of politeness is not necessary for an analysis of honorifics” (p7). He stated that it is possible to use honorific forms in a disrespectful way. On the other hand, he claimed that honorifics are not used mainly to indicate politeness, but instead to show the speaker’s position in a social hierarchy. This displays that the two ideas are at least discrete. For two reasons .First, the idea laid the groundwork for the indispensable notion of "face," which is crucial to any discussion of honorifics and civility. Second, the idea put out by Brown and Levinson identified a distinct (though ultimately contentious) function for honorifics systems within the context of politeness.

3.2.Categories of Honorifics:

As stated by (Levinson, 1983, p. 90-91) honorifics can be separated into two central types. The first one is called relational which is further significant than the second type and largely concerned with the informally deictic information in languages. Contained by this relational type of honorifics, three subdivisions are recognized; these are addressee honorifics, referent honorifics as well as by-stander honorifics. According to Levinson’s typology, the second type of honorifics is called absolute, that is honorifics which defines the relationship amongst the speaker and the setting throughout formality levels. Like the first type, absolute honorifics are classified into subcategories, authorized speakers and authorized recipients according to the relationship between the speakers and recipients.

1-The types of relational honorifics are:

A. Addressee honorifics. These types of honorifics are straight indexing of the speaker-addressee connection lacking any reference to the addressee (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.

276). (Levinson,1983, p. 90) cited an example where the word “soup” in the sentence “the soup is hot” converts respect to the addressee devoid of openly referring to him. So, here honorifics are indicated over the circumstances or context as person sitting on the table and saying such a sentence. In most languages, addressee honorification is restricted to alternative forms of the vocative. In English, for instance, “whether a speaker addresses or refers to someone as John, John Smith, Professor Smith or Smithy will depend on whether the speaker is this person's work colleague, a stranger, a student or a friend from childhood” (Brown, 2011, p. 21). These shifts in terms of address are chiefly well confirmed in languages with extremely developed honorifics systems.

B. Referent Honorifics. These types of honorifics are used to express the respect of the relations held between the speaker and the referents that is the things or persons referred to (Levinson, 1983, p. 90). In the same way, (Sifianou, 1992, p. 57) maintained that this form is used to express the speaker's respect to people essentially referred to or according to (Brown, 2011, p.20) “the referent may be the hearer him/ herself or otherwise a third person”. Referent honorifics are largely verified in the world's languages, primarily by means of shifting in the use of second person pronouns as well as reference expressions for third persons. For example, French or Russian speakers must select between two second-person pronouns (French tu/vous; Russian ty/vy) determined by their relationship with the hearer.

C. Bystander Honorifics. The word “bystander” is used as a hidden term which denotes the participants in audience part in addition to non- participants over hearers (Levinson, 1983,p. 90). Similarly, Horn and Ward (2006,p. 120) explained that this type of honorifics is used to display respect to non-addressed but then present party.

2-Absolute honorifics, on the other hand, describe the bond between the speaker (and potentially other members) and the environment. (or social activity). The distinction between formal and informal language, which indicates the level of familiarity between the speakers, is crucial. Actually, there are some forms that are intended for certain speakers and other forms that are reserved for particular listeners. This type has two sub-division: authorized speaker authorized recipient.

3.3. Significance of Using Honorifics

The primary reason we use honorifics is to show respect to one another. As a result, they are often associated with displaying one's social standing. Whether one is addressing a superior, noble, or inferior is a matter of context. Nevertheless, using honorifics is usually related to non-linguistic things such as culture and gender. (Keating, 1998, p.42) stated “that using honorifics is either to display one's position or give respect and show both social relations and many other types of meaning”. Moreover, (Ide & Lakoff , 2005, p. 61) revealed that “the basic function of honorifics is to express politeness because using them in appropriate contextual factors will generate safe interaction”. They underline that honorifics denote mutually respectful interactions. Honorifics are a kind of courteous address, as acknowledged by (Brown 2011, p. 49). According to Brown, the use of honorifics might indicate formal rank or that the speaker is reluctant to disturb the addressee, but it does not necessarily indicate that the receiver is of greater standing than the speaker.

However, the usage of honorifics is influenced by authority, formality, age, and gender. For instance, the meaning of honorifics may be influenced by who is using them. One of the factors related to hierarchical disparities is age. For example, a son will show more deference to his grandfather, who is older than him, by calling him "grandpa" instead of his first name.

Instead, factors like age and formality have more weight than gender. Conversely, it has been said that formality is the most important determinant of social environment. All honorific expressions are dictated by the level of formality present, hence it is possible to specify formality via the use of various politeness. Using honorific forms of address during formal events like conferences, television news broadcasts, and ceremonies does not always indicate a higher social status for the addressee. The relative formality of the situation is shown by this. (Brown, 2011, p. 54).

It is intending in setting and purpose that using honorifics does not only reveal the person has an authority, rather it reveals that the speaker keep the politeness and the addressee's face. Overall, honorifics attend to distance, good manners, giving respect, and dignity. Nevertheless, it may be astonishing that honorifics can create impolite meanings for example conveying contempt. Therefore, they can be respectful on the surface but truly disdainful. Since honorifics

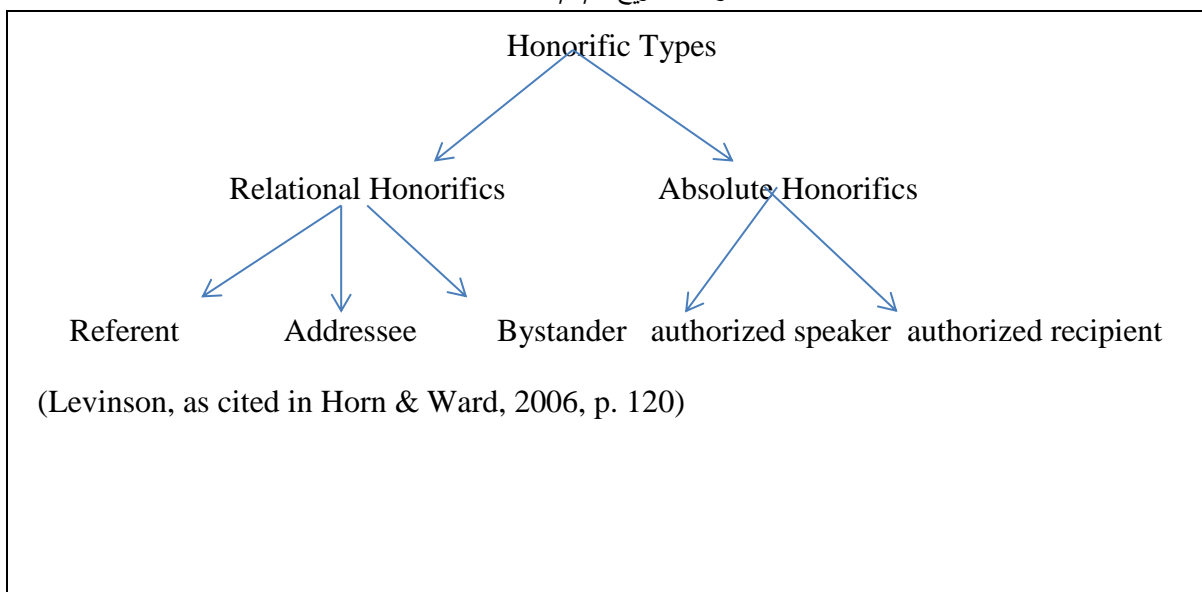
can have several functions and meanings, it described as “a very leaky thing” in addition honorifics serve control and supremacy, irony, mockery, flattery and other proposed related to the social behaviours.

4.1. Methodology

This study uses descriptive and interpretive analysis to analyse newspaper texts in a qualitative manner. Articles will be collected to analyse the type of honorific forms used in newspapers. The researcher selected different newspapers from different countries to show how these newspapers honored the queen by using honorific forms.

There are ten newspapers (five from the United Kingdom and five from the United States). The British newspapers are the Telegraph, BBC News, The Sun, Daily mail and The Metro. On the other hand, the American newspapers are The Washington Post, The New York Times, USA Today, New York Post and the Los Angeles Times. The reason behind choosing these newspapers is that all the articles from both countries were written in the same day of the queen's death. Another reason for choosing these newspapers is that these newspapers generally have reputation for high-quality journalism in the United Kingdom and the United states.

The researcher used Levinson's (1983) model of honorifics to find out the types of honorific forms used to honor the queen Elizabeth. His model which has been significant for lots of studies is identified as shown in the diagram below:



Data Analysis

In this section ten extracts drawn from different newspapers are analysed and taken as concerns the use of honorific forms. The first newspaper (*The Sun*) is from UK. The article was written few hours after the death of queen Elizabeth. The writer started the article with the heading that praising the time the queen Elizabeth was monarch.

1- *The Queen has died peacefully aged 96 - marking an end to her historic reign and sparking an outpouring of grief around the world, The Queen spent her first ten years in charge overhauling the stuffy, unapproachable image of the royals that Brits were used to and transforming them into a more modern and relatable family, Seen a shining beacon of hope to punctuate the darkest moments in Britain's history, Her Majesty became the epitome of a true leader thanks to her unwavering strength*

Her, the honorific forms are formed by the honorific title “the Queen and her majesty” which literally specifies respect and honor. Honorific forms and respectful titles of address are capitalized in any context, that why the word queen and majesty is written each time in this British newspaper with capital letter.

On the other hand the writer used different adjectives to describe the queen. Words as “historic reign shining beacon of hope, the epitome of a true leader’ are used to signal respect and social distance”

2- *“The Queen’s own words of wisdom provide comfort in our moment of sorrow the huge swell of tributes and flowers from ordinary people in Britain and even around the globe, prove just how iconic Her Majesty has been: a woman the face of her nation for more than 70 years” .*

3- *“Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, by the Grace of God Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Defender of the Faith, who has died aged 96, was the longest-serving monarch of the United Kingdom. During a period of remarkable change throughout her realms and the world at large, she proved herself one of the most effective and best-loved sovereigns the nation has known”*

4- *“As the only monarch the vast majority of Britons have ever known, she has been a constant in people’s lives her profile on the currency, on the stamps. She was there in times of celebration and sorrow and fear. As she aged, she became more and more a grandmotherly figure of warm and fuzzy affection, even for those who don’t especially like the institution”*

It is clear that the forms employed for authorised speakers and receivers are what the absolute social honorifics reflected here are. Using of terms of address, like her Majesty, Honor, etc., is one example. These titles are absolute social honorifics that necessitate authorised addressees for whom they are reserved.

5- *“As the 41st monarch since William the Conqueror in 1066, Elizabeth was the symbol of stability as Britain and its 1,000-year-old monarchy sailed through roiling storms of the modern age, including a deadly pandemic”*

6- *“the plans include a funeral worthy of the devout and dutiful woman who pledged herself at age 21 in service to her nation and never wavered as the living symbol of the British people”*

The honorific words in this newspaper refer more to registers that have a somewhat everlasting form. In this part the expression of honorific language in the form of the use of specific adjectives or select of language that leads to the register. Alternatively, there is an opinion that honorifics in any language are a variation strategy in the use of language to acquire the influence of respect over other language expressions. This opinion is paralleled by several

linguists who have a tendency to consider the circumstance of the situation to be a basis of the honorific effect.

7- *"That unassuming air turned out to be a hallmark of the longest reign by a monarch this country has ever known, seven decades of steadfast service and stately splendor that saw postwar Britain transform from an outsize, if insular, imperial power into a modest, multicultural European nation. Queen Elizabeth II reigned so long that most of the U.K.'s 68 million people and, indeed, most people on the planet have known no other person on the British throne"*

8- *"She's the mother we all had for such a long time... she's been everything that Britain is personified about. She is Britain, and now she's not here anymore"*

9- *"Tributes are already pouring in for Her Majesty, to many the greatest Briton in history and undoubtedly the most famous woman on earth. To billions around the world she was the very face of Britishness"*

10- *"With the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, the world loses not just the most constant star in the constellation of global leaders, but an epitome of virtues that now seem extinct: restraint and devotion to duty"*

Her Majesty and The Queen are the most common titles that queen Elizabeth has been allowed to use of many official and informal titles and styles in keeping her position as a child of a royal Duke since her birth in 1926.

The following table illustrates the number of honorific words used by the newspapers written in the united states and Britain.

| <i>The British Newspapers</i> | <i>honorific forms</i> | <i>Number of the words</i> | <i>The American Newspapers</i> | <i>Honorific forms</i> | <i>Number of the words</i> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Ma'am | 1 | | | |
| The sun | The queen | 24 | The New | QUEEN | 25 |

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| | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|----|------------------------------|-------------|----|
| | Monarch | 4 | York post | Monarch | 5 |
| | Her majesty | 7 | | Her Majesty | 3 |
| | Elizabeth the great | 2 | | | |
| Daily Mail | Monarch | 8 | New York | Queen | 42 |
| | Majesty | 18 | Times | Majesty | 3 |
| | Queen | 30 | | Her honor | 3 |
| BBC | Queen | 17 | USA Today | Queen | 9 |
| | Monarch | 4 | | Monarch | 5 |
| | Princess | 2 | | queen | 5 |
| | majesty | 2 | | | |
| Metro | Queen | 6 | The Los Angeles Times | Queen | 12 |
| | monarch | 3 | | Majesty | 4 |
| | | | | monarch | 2 |
| The Telegraph | Queen | 50 | The Washington Post | Queen | 11 |
| | Monarch | 10 | | Monarch | 4 |
| | majesty | 15 | | Her majesty | 4 |
| | | | | Princess | 1 |
| | | | | Elizabeth | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Conclusion

The majority of honorific terms used to honour the queen adhere to regular rules and formal style. The choice of honorifics is made depending on the context or social standing of the addressee rather than the speaker's connection to them.

The social distance between participants and their cultures influences honorifics forms that were used to honor the queen. It is noticed that, in most cases, all newspapers contain relational honorifics which exhibited by the speaker and referent (referent honorifics). Also the second type of absolute honorifics (authorized recipient) is presented a lot during the reports. Using these types particularly emphasize the way the newspapers honored the queen. The most repeated honorific words are (Queen, her honor and majesty) to define the deixis reference, which is typically stated in a firm form of address, which does not contain any level of comparison between the speaker and the addressee.

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