Politeness Models in Indian English*

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Some theorists claim that speech acts operate by universal pragmatic principles and are governed by the universals of cooperation and politeness. Others question the far-reaching universality of politeness and argue for more culturally based theory. All languages may have devices to indicate way. In this paper I suggest that Asian societies are culturally-based in that they are guided by an underlying principle which guides each and every social interaction: where the speaker stands in relation to other members, speaker's motivation to be accepted as a society member, and the speaker's dependence on other members. But what happens when a speaker from a deference-based Asian culture such as India uses a non-Indic, distance-based language such as English? Does the speaker transfer Asian cultural appropriateness to this new language? What, then is the description of the model of politeness which accounts for the appropriateness of the degrees of politeness choice in a dual language-dual culture speech situation? This paper attempts to answer these questions.

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* I have used the conventional transcription system in this paper. I have made not of different speakers by ordering each individual speaker as A, B, C,...; there is no connection between speakers A, B, C,... in all the examples. To illustrate certain points I make in the paper, I highlight parts of the conversation.

1. Introduction

In recent years, a central focus of cross-cultural pragmatic theory has been on speech acts, Gricean maxims, and general sociocultural conventions that ensure success in verbal interaction. Some theorists such as Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1975) claim that pragmatic tendencies work by universal principles which specify the rules that govern the uses of language in context. In particular scholars have proposed models of cooperation and politeness which, too, operate by universal sociolinguistic rules. Accordingly, all speakers use language to convey politeness primarily to consider others feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort, and promote rapport, consequently minimizing the potential for conflict: termed positive and negative face by Brown and Levinson (1978), imposition and optionality by Lakoff (1973), appropriateness by Grice (1975), and principles of interpersonal rhetoric by Leech (1983). Nevertheless, cultures exhibit varying degrees of interactional sociolinguistic studies show that a difference in pragmatic conventions such as politeness can lead to breakdown in intercultural and interethnic communication and to cross-cultural conflict (Gumperz 1982, Hall and Hall 1990, Tannen 1993).

Brown and Levinson (1978) offer the most detailed and comprehensive model to compare cross-cultural differences in politeness. Primary to their politeness theory is the notion of *face*, the public image each individual wants to display. Speakers choose linguistic strategies to satisfy face wants and achieve communicative ends. The two aspects of the notion face are *negative face* and

positive face. Negative face is the desire to be unimpeded by a speaker's actions, and positive face is the desire to be approved of. Acts which threaten face, such as orders, requests, advice, offers, promises, complaints, criticisms, and disagreements are countered with appropriate conflict-reducing politeness strategies chosen by speakers in accordance with cultural norms.

Some studies, however, question the far-reaching universality of face; they argue for a more culturally-based theory. Although the universal politeness frameworks offer models to compare cross-cultural differences in politeness, it appears that social context plays a larger role than is assumed in the Gricean and Brown and Levinson approaches. Where these approaches focus on individuals, individual rights, and protection of individual territory, a dominant dimension in European and American cultures, other approaches [Lakoff (1984, 1990), Hill et. al. (1986), and Pandharipande (1992)] propose models which focus on the notion of cultural appropriateness where social interaction is governed by where the speaker stands in relation to other members of a group or society, the speaker's motivation to be accepted in that society, and the speaker's dependence on others of that society. For example, a Japanese speaker cannot avoid conveying the setting and the relationship among the addressee, the referents, and the speaker because no utterance in Japanese can be neutral with respect to the social context (Matsumoto, 1988, 1989; Hill et. al., 1986). And, in Indian languages politeness is defined in terms of structural and cultural appropriateness. An utterance cannot be viewed as polite and inappropriate or impolite and appropriate (Pandharipande, 1992). In order to be a member of these speech communities, the speaker must be sensitive to his/her position in the social situation and to the expected norms to which he/she must conform. This guiding principle of using certain structures and behaviors as appropriate or inappropriate is named *wakimae* or "discernment" in Japanese (Hill et. al., 1986) and *Maryaadaa* or "etiquette" in Sanskrit (Pandharipande, 1992). These culturally-based models, then, propose that cultures encode their sociopragmatic notions of politeness in language, and speakers are obligated to conform to them.

2. Strategies of politeness

Robin Lakoff (1984, 1990) suggests that different cultures and different languages have different definitions on what it means to be polite. The degree of politeness is determined by three basic strategies of politeness; every culture adopts one as its dominant mode: *distance*, *deference*, and *camaraderie*.

3. Distance politeness

It is the standard form of polite behavior associated with formal etiquette, courtesy, and rigid rules of formality. Distance politeness, usually associated with speaker-based cultures such as European and American cultures, expects speakers to be honest, straightforward and relevant. This style places responsibility of ensuring explicitness, clarity, and precision on the speaker, and the addressee's choice of expression is determined by that speaker. If a speaker is imprecise, then the speaker is perceived as devious, inscrutable and concealing something. If communication problems occur then the fault lies with the speaker. The strategies and linguistic devices which characterize the distance style include those of linear development, passive verb forms, impersonal forms, coherence, cohesion, etc., devices formally prescribed by school and society.

4. Deferential politeness

It recognizes the existence of both participants and their relationships. Where distance politeness assumes equality, deference politeness necessarily does not. A speaker's choice in the deferential use of language is determined by the perceived status that exists between the speaker and the addressee in a particular situation. Members of hearer-based cultures such as Asian cultures value indecision and ambiguity. The speaker leaves the responsibility and decision-making up to the hearer. For the speaker to be clear and precise in such cultures is seen as childlike and insulting. Linguistic devices which characterize deferential politeness are euphemisms, circumlocutions, hedges, and honorifics devices which rely on contexts beyond the sentence to express meaning and emphasize the relationships between participants.

To some extent, both of these forms of politeness assume an avoidance of involvement. *Cammaraderie politeness*, in contrast, assumes total involvement, empathy, and courtesy among all participants. Linguistically and behaviorally, these speakers display openness, trust, and intimacy by mirroring talk, showing understanding, and providing constant feedback. The touchy-feely, mellow behavior associated with California culture is a good example of camaraderie style. Studies on language and gender also support a strong camaraderie politeness among female speakers.

5. Non-Western Studies

That cultures develop their own system of sociolinguistic politeness is evident in non-Western studies on speech acts and speech genres (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain n.d., Wierzbicka, 1985). Matsumoto's work (1988 and 1989) on the politeness phenomenon in Japan shows that people are expected to act properly according to their relative position or rank with regard to others of the group and it is that relative position that they want to maintain when they use politeness strategies. Hill et. al. (1986) claim that *discernment* and *volition* operate in all sociolinguistic systems of politeness but different weights are assigned to each depending on the culture. The discernment factor satisfies a proportionately greater share of the decision-making for Japanese speakers (and for most Asian speakers) than it does for American English speakers who take into greater account the factor of volition. In other words, once factors of addressee, status, and situation are identified a Japanese speaker is limited to specific correct choices, whereas for the American English speaker she/he chooses just how much politeness to use from a broad range of polite usage choices. Brown (1980) provides evidence from a Mayan community that the level of politeness appropriate to a given interaction depends on the social relationship of the participants. Tenejapan women are more linguistically sensitive to face-threatening situations and therefore use the extremes of positive and negative politeness depending on the sex of the speaker and hearer. These studies support that linguisitc markers of politeness are good indicators of social relationships.

Studies on politeness in Indian languages are minimal. D'souza (1988, 1992) examines what she calls linguistic instruments which express politeness in south Asian languages. She shows that overwhelming pan-Indian similarities exist in what speakers consider to be polite and how they express politeness. She identifies a grammar of culture, a predictive system which accounts for these pan. Asian similarities. Subbarao et al. (1991) examine common syntactic forms across Indian languages families. And Pandharipande (1982) and Srivastava and Pandit (1988) propose different hierarchies of the degree of politeness in Hindi and Marathi. That alternative hierarchical models are proposed suggests that a more pragmatic approach must be considered to account for the complete meaning of polite expressions; the social context and role relations must be taken into consideration to account for the different hierarchies in Indian languages.

Even in studies examining the performance of certain speech acts in the indigenized varieties of English, researchers find that cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences exist in the way the same speech act is performed in different languages. K. Sridhar (1991) finds that requesting strategies in Indian English are different from those in native varieties of English. Indian English users from more traditional backgrounds are more likely to use direct speech such as polite imperatives and desideratives (e.g. I want/need) for requests than Indian English users from more Westernized backgrounds who prefer relative indirectness. The observation that sociocultural differences among speakers exist is further supported in Tinkham's (1993) examination of Indian authors' use of directives in English literature. Valentine (1994) provides further evidence that users of Indian English have developed their own distinct style of agreeing and disagreeing in Indian English based on speakers' awareness of face work and striving to satisfy the face wants of others. Y. Kachru (1991) proposes that to formulate a socially-realistic theoretical framework for speech acts in world Englishes, the many sociopragmatic approaches of speech act theory, contrastive analysis, sociolinguistics, and ethnography of communication need to be considered jointly. Each framework separately is not adequate to account for verbal interaction in an indigenized variety of English.

6. Questions

With this background in place, the following discussion will focus on some of the politeness strategies that Indian speakers of English use, based on data from ordinary conversation collected in India.[1] I ask the following questions: 1) What features of politeness does Indian English exhibit? In other words, are the politeness strategies conveyed in Indian English similar to those used in Indian languages or do they more closely resemble the English speaking cultural norms? 2) If the choice of strategy conforms to the Indian culture, not the English-speaking culture, what are the reasons? Are the strategies heavily tied to social context as suggested by the research? and 3) could there exist a model of politeness to account for the appropriateness of the politeness choice? does such a model take into consideration whether the culture is deference-based or distance-based? Does it account for the nature of the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and hearer, which is the fundamental principle in a deference-based culture? Does it take into consideration the effect english use has on the Indian politeness system?

7. Indian politeness

All languages have devices to indicate politeness and formality. Not every language expresses them in the same way, however. Languages encode politeness in lexical choices, in intonational patterns, in syntactic structures, and in speech acts. There are obligatory markers of status, deference, and humility. But what happens when a speaker from a deference-based culture such as India uses an non-Indian, distance-based language, such as English? Does the speaker translate cultural appropriateness to this new language?

8. Agreement and Disagreement

In earlier discussions (Valentine, 1994), I show that in Indian English discourse, speakers produce talk with concern for face and politeness factor. Acts, such as agreeing, reporting and informing are perceived as non-face threatening, whereas

disagreeing and arguing threaten face. A speaker threatens the hearer's positive face when the speaker accuses, insults, or reprimands, interrupts a turn, changes topic, disagrees challenges or rejects. In a hearer-based culture such as India, speakers avoid appearing emphatic or sure of their views; they want to allow the hearer options. The more indirect, digressive, or ambiguous the speaker is the more options the addressee has for not agreeing or performing the intended action. This is in agreement with observations that Indian English speakers prefer compound and complex sentences over native English speakers' simple, direct ones. It is not that Indian English speakers do not show disagreement in conversation, but that Indian English speakers work very hard to support positive face by agreeing rather than risk face by disagreeing. When, however, a speaker shows opposition to a view, the disagreement is softened with politeness form, apologies, honorifics, and hedges. Ahluwalia et. al. (1990) support that in conversation Indian speakers avoid talking straight; they indirectly reveal their real motives to appease the positive face of the hearer establishing that the speaker does not agree with what the other is saying. What is most interesting about Indian English agreement however, is that speakers use both agreement and disagreement components within the same turn, what appears to a non-Indian to be a *contradiction.*

To illustrate, in examples 1-2 below the respondents (speaker C in 1 and speaker B in 2) start their turns with a negative *no* but agree with the previous statement. For non-Indians *no* signals denial and disagreement; what is expected to follow is an expansion of the negative. As a result of the perceived contradiction, non-Indians may feel offense or insult. What is appropriate and of primary importance within the norms of Indian politeness, then, is the reduction of a face threatening situation even at the expense of sounding contradictory. To prevent a face threatening episode the respondent first negates the previous speaker's proposition then modifies it.

1.)

    A: Do you think it (wife abuse) is common?

    B: In India? In rural families this is common.

    C: *No, it's common.* Very much common even in very literate families.

2.)

> **A:** So in your family were you treated differently from your brother in other ways?
> **B:** *No, not in other ways, but yeah yes I was.* They didn't allow me.

In lengthier turns, Indian English speakers *weigh both sides of an issue* (examples 3 and 4 below). Appropriate to the norms of Indian politeness, it is better to ask "In what way do I agree, *and* in what way do I disagree?" To position not weakening it. Indian English speakers use this strategy to such a degree that they go to great lengths to hide their point of view on a matter, whether it is to agree or to disagree. In example 3, male speaker A provides many varied arguments on the virtues of an ideal Indian wife. At the outset he states that a lady should be interested in the activities of the house, but at the same time, he states that she has to manage two fronts; he concludes that the ideal wife is one who balances both the house and the office. In example 4, speaker B considers both arranged and love marriages, never commiting to one view or the other. As is typical of the deferential style, speakers weigh both sides, modify their positions, and include details and digressions to minimize the risk of disagreement and maximize the desirable outcome of agreement. A non-Indian views this style as "beating around the bush" and the speaker as non-committal and indecisive.

3.) [ideal wife?]

> **A:** to me I think it would mean a lady who would certainly *be interested in the activities of the house* because again in the Indiancontext you have to do you have to look after your children for quite some time. *But at the same time,* I think the Indian wife, I think has a very important and very difficult job to do. She has to *manage two fronts* at the same time [yeah] because of modernization you find women, y'know going out, working ¡nowadays and that does happen in most middle-class families now.Which is a quite a big number. But then you will also find that largelynow of course y'know not to say that the husband are not at all helping them at all I think the major part of procreation *growth of child development is played by the mother* in India.There is no doubt about that and I think if somebody could *ba lance the two well* would I think be t*he ideal Indian*

wife. Absolutely, because *both are important.* And I think even, y'know the females are angry about this. I think that most even accept this, yeah. They accept that it is a part of their female...

B: most of them accept it because they have no other choice exceptto accept it.

A: *ah well I would say that.* Well, most them don't maybe I'm notsaying everybody's liberal in our society. But there are many women wholove to do it. So they feel that "yeah it is my job and I should do it."

4.)

A: It's very difficult to then to actually expect I know even people who staying abroad but they'll come to India to get married which is the height of hypocrisy in my case.

B: *Well, I wouldn't totally say it is the height of hypocrisy,* I would rather say not really looking into the social background. *I'm not totally against arranged marriage, not to say that I would say I'd like somebody who is following romance.* I feel if there's a father who can choose a girl for me, and if I'm not involved already with somebody whom he thinks shouldbe the ideal wife and then we meet for some time   and we decide to getmarried I think it's perfect. And it has proved right. *I think there are demerit to both arranged marriage and falling in love and marriage.*

In Indian languages, the tag particle, such as *n a* in Hindi, attaches itself to a positive or negative statement. Tag forms express solidarity toward the addressee, encourage participation, soften a criticism or disagreement, or express politeness (Holmes, 1984, 1986). For social appropriateness, Indian speakers use English tag forms such as *no* and *y'know* (examples 5-7), as well as *isn't it?, right?, okay?* in similar contexts where an Indian tag would be used. In example 5, speaker C weakens her disagreement with speaker B by first uttering forceful *no*, then tagging her comment with the negative particle. In example 6, the speaker lessens the harshness and the tenseness of her commands by appending the *no* particle.

5.)

A: Do you think that's (male dominance) changing or that will change?
B: No, that won't change because it is we have to I mean go according to the male supremacy I mean we can't go our own way.

C: *No,* but nowadays I think it is changing, no?

6.)

Now put if off... wipe it off this year, *no*?

7).

Even in cases of wife beating, *you know*?

Negative politeness, the concern for being liked and admired is shown in the use of *honorifics*. Honorifics are classified as a pan-Asian feature of showing deference politeness in Indian languages. They involve the use of special pronouns or honorific markers which are added to nouns or verbs, depending on the status of the addressee to the speaker. English does not have the hierarchical structure of second person pronominals or verbal or nominal markings as most Indian languages do to convey the different levels of politeness and to pay appropriate deference to the hearer. To convey this type of politeness in Indian English speakers use honorifics of respectful address/reference forms, humbling and exalting forms, superpolite styles, and repetition, among other strategies to soften the possible disagreement.

9. Address/Reference forms

In Indian languages, address/reference terms and kinship forms are markers that function to establish the relationship between the speaker and hearer, to identify the underlying Indian conventions of appropriateness, and to predict social expectations and behavior associated with them (Pandharipande, 1992). In the discourse under discussion, forms such as English *ma'am* and *auntie*, extensions of a perceived relationship between speaker and hearer, and Indian kinship terms such as *chaachii* 'aunt' and *bhaaii* 'brother' indicate not only the differential social position in terms of status, respect, gender and age of each participant but reduce face threatening acts and establish a suitable relationship with the speaker. In example 8, a 22 year old female acknowledges and establishes her relationship with her aunt by addressing her with the apropriated respectfull

Hindi kinship marker, *chaachii* 'aunt'. In example 9, English *ma'am* is used profusely by college students to their professors to minimize the differential social status of each participant and to show respect, thus reducing any chance of a face-threat, especially when the younger, low-status addressees disagree with the older, higher-status speaker. Exercising her privileged position, the professor returns with the address *my dear*, for her social status does not put her in jeopardy of being misunderstood.

8.)

> *Chaachii, let's start* with the beginning, the childhood part.

9.)

> **A:** *But ma'am* children calling things, their parents, and my mother slapped me and if
> **B:** No, no, that is let us go for the good points, not he bad points even here the things are like that... no even here things happen so many. But it may not be to that extent...
> **A:** *Ma'am* that is not possible in our culture and it's
> **B:** It is possible *my dear* I have seen so many years to go through. It will be possible provided girls really come out.
> A: *Ma'am* we have a habit of finding midway.

10. Bountiful behavior

In Indian languages, a common politeness strategy called *bountiful behaviour* is used by a speaker to humble her/himself and to exalt the addressee. Examples 10-12 show such deferential politeness behavior. The speakers not only humble themselves, e.g., *"I have not taken much pains, nothing great, maybe I'm not correct, I'm not in the inner group but raise the level of others, e.g., they are gifted, you can correct me,"* etc.

10.)

> **A:** Yes, I used to sing before, then a time came when I thought I was not able to devote that much of time so I should step down gracefully. There are many artists even though their singing is not nice they go to the radio

and they sing. But I don't like that. I said when I don't feel that I am good for that I should step down. Then   I myself go to the radio that *please* don't fire me... sometimes they say what thing what thing you have done I said (laugh) okay *thanks,* that I, I'm in touch for my own pleasure.
B: she's trained her daughter instead.
A: *I have not taken much pains* but *they are gifted* and whatever little I could do I have. *Not much. I didn't sit with them and all that* but when they were small you know picture, film songs, such songs which werereally nice I used to teach them. And when they first started to sing, they from the radio we you only get the poetry, but you have to tune that so I used to do that. In the beginning Tiik hai? Then there are composers here in every out-station themselves. But to start with I did it. *Nothing great about.* Every mother does for their daughter or sons. *Nothing great.*

11.)

A: Y'see I'm not saying individuals and all that about generally that is the situation. See, *maybe I'm not correct you can correct me* but that is the situation that I generally see it. Most often.

12.)

A: *If I may interrupt for a minute here. Y'know I'm not in the innergroup.* but none of you have had daughters. I was shocked once I saw her slapping a man. I can't do it and I said "Don't do it," she said, "No they're like dogs..."

Deference politeness extends to superpolite styles of speech such as *I favor to talk from my own experiences and You are most welcome* (as in examples 13-15). Such superpolite forms as *kindly please advise me, with due respect I beg to inform you,* and *thanking you in anticiption* are considered to be overpolite and unacceptable to native English speakers (Parasher, 1983).

13.)

I favor to talk from my own experience.

14.)

You are most welcome to go.

15)

Very nice being with you.

11. Repetition.

Repetition serves the function of positive face and sends a metamessage of involvement. It has a wide range of varied functions in conversation (Tannen, 1989). Repeating indicates a speaker's response to another's utterance, establishes acceptance and agreement, and gives evidence of a speaker's own participation. The process of repeating to stress emotional agreement seems highly conventionalized in Indian languages. In a study examining the politeness, Subbarao, et. al (1991) state that one way to achieve positive politeness in these languages is to repeat a part of what the other interlocutor said. This strategy is so common that often the repetitions appear irrelevant to the point being made, hence for a non-Indian hearer, the Indian speaker is viewed as repetitive and inconsistent. In example 17 and 18, agreement is shown by the respondent repeating part of a previous statement or complete sentences. Among female speakers, often such repeats go on for a number of consecutive turns indicating emphatic agreement and strengthening the ties of a camaraderie relationship.

17.)

A: So dating is *common* nowadays.
B: Yeah. This is *very common.*
C: *Very common.*
B: *Really common.* And in this level well we are doing research. This is not anything very strange. We are bound to do all these things because we have to go outside frequently.

18.)

A: *Men are not helping at all.*
B: *Men are not helping at all.*
C: *They are not.*

12. Speech acts of directives

The speech acts of directives (commands, suggestions, requests, offers and invitations) are intended to encourage the addressee to carry out a particular action. Examples 19-25 illustrate the various strategies Indian English speakers use to make suggestions and requests. Strategies range from a) inclusive language such as first person imperative *let's, let us*, and first person plural *we* (19); b) questions: *What about the freedom bit?, What would you prefer...?* (20); c) direct commands as imperatives (21); d) polite imperatives (22); e) prefacing requests (23); f) indirect statements in the forms of nominals, statements and suggestions (24); and g) indirect questions (25).

In the deferential style, inclusive language and question-asking are seen as ways to reduce personal involvement and to avoid confrontation. Whether the question is a tag particle to soften or mitigate conflict (as seen above) or information-seeking ones (below), the speaker creates a feeling of good will and suggests a direction for non-confrontational interaction.

19.) Inclusive language:
a. Acchaa, Neerja, *let's hear your views* on love marriage and arranged marriage kind of thing. *What would you prefer as the advantages disadvantages?* (female acquaintances)
b. *Let's take you and your brother.* (female acquaintances)
c. After you finish up *we will meet, okay?* (female colleagues)

20.)
Questions:
a. *What about* the freedom bit? (niece to aunt)
b. *What would you prefer* as the advantages disadvantages? (niece to aunt)

Recent studies show that there are cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences in the way the same speech act is performed. In native varieties of English, the preferred form to request is that of questions which are more polite than declaratives which are more polite than imperatives (Lakoff, 1990). The claim is that in a speaker-based culture increasing freedom of

the addressee to refuse the request increases the impact of politeness. In Indian languages, in contrast, it is acceptable to use imperatives and desideratives as requests (examples 21 a-e), especially if the force is toned down by deference markers, even English set expressions of *please* and *thank you* (as in reported speech examples 22 a-b). In Indian languages, the imperative is considered a very polite form because the verb usually carries an honorific ending.

21.) Imperatives:
    a. *Come here Ashok.* (female colleague to male colleague)
    b. *Now put it off... wipe it off* (referring to a tape recorder) (sister to brother)
    c. *Think about dowry.* (niece to aunt)
    d. *Come* I have a nice story to tell you about influence everywhere (uncle to niece)
    e. *Don't do it straightforward.* (female friends)

22.) Polite imperatives:
    a. Acchaa like if he if I want I ask him I tell him *go get a glass of water for me please...* y'know it's very rarely that we ask our husbands to do anything. (elderly female to young females)
    b. And I was asking the bus people *please stop please,* nobody nobody waits for you... They said, *don't worry madam...* she said "Have you lost your way? I said, "Yes, ma'am"... " And always ask a policeman for your way and *please don't go out alone after dark...*" (elderly female to young females)

When Indian English speakers make their requests, it is formed with hedges, polite language, emphasis on lexical items, and other politeness markers. In examples 23 a and b, each speaker leads up to her question or request with elaborative prefacing and hedging. Usually in such situations when the speaker feels the need to elaborate on an issue, the relationship between the two interlocutors is unequal; in these cases, the younger the speaker and the more respect for the addressee, the less direct and confident the request.

23.) Prefacing:

a. What about the trends now more and more people are going in for those love marriages and so forth... and though we are having a lot of arranged marriages within the country how would you sort of balancethe act and say give preference to any oneof them? (22 years old femaleto 40 years old female)

b. Acchaa, it doesn't go well with asking you this question. Having sons all around the place but what about discrimination at a very subtle level in our homes? Acchaa let's talk about your parent's place. Which discrimination there are between brothers and sisters. (niece to aunt)

(21 and 22), and prefacing (23), the least preferred polite request forms in native varieties of English.

24.) Indirect Statements:

a. Status of women in India ke bare me chaachii "about the status of women in India auntie" (niece to aunt)

b. That wool has to be exchanged. (female friends)

c. I suggest that you wash in heat. (elderly female to younger female)

d. I should, two black balls, and I need one light grey. (female friends)

25.)

Indirect questions (reported speech):

Well earlier y'know it this is a matter of my own responsibility and other things y'know which come into your life like y'know the children's education... I would just go in and say *"Can I do this for you"* andthings like that. Now I don't think it's as it's that way any longer. but, if she asks me *"Can you just come in, gimme a hand"* well, I do it. But not readily forthcoming. (female friends)

13. Conclusion

It appears that differences between native and non-native English patterns of politeness do exist. Indian English speakers have their own way of expressing politeness. The Indian system is more hearer-based so speakers lay more emphasis on being less forceful in agreeing/disagreeing, using kinship and

address/reference forms to establish relationships, replying with overly polite styles, repeating comments, and using direct polite imperatives, choices appropriate to the sociocultural conventions in the Indian culture not always to those in native English-speaking cultures which are speaker-based.

An Indian English speaker's choice of politeness patterns is dependent on a number of factors. First and foremost being a member of the Indian community means that in every speech situation the speaker recognizes the limited permissible choices of deferential language strategies, recognizes the perceived status among all participants, and has knowledge of the underlying Indian politeness principle. Secondly, in a multilingual context such as India, when the language choice is one other than an Indian language it appears that the speaker resorts to her/his indianness, i.e., the politeness strategies and conventions which are appropriated in the Indian cultural system. Therefore, a speaker's linguistic choices in English most often are based on the native conventions of politeness.

Now the question arises: As scholars have proposed scales of politeness for syntactic features could there be a model of politeness or degrees of politeness which take into account the dual languages/cultures? Earlier in this paper I questioned the universality of face. Although the framework of politeness may be universal, the strategies for appropriate responses are not. It has been suggested that Asian cultures are more culturally-based in that they are guided by an underlying principle which assigns a structure as appropriate and polite. This principle is one which guides all social interactions: where a speaker stands in relation to other members, the speaker's motivation to be accepted as a society member, and the speaker's dependence on other members. But when a speaker from a deferentially-based culture uses a distance-based language, such as English in which its users are guided by other politeness principles, how is politeness expressed?

For the most part, I have shown that the strategies transferred to English are those used in Indian languages. How, then, do we account for such Indian English structures as a speaker's use of the English formulaic expressions *please* and *thank you*, to account for dual cultural strategies such as the extension of English address forms *ma'am* and *auntie* and indirect speech forms such as *Can you just come in?*, to account for speakers who have great exposure to English

speaking environments, and to account for speakers who have extensive study in formal English? The only answer is for the model to take into consideration two different cultures and two different sets of politeness strategies and the interplay between the cultures and the two languages.

What appears to be happening is that the notion of an underlying principle of appropriateness in India seems to be in flux and changing. The new English terms, structures, and strategies entering the Indian culture are impacting what is considered appropriate politeness in behavior and language. For example, although Indian expressions of apology and gratitude equivalent to English *pardon, please*, and *thank you* have been claimed (Apte, 1974) to be relatively rare in Indian social situations because they put distance between persons, I find that Indian English speakers use English expressions *beg pardon, most welcome, please*, and *thank you* most often in contexts related to Westernized settings or references, but not exclusively. The use of *auntie* and *ma'am* are English terms, which are not a part of the highly structured kinship system of India, but they now are being used by even non-English speaking Indians to identify women who are not related to the speaker. *Auntie*, for example, is taking the place of Indian kinship terms kaskii "father's brother's wife" and *maasii* "mother's sister." And the more traditional the speaker the more likely he/she will use direct speech acts in English to make requests. English can be said to be leveling.

To conclude then, the presence of certain features unique to Indian English identifies underlying Indian English politeness conventions which in turn reflect the Indianness in Indian English and the Englishization of Indian languages which set Indian English apart from other Englishes of the world.

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