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(In)directness of Requesting in Hindi

Abstract

The present study examines whether the (in)directness of requests correlates with the degree of politeness and whether the use of honorifics influences the degree of directness of linguistic forms in requests, in Hindi. Since honorifics play a significant role in expressing politeness, using honorifics appropriately is integral to effective communication; yet, indirectness contributes to the mitigation of a face-threatening act (Brown & Levinson 1987). Taking Blum-Kulka's (1989) theory on categorization of requests, the study attempts to describe how a language with an inbuilt honorific system uses direct and indirect request forms. The study is based on three kinds of data gathered from respondents: (1) the responses to an open-ended question aimed to gather the canonical request forms in the language in different request situations; (2) responses to a closed question in which the respondents indicated their choice of the level of politeness they would use with addressees in different role-relationships; (3) respondents' ranking of the forms from the most polite to the least polite. The results show that direct and conventionally indirect forms of request are used frequently in Hindi. Further, the need for clarity determines the degree of directness of requests, as honorifics serve the purpose of indicating politeness.

1. Introduction

The literature on the theories of politeness and speech acts considers requesting to be inherently threatening to the negative face of the addressee as it involves an expectation of a favor that a speaker demands from the addressee. In order to mitigate this Face-threatening Act, languages have a set of politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson 1987). Focusing on requests as speech acts, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) categorize the linguistic forms based on the degree of explicitness of the illocution in

the speech acts. The present study describes the request forms in Hindi, employing this categorization, and brings out the culture-specific nuances of requesting in Hindi, which has an inbuilt system of honorifics.

The study is based on a set of written discourse completion tests and two scale questions. Both questions have been answered by a total of 162 respondents on a university campus from different age-groups, gender, and occupations including students, teachers and non-teaching staff.

The paper examines how explicit and implicit a request can be in Hindi in a common request situation with addressees of different social distance (friends, family, strangers) and age group (younger and older). The paper examines whether there is a correlation between directness/indirectness and politeness in Hindi requests. As indirect requests seem to be more polite than the direct requests due to their mitigating effect, the paper seeks to answer whether a language with a built in system of honorifics, such as Hindi, views the levels of (in)direct request strategies differently?

The paper is divided into six sections, including the introduction as the first section. Section 2 briefly outlines the literature on politeness and honorifics. Section 3 gives an overview of data collection whereas section 4 describes the gathered data and the methods of analysis used. Section 5 lists the findings of the study and section 6 ends with the discussion and conclusion based on the study.

2. Literature background

Drawing on Goffman's (1967) concept of 'face', Brown & Levinson (1987) describe the politeness strategies used to mitigate a face-threatening act (FTA). The strategies are listed under five broader categories:

1. Do the FTA, without redressive action (bald on record)
2. Do the FTA, with redressive action (positive politeness)
3. Do the FTA, with redressive action (negative politeness)
4. Do the FTA (off record)
5. Don't do the FTA

The most direct form, 'bald on record', is the least mitigating and least polite by this categorization. The degree of politeness is said to increase with the degree of indirectness. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), in their goal to study the cross-cultural realization of requests as speech acts, rank the

Head Acts of requests (based on illocutionary¹ force) from most direct to least direct, as the following list illustrates:

1. Mood Derivable
2. Explicit Performative
3. Hedged Performative
4. Locution derivable
5. Want Statement
6. Suggestory Formula
7. Query Preparatory
8. Strong Hint
9. Mild Hint

One of the basic distinctions between direct and indirect forms, according to Blum-Kulka (1989: 2) is that in “direct speech acts the speaker says what he means but in indirect speech acts, he or she means more than or something other than, what he or she says.”

However, the correlation of (in)directness with politeness is contested in Blum-Kulka (1987), where the author finds that indirectness does not always indicate more politeness, and points out the importance of ‘clarity’ and the explicitness of a speech act. This discussion highlights the significance of clarity (Grice 1967) and politeness in ‘pragmatic competence’ (Lakoff 1973). The variation in the use of (in)directness in requesting, in different cultures, is highlighted by Fukushima (1996) and Marti (2006).

Politeness theories in the literature can be divided into two kinds. The first category describes universal aspects of politeness (Lakoff 1973; Brown & Levinson 1987; Leech 1983, 2005). The second category focuses on the culture-specific aspects of politeness strategies (Wierzbicka 1985; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 1987).

¹ Illocutionary acts are described in Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and further explained in Levinson (1983), as the conditions that are necessary for the act (here request) performed.

2.1 Theories of politeness in requesting and honorifics

The act of requesting, categorized as an FTA, threatens the negative face of the hearer (Brown & Levinson *ibid*: 66) as a Speaker (S) indicates that he wants the Hearer (H) to do or refrain from doing, some act A.

One of the criticisms of the universal nature of the theory of politeness suggested by Brown & Levinson (*ibid*) is the inclusion of honorifics in the negative politeness strategy, because honorifics are normally used even when there are no face-threatening acts involved. Fukada & Asato (2004), however, suggest that if honorifics are not used, it would lead to a face-threatening situation. Culpeper (2010) argues (im)politeness to be both inherent in an expression and also to get its meaning from its use in a particular context.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) build up a nine-level categorization of Head Acts of requests (see table 5) and also describe the non-Head Acts such as alerters and supportive moves. Based on the (in)directness of these Head Acts Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) have further clubbed these nine levels of requests into direct, conventionally indirect and unconventionally indirect.

2.2 Honorification and politeness strategies in Hindi

Politeness in Hindi may be expressed by varying the pronouns, verbs, titles of the addressee and reference, and distinct lexical forms to refer to things and actions. Politeness may also be indicated by using different types of sentences like, passive and imperative (Pandharipande 1973). Thus, in Hindi, the level of politeness can be expressed by various morpho-syntactic means. Pronouns in Hindi vary according to number (singular/plural) or social distance. The second person pronoun 'you' has a three way distinction in Hindi, *tu* 'you1', *tum* 'you2' and *aap* 'you3' (Misra 1977). The forms 'you1' and 'you2' are used among intimate interactants, whereas, 'you3' is the honorific form, used to show respect to the addressee (Table 1). Honorifics may also be suffixed to proper nouns or titles of the addressees.

Table 1. Honorifics in Hindi noun, pronoun and verb

	Proper Noun	Noun	Pronoun	Verb
Neutral 1	Name	Name	<i>tu</i> 'you'	<i>do</i> 'give'
Neutral 2	Name	Name	<i>tum</i> 'you'	<i>de</i> 'give'
Polite/ Honorific form	name + -ji <i>Mohan-ji</i> 'name-HON' <i>Sharma-ji</i> 'surname-HON'	profession + -ji / -sahab, <i>master-ji</i> 'teacher-HON' <i>doctor sahab</i> 'doctor HON'	<i>aap</i> 'you.HON'	<i>dijiye</i> 'give.HON'

The verbs in Hindi are inflected to agree with singular or plural subjects as follows.

(1) *tum do*
you.neutral1 give.neutral1
'you give'

(2) *aap dijiye*
you.HON give.HON
'you give'

Apart from these there are some lexical forms in Hindi-Urdu² (Jain 1969:83–84) which show verbalization of respect. The author shows how in asymmetrical and symmetrical relationships the speaker uses neutral forms, humble forms and exaltation forms. For example, *ghar* 'house' is neutral, *garibkhana* 'humble-house, hut' is the humble form, and *daulatkhana* 'wealth house/palace' is an exaltation form. Verbs like *to give* also have three forms such as *dena* 'to give', *pesh karna* 'to offer', *ada karna* 'to grant'.

Pandharipande's hierarchy as shown in Srivastava & Pandit (1988: 190,199) described the hierarchy of degree of politeness in different forms of sentence constructions in Hindi such as passive, simple present,

² Hindi-Urdu is used among the Indian linguists to refer to Hindi which is not different from Urdu. However, the lexical terms in Urdu have more polite forms but are mutually intelligible to Hindi speakers.

optative, future imperative and imperative. However, Srivastava & Pandit (1988:203) state that the degree of politeness associated with different sentence construction also depends on the context. Thus, the social context and the social meaning of a language structure need to be taken into consideration to determine the degree of politeness of the linguistic form. These various ways of showing varying degree of politeness, including, honorifics and sentence construction, do not form a part of the nine-way categorization of (in)directness model offered by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). In order to widen the description of verbal (in)directness and politeness to fit languages like Hindi as well, the present study focuses on the lacunae in the description of the use of linguistic politeness on the basis of (in)directness of a speech act without considering the inbuilt honorification system.

2.3 Purpose of the study

Building on the available literature, the paper describes the request forms in Hindi and categorizes them based on their (in)directness. Further the requests are categorized based on the use of honorifics in order to examine whether the degree of directness or indirectness is influenced by the use of honorifics.

3. Data

3.1 Instrument

The present study is based on a questionnaire, which had three sections (See Appendix 1 for the English equivalent of the questionnaire used). The first section of the questionnaire contained an open-ended question. The respondents were asked to write the request forms they would use in the given situations to three categories of addressees of varying social distance (friends, family members, strangers). Table 2 below lists three request situations and the role-relationship between the interactants.

Table 2. The request situations in the questionnaire

Degree of imposition →	Situations
Addressee ↓	
To friends (younger/older, male/female friend)	Ask money
To family members (younger/older, sister/brother, mother, father)	Ask money
To strangers (younger/elder male/female stranger)	Ask to move ahead in a queue

The second section of the questionnaire had a three point scale question aimed to determine the level of politeness that the respondents would claim to use with each category of addressee of different age groups (younger, older) and social distance (friend, family, strangers). The question contained the labels ‘very polite’, ‘polite’ and ‘casual,’ and the respondents were asked to indicate which level of politeness they would use. The respondents had to tick one of the options.

The last section of the questionnaire contained nine request forms used in the context of asking for money. In this context, the addressee was a friend belonging to the same age-group and gender. The respondents were asked to rank the nine request forms on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 was the least polite and 9 the most polite.

3.2 Respondents

The respondents chosen for the study were native speakers of Hindi, who were studying or working on a university campus in Delhi³. There were a total of 163 respondents. The questionnaire was in written form and it was distributed manually to the respondents after having their personal consent. The average time to fill up the questionnaire was 15 minutes.

³ The field of the study was Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi as a representative field that has a heterogeneous population of Hindi speakers.

4. Data description

4.1 Request Acts in Hindi elicited from the respondents

The responses to the open-ended question were categorized based on CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project) as in Blum-Kulka (1989) into the following categories:

1. Alerters
2. Supportive Moves
3. Head Acts
4. Internal Modifications

For the purpose of analysis only the Head Acts were considered. The Head Act is the kernel of a request whereas the other parts of the speech act are optional and may be present in different orders and combinations. To illustrate an example from Hindi data,

- (3) *suniye! Please aapke paas kuch paise hoNge?*
 listen.HON please you.GEN with some money have.FUT.INT?
baat ye hai ki mere paise khatm ho gaye haiN
 reason this be.PRES COMP I.POSS money over be.PRES go.PRES be.PRES.PL
aur mujhe ghar jana hai.
 CONJ I.DAT house go.INF be.PRES
 ‘Listen! Please do you have some cash on you? The thing is that my money is over and I need to go home’

- *Suniye* = **Alerter** (attention getter),
- *Please* = **Internal Modification** (politeness marker),
- *Aapke paas kuch atirikt paise hong*e = **Head Act** (Conventionally Indirect Request),
- *Baat ye hai ki mere paise khatm ho gaye hain aur mujhe ghar jana hai.* = **Supportive Moves** (Giving reason and explaining the situation)

The Head Acts were categorized into nine request forms based on Blum-Kulka’s categorization. Table 3 below illustrates the nine categories of Head Acts with the examples as given in Blum-Kulka and the Hindi examples taken from the data of the present study:

Table 3. Categorization of Hindi requests in the DCT based on Blum-Kulka et al. (1989)

Categories	Sub-categories based on illocutionary force	English Examples (as given in Blum-Kulka)	Hindi Examples as found in the responses for the request situations in Table 3
A Direct Request	A1 Mood Derivables	Clean the kitchen	<i>ghar jane ke liye paise do</i> 'give (me) money to go home'
	A2 (Explicit) Performative	I am asking you to clean the mess	<i>maiN tere paise le rahi huN</i> 'I am taking your money'
	A3 Hedged Performative	I would like to ask you to give your presentation a week earlier	<i>yadi aap itna de sake to aabhari rahuNgi</i> 'if you are able to give this much I would be obliged'
	A4 Obligation statement	You'll have to move the car	<i>maaf kijiye ga aapko aage baRhna chahiye</i> 'sorry but you should move ahead in the queue'
	A5 Want Statement	I really wish you'd stop bothering me	<i>is kaam ke liye kuchh paisoN ki zarurat hai</i> 'I need some money for this work'
B Conven- tionally Indirect Request	B6 Suggestory Formula	How about cleaning up?	<i>aage chaleN</i> 'shall we go ahead'

	B7 Query Preparatory	Could you clean up the kitchen, please?	<i>kya tum mujhe kuch paise de sakti ho?</i> 'can you lend me some money?'
C Unconven- tionally Indirect Request	C8 Strong Hint	You have left the kitchen in a right mess	<i>kuch paise kam par gaye</i> 'falling short of cash'
	C9 Mild Hint	'I am a nun' in response to a persistent hassler	<i>aaJ to maiN baRi musibat me paR gayi</i> 'today I am in a big trouble' (making the addressee ask about the problem and offer for help, like lending money to go home)

Table 4. The mean percentage of request types used by respondents with friends, family and strangers.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B6	B7	C8	C9	Won't ask
Friends	27.3	0.9	7.37	0.15	6.87	0	29.12	6.27	0	12.55
Family	31.08	0.6	8.8	0	18.28	0	19.95	5.43	0	4.7
Strangers	69.15	0	3.1	0.6	0	3.1	12.57	6.4	0	0.6

The table 4 above shows that the Mood Derivable (A1), Hedged Performative (A3), Want Statement (A5), Query Preparatory (B7), Strong Hint (C8) and Won't ask⁴ are the more frequently used forms amongst all nine types. The frequency of these forms varies with the social distance between the interactants as the use of forms such as Query Preparatory (B7) and Won't ask options were relatively more amongst friends whereas, with family members Mood Derivable (A1), Query Preparatory (B7), Want Statement (A5) and Hedged Performative (A3) were used more. The most frequent use of Mood Derivable (A1) even with strangers is strikingly evident in the data.

⁴ Won't Ask was included in the coding of the data to capture the complete withdrawal of making the request. According to Brown & Levinson (ibid) it would fall in the fifth category of 'Don't do an FTA.'

4.2 Use of honorifics in the request acts

The data show a three way division in the level of politeness based on honorifics. The Direct Request form, A1 (Mood Derivable) and Conventionally Indirect Request form B7 (Query Preparatory) clearly had this three levels of politeness: honorific, neutral1 and neutral2. This subsection shows the use of honorifics with the (in)directness in requests. Table 5 below enlists the verb and pronoun forms and their level of politeness based on honorification.

Table 5. Honorific verb and pronoun forms in Hindi as in the open ended responses

CATEGORIZATION BASED ON CCSARP	VERB FORMS for <i>do</i> 'give' and <i>baRho</i> ⁵ 'move ahead'	Honorific	Neutral1	Neutral2
A1 (Mood Derivable)	Imperative	<i>deN, dijiye, baRheN</i>	<i>dena, do</i>	<i>de</i>
B7 (Query Preparatory)	Interrogative	<i>denge/ dengi?, dijiyega? baRhiyega?</i>	<i>doge/dogi?</i>	<i>degi?</i>
	Interrogative+ Modal+Aux (<i>Kya + sak/pa</i> 'capability modals' + <i>hai</i> 'be verb form')	<i>de sakti/sakte haiN (kya)?, sakenge (kya)?, de payenge?</i>	<i>de sakti/sakte ho, kar sakoge/ sakegi/ paogi (kya)? le sakti ho?</i>	<i>de sakti/sakt a hai</i>
	PRONOUNS			
All request forms	Hearer-oriented Second person pronoun 'you'	<i>aap</i>	<i>tum</i>	<i>tu</i>
A5 (Want Statement), A3 (Hedged performative)	Speaker-oriented	<i>main</i> 'I'		
C8 (Strong Hints)	Impersonal	<i>line</i> 'Queue'		

⁵ Hindi data showed a number of serial verb constructions used in Hindi, like *baRh jaayen* 'move.go.HON.' As the discussion of these complex predicates falls outside the scope of the present study, only simple verb forms were presented in the Table 5.

4.2.1 Honorification in verbs as per the data

The Table 5 above shows the frequently used forms of *do* ‘give’ in Hindi when asking for money and *baRho* ‘go ahead’ when asking to move ahead in the queue. The variety of forms of ‘give’ calls for an explanation for each of them. To begin with, the imperative form ‘de’ is a form used only with younger friends or siblings as in,

- (4) *chal paise de*
 ALERTER money give.neutral2
 ‘C’mon give money’

It sounds like a demand on an addressee. *de do*, a serial verb construction of the form V1V2, and *dena*, a non-finite form of the verb, which are also other intimate and neutral2 forms. But the level of politeness shown by *de* is a little lower than the latter forms. For example,

- (5) *behen paise de do/dena*
 sister (address form) money give-give/give.INF.neutral1
 ‘Sister! Give money’

deN is a typical formal honorific form, which is used with customers or for general public. *dijiye* however, is a more general form of honorific used in day-to-day life. The example sentences below illustrate this.

- (6) *kripya paise deN*
 please money give..HON
 ‘Please give money’

- (7) *mummy paise dijiye.*
 mother money give..HON
 ‘Mother! Give money’

The Query Preparatory forms of ‘give’ have only interrogatives like *dijiyega* and *dengi* that are honorific forms of implying ‘will you give’, whereas, *dogi/doge* is the neutral1 form. *degi/dega* belong to the neutral2 form.

Likewise, the modal interrogatives use the capability modal *sakna* or *paana* ‘to be able to’ and have a three way division as shown in Table 5 above.

- (8) *kya kuch paise de sakte haiN / de payenge?*
 INT some money give MOD(can) be.HON / give MOD(able to).INT.HON
 ‘Can you give some money?’ / ‘Will you be able to give some money?’

Similarly, *de sakti ho* is one of the neutral1 and *de sakti hai* is the neutral2 form.

4.2.2 Honorification in pronouns as per the data

Most of the pronoun forms in request data were second person pronouns as the request was addressed to a hearer and these pronouns had a three way distinction in the levels of honorification as shown in Table 6. However, there were two other cases of pronominal usage, which did not show any distinction in the levels of honorification. First, the pronouns used for ‘I’ in Speaker-oriented requests as shown in the example (15) below. This request form falls under the category A5 (Want Statement).

- (9) *mujhe paise chahiye*
 I.DAT money want
 ‘I want money’

Second, the data contained impersonal forms of requests where neither the Hearer nor the Speaker was mentioned. For example, in (16) the Speaker just mentions that ‘the queue’ is moving ahead. This request form falls under the category C8 (Strong Hint).

- (10) *line aage barh gayi hai*
 queue ahead move go.PERF be.PRES
 ‘The queue has moved ahead’

4.3 Rating of level of politeness based on the role-relationship

The second part of the questionnaire is a role-relationship question where the respondents had to choose the level of politeness used with addressees of different age and social distance. The Table 7 below shows the

hierarchy in the level (very polite, polite, and casual) of perceived politeness based on the mean percentage of the choice of the levels of politeness of the respondents for each category of addressee. As all the three levels of politeness were found to be used by addressees of all the three groups, the Table 6 below presents the only the variations in the rating of levels of politeness used by the respondents.

Table 6. Hierarchy in politeness level varying with social distance and age. C = Casual, P = Polite, VP = Very Polite

Group of addressees I: Family	Group of addressees II: Friends	Group of addressees III: Strangers
Parents VP > P > C	Elder Friends P > C > VP	Elder Strangers VP > P > C
Elder Siblings P > VP > C	Young Friends C > P > VP	Younger Strangers P > VP > C
Younger Siblings C > P > VP		

The hierarchy shown in Table 7 shows that the speaker's relationship with the addressee as well as their age decide the level of politeness perceived to be used by the respondents. With elder addressees a higher use of 'Very Polite (VP)' level of politeness was rated by the respondents, as with parents and elder strangers. But with elder friends Polite (P) level of politeness were used more frequently. With younger addressees, Casual (C) level of politeness were chosen more by the respondents, as with younger friends and siblings. However, with younger strangers, Polite (P) level of politeness was chosen by a higher number of respondents.

4.4 Ranking of nine types of request based on degree of politeness

The third part of the questionnaire has the nine canonical types of Head Acts used in the requests for borrowing money from a friend. The respondents were asked to rank the requests from 1 to 9 to indicate what they perceived as the hierarchy of politeness, from the least polite (1) to the most polite (9). Since the interactants were supposed to be of the same age and gender, honorifics were not included in the sentences given for

ranking, which helped in eliciting the attitude of the respondents towards request forms of various degrees of directness.

Table 7. Mode distribution of ranking of request forms in Hindi

Request forms	Ranking in Hindi (percentage of respondents giving it the ranking given in brackets)
A1 (Mood Derivable)	1 (41.7%)
A2 (Performative)	4 (16.0%)
A3 (Hedged Performative)	5 (16.6%)
A4 (Obligation Statement)	2 (17.2 %)
A5 (Want Statement)	8 (20.9%)
B6 (Suggestory Formula)	7 (17.2%)
B7 (Query Preparatory)	9 (38.7%)
C8 (Strong Hint)	6 (17.2%)
C9 (Mild Hint)	3 (12.3%)

Table 7 shows that A1 (Mood Derivables) was ranked the least polite request form (41.7 % of the respondents gave it the lowest value, 1) and B7 (Query Preparatory) was ranked the most polite form by a large percentage of respondents (38.7 % of the respondents gave it the highest value, 9).

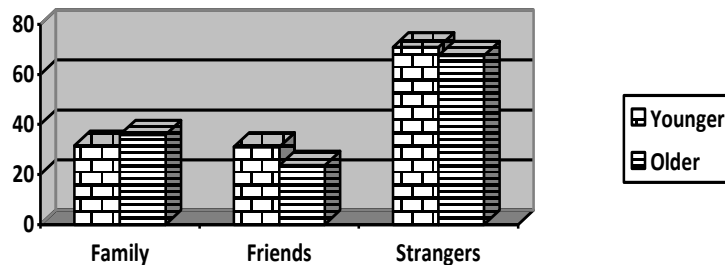
5. Results and discussion

5.1 Direct requests (A1 – C9) and honorifics

As shown in table 4 the Mood Derivable (A1), Hedged Performative (A3) and Want Statement (A5) are used in Hindi requests, and use of Performative (A2) and Obligation Statement (A4) is negligible (the percentage use is less than 1 % as shown in Table 4). As the examples in Table 3 and Table 5 suggest A3 and A5 are self-oriented where the action and need of self is highlighted. Hence these do not necessitate the use of honorifics. However, A1 has a set of verb forms that vary in the degree of politeness. The coding by CCSARP could not include the variation in the use of different verb forms with the age of the addressee even though the level of politeness used for elders is always higher than that used for younger addressees (as in Table 6).

The illustration of the attitude towards the request forms as in Table 7 shows that A1 (Mood Derivable) without honorifics is considered to be the least polite by 41 % of the respondents. Yet the responses about usage as per the responses in open-ended question show that A1 is used with strangers by nearly 70 % of the respondents as shown in Table 4. It is also used with friends and family members. The use of A1 (Mood Derivable) with younger and older addressees shows a relatively similar distribution.

Figure 1. The mean percentage of use of Mood Derivable (A1) with younger and older addressee with varying social distance.





The results on the use of Mood Derivable (A1) differ from that of the perception and attitude of the native speakers towards the use of Mood Derivable. All of these results indicate that direct requests, especially A1, reflect different levels of politeness as they are used along with honorifics. Direct requests, therefore, were not considered to be less polite because of the mitigating effect of honorifics.

5.2 (In)direct requests (A1–C9), their use and perception

As shown in Table 7, Query Preparatory (B7) is considered to be the most polite form by the native speakers. This is supported by the higher use of B7 among friends than with family members (as in Table 4), where A1 is used relatively more. However, Want Statement (A5), where only the speaker's need is articulated and the addressee is left with a better option to turn down the request, are considered to be next in the degree of politeness (in Table 7) but are not so often used as A1 (as in Table 4). Similarly, even though Suggestory Formula (B6) is perceived to be only next in the degree of politeness, these forms are not used at all with friends

and family members. In addition to this, only 3.1 % of the respondents use it with strangers. Forms like Mild Hint (C9), Performative (A2) and Obligation Statements (A4) are in the list of non-preferred forms in both use and perception. Also, the use and perception of Hedged Performative (A3) and Strong Hint (C8) is relatively less frequent.

Table 8. Use and perception of (in)direct request forms from least used to most used and least polite to most polite.

	USE	PERCEPTION	
Least used  Most used	C9 (Mild Hint)	A1 (Mood derivable)	Least polite  Most polite
	A2 (Performative)	A4 (Obligation Statement)	
	A4 (Obligation Statement)	C9 (Mild Hint)	
	B6 (Suggestory formula)	A2 (Performative)	
	C8 (Strong Hint)	A3 (Hedged Performative)	
	A3 (Hedged Performative)	C8 (Strong Hint)	
	A5 (Want statement)	B6 (Suggestory formula)	
	B7 (Query preparatory)	A5 (Want statement)	
	A1 (Mood derivable)	B7 (Query preparatory)	

The use and perception hierarchy is shown in Table 8 above. Even though a triangulation of perception and use of polite forms would be possible in a very prescriptive endeavor, their patterns of dissimilarities and similarities show that hints (C8, C9), though the most indirect forms, were neither used nor were perceived as polite. Conventionally indirect requests, although indirect, are a more preferred because they are perceived as clear, based on convention. The direct request, A1 (Mood Derivable) was the most used form but was perceived as the least polite form.

5.3 Discussion

The results in 5.2 and 5.3 show that (A1) Mood Derivable, which is the most direct request form based on CCSARP is also the most frequently used of all the nine request forms. An examination of the direct request forms in the data reveals that the use of honorifics in the direct forms serves to mitigate the requests. This accounts for the difference or lack of correlation between what the respondents believe to be polite and the forms that they actually use. The researchers argue that in order to understand the use of linguistic politeness, one needs not only to look at the directness of requests but also consider the use of honorifics, especially in languages such as Hindi that have an inbuilt system of honorification. This study highlights the need to study honorification, in cross-cultural studies on the use of speech acts and politeness in various languages.

6. Conclusion

In the present paper we started with a discussion on the theories on politeness and their relation to the illocutionary force evident in a speech act. With the discussion on the honorific forms in Hindi and the use of linguistic politeness for requesting among Hindi speakers, the paper has touched on three related issues in politeness. The paper has examined i) speakers' use of request forms in different situations based on social distance and age of the addressee, ii) their claims about the degree of politeness they would use with different categories of people and iii) their perception of politeness, based on their ranking of the given request forms.

The results show that the direct and conventionally indirect forms of request are the most frequently used. One of the reasons for the less frequent use of Hedged Performative (A3) or need statements (A5) and a greater use of Mood Derivable (A1) in the direct requests could be the inbuilt system of honorifics in Hindi, as the use of these honorific forms renders the request a polite tone even though they are direct. The use of Query Preparatory (B7) among speakers of different role-relationships also implies that clarity of requests is given more priority as far as (in)directness in the request forms is concerned. The politeness norms are fulfilled either by using honorifics when addressing the hearer or using Hedged Performative (A3) and Want Statement (A5) that refer only to

speaker's need or action. Also, the infrequent use of hints suggests that hints, though implicit and more indirect, may not be considered to be polite always. Clarity of the request is also important, this being the reason hints are not used for the request with strangers at all even when the addressee is at a greater social distance.

A further step of the research could be to test how the level of politeness varies with honorifics in languages like Hindi. The findings show that a further detailed analysis of the influence of honorifics on the (in)directness of requests can be done to see how the speakers prioritize and combine the use of honorifics with (in)directness in requesting. This would lead to a clearer understanding of the act of requesting in the languages that have an inbuilt honorific system.

The limitations of the study are that it is based on a written discourse completion test and is the constructed view of the speakers. In a way it shows what the speakers consider best to use in the situation and not the actual situation. However, it does capture the canonical forms of requesting in Hindi and the triangulation with the scale data leads to a wholesome argument.

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Appendix 1

The English equivalent translation of Questionnaire

Hello!

This is a PhD student from IIT Madras. For my research on ‘Linguistic politeness’, I need to collect this questionnaire from some Hindi speakers. All the information that you give in this questionnaire will be used only for the purpose of my research. Please fill it only according to your opinion and without consulting with others.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Nivedita Kumari

Age:

Gender: M/F

Occupation:

Student	Teacher	Non-teaching staff	Shopkeeper
Hindi	Japanese	If any other, please specify _____	

Mother

Tongue(s):

Medium of Instruction in school:

Hindi	Japanese	English	If any other, please specify.....
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English known:

Native of:

Currently living in:

Name:

Email:

I. Please fill in the blanks with the appropriate sentence that you would use in the given place, situation with the given person to make the given kind of request.

S.No.	Place	Situations	Kind of Request	Request directed to	Please state how would you request
1.	In the Market	You have done a lot of shopping and now left with less cash. You need money to go home.	Borrow money	Younger female friend	
				Older female friend	
				Younger male friend	
				Older female friend	
2.	At home	For a forthcoming event, you do not have enough cash.	Borrow money	Younger sister	
				Elder sister	
				Younger brother	
				Elder brother	
				Mother	
				Father	
3.	In a queue	The person standing in front of you in the queue has forgotten to move forward as he is reading something. You need to remind him to move ahead.	Ask to move forward	Younger female stranger	
				Older female stranger	
				Younger male stranger	
				Older female stranger	

II. Based on the role-relationship with the addressee choose the degree of politeness you would use with them and tick (✓) in the appropriate box:

S.No.	Person you are requesting to	Very Polite	Polite	Casual
Example	Person A		✓	
1.	Father			
2.	Mother			
3.	Younger sister			
4.	Elder sister			
5.	Younger brother			
6.	Elder sister			
7.	Younger male friend			
8.	Older male friend			
9.	Younger female friend			
10.	Older female friend			
11.	Younger male stranger			
12.	Older male stranger			
13.	Younger female stranger			
14.	Older female stranger			

III. You have done a lot of shopping and now left with less cash. You need money to go home. There are 9 requests given below. Please put these 9 requests on a 1–9 scale. Give 1 for the least polite request and 9 for the most polite request.

Least polite 1 ←————→ **9 most polite**

- *Main ghar jaane ke liye paise chahiye.* ‘I want money to go home.’
- *Kya main ghar jane ke liye paise mang sakti/sakta hun?* ‘Can I ask money to go home?’
- *Dost! Mujhe ghar jane ke liye tumko paise dene parenge.* ‘Friend! You will have to give me money to me to go home.’
- *Ghar jane ke liye paise do.* ‘Give me money to go home.’
- *Sare paise kharch kar diye. Ab ghar kaise jaungi/jaunga?* ‘I have spent all my money. How will I go home?’
- *Main ghar jane ke liye paise mangti/mangta hun.* ‘I ask money to go home.’
- *Ghar jane ke liye paise milenge kya?* ‘Will I get money to go home?’
- *Mujhe ghar jane ke liye paise mangne parenge.* ‘I will have to ask money to go home.’
- *Tumhare paas paise honge kya?* ‘Do you have cash on you?’

Thanks a lot for your cooperation.

Abbreviations

ACC = accusative

COMP = complimentizer

CONJ = conjunction

DAT = dative

FUT = future

GEN = genitive

HON = honorific

IMP = imperative

INF = infinitive

INT = interrogative

MOD = modal

NEG = negative

PERF = perfect

PL = plural

POSS = possessive

PRES = present

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