

**Quantitative Analysis of Politeness Expressions found among
Kashmiri Speakers**

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Abstract

Speech plays a focal role in the process of communication, as people show social binding through language only. It is merely by means of speech that complicated ideas are conveyed from person to person. However, the role of speech is not only to pass information among people, but also to create interactional relations between them. And this interactional relation is supposed to be polite, as etiquette of the absolute majority of cultures advocate the same belief. The polite factor in conversation enables the participants of communication to feel at ease, to enjoy conversations and social interactions in general. Through prescribed rules of etiquette, people are able to converse effectively. Moreover, human-beings can continue living in peace together if fundamental elements of politeness are observed. Politeness is the application of good etiquette. Politeness expressions are culture specific, i.e., expressions considered polite in one culture can be indecorous or simply unacceptable in another culture. The present paper is an attempt to provide the quantitative analysis of politeness expressions found among the speakers of Kashmiri language with respect to age, gender and educational status.

Key Words: Politeness, Communication, Etiquette, Gender, Age, Self-esteem, etc.

Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson were the first to develop the ‘Politeness Theory’ in 1978. Politeness theory is the proposal that politeness strategies are framed in order to save the hearer’s face in the communicative situation. This refers to the respect that an individual has for themselves and for others and also maintaining the ‘self-esteem’ in public or in private situations. According to Brown and Levinson (1987; pp. 61-70), “Each individual in normal human society has two types of face needs, i.e., ‘positive face need’ and ‘negative face need’. The positive face need of an individual refers to positive self-image or personality that is to be appreciated and approved of, while as, negative face need of an individual refers to the basic claim of territories, personal preserves and right to non-distraction, i.e., freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Positive face can be characterized by the desires to be liked, admired, praised and ratified. At the same time,

negative face can be characterized by the desire to remain independent, i.e., not to be imposed upon.”

Based on the face-needs, Brown and Levinson categorized two types of politeness, i.e., ‘Positive politeness’ and ‘Negative Politeness’. Positive politeness caters the person’s positive face needs and takes into account the speech acts like greetings, invitations, compliments, etc. Negative politeness caters the person’s negative face needs and incorporates apologies and indirectness. The two aspects of face are the essential requirements in any communicative situation, and thus, mutual cooperation is needed between the interlocutors to maintain each other’s face through the use of desirable polite expressions.

According to Yule (1996; pp.60), politeness is considered as a fixed notion, more expressly as, “polite social behavior, or etiquette, within a culture”. Yule comprehends politeness as a variety of ethics conveying graciousness in any social interaction which may include being tactful, modest, sympathetic and generous to others.

According to the views presented by Mills (2003; pp. 6), “Politeness is the expression of the speaker’s intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts towards another”. In simple words, politeness expressions can be defined as the social skills whose major goal is to make sure that each participant involved in the social interaction feels comfortable and relaxed.

Politeness Strategies

Majority of the linguistic theories regarding politeness were put forth in the second half of the 20th century and are till date in the process of development. Most of them have pragmatic basis which is mainly concerned with the meaning of addresser’s utterances. Paul Grice’s work (1957, 1975) became one of the much influential works which has its grounds in pragmatics. Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies (1978, 1987) are similar to Leech’s work (1983) which is also indispensable works in linguistic politeness.

➤ Co-operative Principle by Grice

One of the major influential works based on the principles of pragmatics is produced by Herbert Paul Grice. His studies in general focused on the meaning in verbal utterances along with speaker’s intention. Grice developed the approach of Cooperative Principle wherein he explains four conversational maxims which are as: Maxim of Quality, Maxim of Quantity, Maxim of Relation and Maxim of Manner. Later on, he proposed that few more maxims might be added, e.g., Maxim of Politeness, which motivated Lakoff and Leech to formulate them.

➤ **Conversational – Maxim Approach by Lakoff**

Robin Tolmach Lakoff is also listed among one of the extremely influential sociolinguists. She is very well known for her pioneering work focusing upon the gendered language differences and thereby characterized the well known ‘Women’s Language’. Inspired from the work of Grice for his ‘Cooperative Principles’, Lakoff devised ‘Politeness Principle’ and referred these set of rules as the “Pragmatic Competence”, which are as under:

Table 3.1: Lakoff’s Rules of Pragmatic Competence

Rules of Politeness (For Being Polite)
R1: Don’t impose
R2: Give Options
R3: Make a feel good – be friendly

Rule 1 i.e., ‘Don’t impose’, may be interpreted as formal politeness according to the complex grammar structures, often connected with the connotative meaning. Rule 2 i.e., ‘Give options’, might be expressed as informal politeness comprising of short utterances with simple form, grammar and lexical means. Rule 3 i.e., ‘Make a feel good’ generally structures as intimate politeness (Watts 2003, pp. 60-61).

Watts (2003, pp. 60) marks out a weak point in the model, that there is a high chance of violating Grice’s cooperative principles when one follows the rules of politeness. In such a conflicting case, Lakoff suggests that to fulfill the maxim of cooperative principle rather than politeness.

➤ **Politeness Principle by Leech**

Inspired by Grice’s maxims, Leech also proposed to broaden the cooperative principles by maxims of politeness. But contrasting Lakoff, Leech was concerned only in the “principle of interpersonal rhetoric” (Watts 2003, pp.64). He propounded politeness principle consisting of six maxims, each maxim with two rules which in turn are related to the strategy of minimizing the cost and maximizing the benefit to a speaker or the hearer.

The six maxims provided by Leech are as follows:

- a) Tact maxim: Minimize cost to other and maximize benefit to other.
- b) Generosity maxim: Minimize benefit to self and maximize cost to self.
- c) Approbation maxim: Minimize dispraise of other and maximize praise of other.
- d) Modesty maxim: Minimize praise of self and maximize dispraise of other.

- e) Agreement maxim: Minimize disagreement between self and other & maximize agreement between self and other.
- f) Sympathy maxim: Minimize antipathy between self and other and maximize sympathy between self and other.

➤ **Politeness Strategies by Brown and Levinson**

Politeness theory given by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson is one of the most extensively accepted theories in this field. Besides garnered with much of criticism, the work still remains extremely influential. Politeness theory is based on the notion of face and face threatening acts (FTA). Hence, it is also called as ‘face saving theory of politeness’ (Watts 2003, pp. 85). Based on the face-needs, Brown and Levinson categorized two types of politeness, i.e., ‘Positive politeness’ and ‘Negative Politeness’. Moreover, two types of face-related acts were also explored by Brown and Levinson, which are as face-threatening act (FTA) and face-saving act (FSA).

Politeness Expressions Employed by Kashmiri Speakers:

Every language has an inimitable way to express politeness and comprises of certain linguistic expressions connected with it, and so is the case with Kashmir language. Politeness expressions are culture specific and are extensively considered to soften the language or utterances. Reverence, respect and recognition of the social status of the addresser and the addressee are the indispensable elements in Kashmiri to convey politeness (Jan 2013, pp. 38). Politeness expressions are the markers that show the addresser’s admiration and choice of further cooperation towards the addressee. The usage of politeness expressions observed among Kashmiri speakers is marked through the language’s special lexicon and its morphology. Politeness expressions observed among Kashmiri speakers can be studied under following four headings, which are as:

1. Use of Polite Pronominal Form
2. Use of Honorific Markers
3. Use of Special Verb Forms
4. Use of Borrowed Lexical Forms

➤ **Usage of Polite Pronominal Form**

Pronominal, which is generally referred to as pronoun is one of the grammatical categories used as a substitution for a noun or noun phrase. The pronominal ‘you’ of English language is manifested as /tuhⁱ/ and /tsi/ in Kashmiri, depending upon its application in different ways. /tuhⁱ/ is the polite pronominal form of /tsi/ and is used with second person forms depending upon the context, as given in the table below:

Table: Pronominal Usage for Second Person

Second Person Singular Familiar	Second Person Singular Respectful	Second Person Plural Familiar	Second Person Plural Respectful
/tsi/	/tuh ^l /	/tuh ^l /	/tuh ^l /

While referring to third person, the pronominal usage in Kashmiri language is manifested as:

Table: Pronominal Usage for Third Person

Gender	Third Person Proximate	Third Person Remote – out of sight	Third Person Remote – within sight
Male	/ji/	/su/	/hu/
Female	/ji/	/so/	/ho/
Male/s	/jim/	/tim/	/hum/
Female/s	/jim/	/tim/	/hum/

➤ **Usage of Honorific Markers**

To enhance the degree of reverence and to make utterances more polite between the interlocutors, the honorific markers /həz/ and /mahra:/ are used. The honorific marker /həz/ is found in the speech of speakers belonging to Muslim community, while as, /mahra:/ is observed in the speech of speakers belonging to Hindu community. For example:

Table: Usage of Honorific Marker

Polite form	Impolite form	English Meaning
/təh ⁱ k ^l a: həz karun/	/tse k ^l a: karun/	What you have to do?
/təh ⁱ ma: həz pata: kot t ^h u gats ^h un/	/tse ma: pata: kot t ^h u gats ^h un/	Do you know where to go?
/təh ⁱ mahra: ma: pata: kot t ^h u gats ^h un/	/tse ma: pata: kot t ^h u gats ^h un/	Do you know where to go?
/tuh ^l mahra: kariv ji pa:naj/	/tsi kar ji pa:naj/	Do it by yourself.
/tuh ^l waliv həz me si:t ^h /	/tsi wal me si:t ^h /	You come with me.

The honorific expressions like /dʒina:b/, /sar/ and /hazu:r/ are also used to show respect to other interlocutors who are part of the communication process. For instance:

- /he dʒina:b kʲa: ʃ^hiw kara:n/
What are you doing sir?
- /a: dʒina:b tuh^j ʃ^hiw poz wana:n/
Yes man you are saying right.
- /wəliv həz mʲa si:t^h sar/
Come with me sir.
- /sar kot həz ʃ^hiw gasa:n/
Sir where are you going?

Usage of Special Verb Form

Usage of special verbal forms is also observed in the utterances of Kashmiri speakers. Special verbal form is generated out of main verbal form by the addition of suffix */-iw/*. The special verb form adds more degree of politeness to the speech. Few of the examples under this heading are as follows:

- /beh/ + */-iw/* → /behiw/
'sit' + 'suffix' → 'sit'(Polite)
- /k^he/ + */-iw/* → /k^hejiw/
'eat' + 'suffix' → 'eat'(Polite)
- /ne:r/ + */-iv/* → /ne:riv/
'go' + 'suffix' → 'go'(Polite)

Table: Usage of Special Verb Form

Special Verbal Form	Impolite Informal Expressions	English Meaning
/bihiw pat ^h ar/	/beh pat ^h ar/	Sit down
/ʃejiw ʃa:j/	/ʃe ʃa:j/	Drink tea
/wət ^h iw ho: kun/	/wət ^h ho: kun/	Move to that place
/k ^h ejiw batti/	/k ^h e batti/	Eat food
/duriw human si:t ^h i/	/do:r human si:t ^h i/	Run with them
/ni:riw tel/	/ne: tel/	Then go
/pəkiw dʒaldi:/	/pak ^h dʒaldi:/	Walk fast

➤ **Use of Borrowed Lexical Forms**

Looking back into the history of Kashmir, it was found that Kashmir has been ruled by many rulers. These rulers brought about with them the culture and language which remained with the people of Kashmir during

their reign. Some cultural norms and a chunk of vocabulary became part of Kashmiri lexicon and ethnicity and are still used till date by the Kashmiri populace. The nominal forms which have the only lexical item as it was borrowed from the than ruling language are found to be used unmarkedly in the speech of Kashmiri speakers, as these words have managed to find their place in Kashmiri vocabulary. While as, borrowed forms which have got some other equivalent in the Kashmiri language forms the marked slot in the vocabulary and are used with prestige and considered more polite forms, as its marked feature gives the lexical item an additional weightage for being the part of dominant language. Some of the examples of polite borrowed forms are given below:

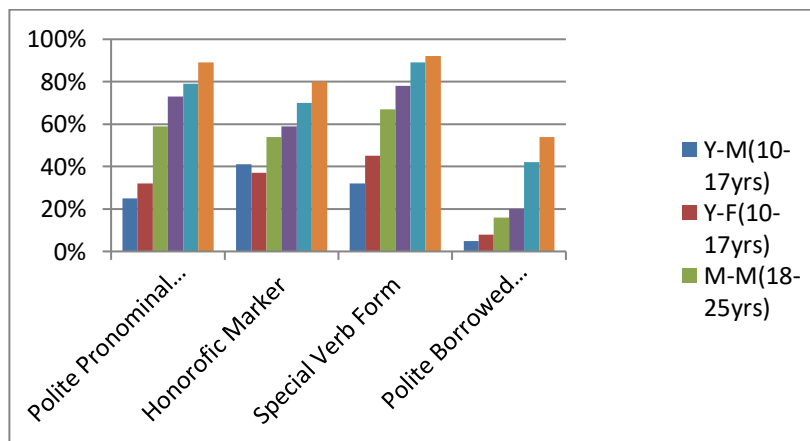
Table : Polite Borrowed Form

Polite Borrowed Form	Kashmiri Equivalent (Polite Form)	English Equivalent
/no:f p ^h armə:jiw/	/k ^h ejiw/	Eat
/tafri:p ^h t ^h awiw/ Or /tafri:p ^h t ^h ajiw/	/bihiw/	Sit
/hukum kariw/	/wəniw/	Say
/bī həz kariha: ariz/	/ bī həz wanha:/	I wanted to say.
/na:n k ^h ejiw/	/tsoʃ k ^h ejiw/	Eat roti.

Quantitative Analysis of Politeness Expressions Used by Kashmiri Speakers

Based on the data obtained from 360 Kashmiri speakers, the quantitative analysis is provided as under:

1. Usage of Politeness Expressions by Informants Belonging to Different Age Groups and Different Genders:



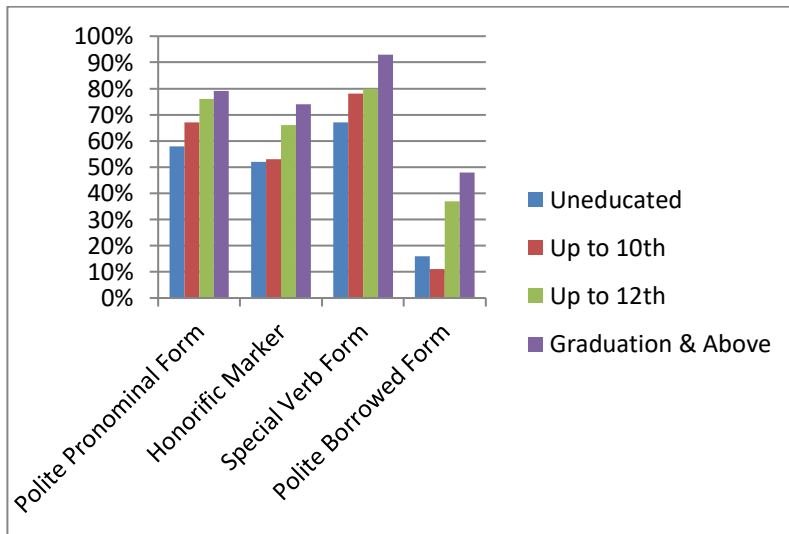
Graph.1: Usage of P.E by different age and gender groups

Graph 1 gives the frequency score for the usage of politeness expressions by the Kashmiri speaking males and females belonging to three different age groups, i.e., age group between 10-17 years, 18-25 years and 26-35 years. It is quite obvious from the graph that under each category of politeness expressions used by the informants, females from all the three age groups score the high frequency percentage than the male informants. Moreover, it is also evident that age shows a positive correlation with the politeness expressions, i.e., with the increase in age the respondents show more usage of politeness expressions in their speech. Considering the overall usage of each expression, respondents show the high usage of special verb forms in their speech, followed by polite pronominal form, next by honorific marker and lastly by polite borrowed forms.

Special Verb Form > Polite Pronominal Form > Honorific Marker > Polite Borrowed Form

Polite borrowed forms are less observed in the speech of Kashmiri speakers as compared to other politeness expressions, despite considered as the most polite form than other forms. The reason for the least usage of polite borrowed forms is the fact that respondents find these forms less pliable and limited in number than the actual forms present in their own language.

2. Usage of Politeness Expressions by Informants Belonging to Different Educational Groups:



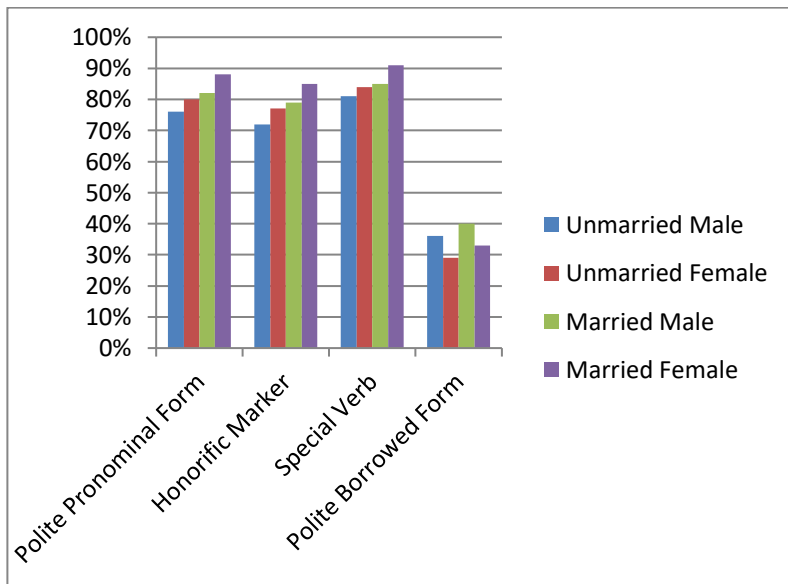
Graph 2: Usage of P.E by different educational groups

Graph 2 given above provides the usage of politeness expressions by respondents having different educational qualifications. The uneducated class is also put under this category so as to get an idea of applicability of

politeness expressions in the language by educated as well as uneducated class of respondents. From the above graph it is clear that, educational qualification is also positively correlated with the usage of politeness markers by the respondents in their language. Thus, making the fact quite clear that respondents highly qualified use more polite expressions in their speech while dealing with others than less qualified respondents and the uneducated group. However, polite borrowed forms are claimed to be used more by uneducated group than the respondents with educational qualification up to 10th, but the difference between the frequency scores is relatively less. Moreover, observing the overall rates of politeness expressions usage it is observed that special verb forms are more frequently used and polite borrowed forms are used less frequently.

Special Verb Forms > Polite Pronominal Form ≥ Honorific Marker > Polite Borrowed Form

3. Usage of Politeness Expressions by Informants belonging to Different Marital Status:



Graph 3: Usage of P.E by informants belonging to different marital status

Marital status of a person also creates a great influence on his/her speech which is fairly clear from the above given graph 3.4. From the inventory of politeness markers observed in the speech of Kashmiri speakers it is observed that females in general are more polite than males. Considering the marital status of respondents, married females are more polite in their speech than married males as well as unmarried males and females. However, reverse trend is seen in the usage of polite borrowed forms.

Married males are found using polite borrowed forms more than unmarried males, followed by married females and finally by unmarried females.

Conclusion

Every language has its unique way to express politeness and comprises of certain linguistic expressions connected with it, and same is the case with Kashmiri language. Politeness expressions are considered to soften the language and are culture specific, i.e., what is considered polite in one culture may or may not be polite in another culture. Politeness expressions are the markers that show the addresser's respect and choice of further cooperation towards the addressee. The usage of politeness expressions observed among Kashmiri speakers is marked through the lexicon and morphology of a language. Politeness expressions among Kashmiri speakers are manifested through the usage of polite pronominal form, honorific markers, special verb forms and borrowed lexical forms. Among Kashmiri speakers, it is observed that females in general are more polite than males. Moreover, it is also observed that the variable age and educational qualification are directly correlated with usage of politeness expressions, i.e., with the increase in age and educational qualification of Kashmiri speaking respondents, the frequency usage of politeness markers also increases. Taking the marital status into consideration, it is found that married males and females are more polite in their speech as compared to unmarried males and females. However, married females are more polite than married males.

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