

**APPLICATION OF POLITENESS IN RAMA MEHTA'S  
INSIDE THE HAVELI****DR. VINAY BHOGLE**Asst. Professor,  
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Degloor.**ABSTRACT**

*The politeness is a universal linguistic phenomenon, which is inherent to successful communication. Cultural-specific ways of every society have their typical linguistics realization. Considering the nature of subject, one could find good potential for Strategies, application of politeness in Rama Mehta's novel **Inside the Haveli**. The major purpose of the politeness is to establish and maintain feeling of community within the social groups. The politeness regulates the social equilibrium and the friendly relationships, which enables us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in first place. It is again clear evidence to evaluate, narrative stance despite the claim of the contrary. Politeness is developed by societies in order to reduce friction in personal interaction. In accordance with the pragmatics as well as well-formed utterances, Lakoff (1979) suggested a cline of politeness types ranging from formal {or impersonal} politeness [don't impose] through informal politeness [give option] to imitate politeness [make a feel good].*

The purpose of the present research article is to study and apply politeness to Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli*. Language is a means of communication. People use language to accomplish such functions as ordering, promising, arguing, and so on. However, any communicative function needs to be interpersonal or social. In the process of communication, the speakers of a language are expected to be in possession of two sets of capabilities. They should have knowledge of the forms of language they use moreover; they must know how to use this knowledge in negotiating meaning in order to clear meaning. The speakers and hearer or writers and readers should be able to create interest.

Effective communication is a key process in everyday life. Not only do we need to communicate about business and public affairs but also about the things, and ourselves which are concerned to person. In each case, it is highly interesting to analyze how we try to convey the information, we want to get across: Naturally enough, we use conventional language but we are also creative and constantly invent new words, phrases and formulations. According to Blank, "*Linguistic (and even non-linguistic) communication can be seen as a process whereby people try to maximize their communicative success by minimizing their linguistic efforts*". Sometimes, however, we diverge from the maximally effective way of communication and, naturally enough, the question arises, why we do so? The divergence,





however, which seems to be highly irrational as far as efficiency is concerned, will turn out to be highly rationally motivated - with politeness being the main reason for this process.

The term **context** has two aspects: social and interpersonal. Social context is important in studies that focus on sociolinguistic aspects of language. Interpersonal context however should be studied according to Levinson (1983), in such sub-disciplines as pragmatics, conversational analysis and discourse analysis. In the present study, interpersonal context plays a crucial role.

The definition of the term pragmatics serves as a good point of departure. According to Levinson, (1983:24) pragmatics refers to the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the context in which they would be appropriate. Pragmatics covers a number of topics including the speech act theory or the study of how we do things with sentences. The speech act theory concerns itself with the function of language. Pragmatics particularly in politeness principle has motivated a good number of researchers to fathom the depiction of the relationships between form and meaning. It aims at discovering the linguistic features of conversation. It also determines how conversation is used in everyday life.

The notion of politeness finds meaning when it is studied in the context of face-threatening acts (or FTA's), which include positive and negative ones. In other words some FTA's threaten positive face. The former includes directives such as commands, requests, advices, invitations, blessing, greetings, etc. The later on the other hand, includes criticisms, insults, disagreements and corrections from the selected novel *Inside the Haveli*.

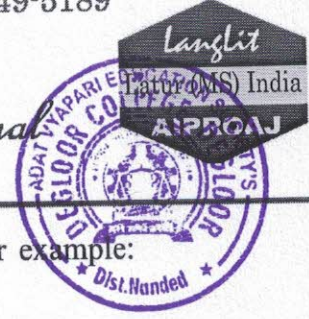
The evaluation of polite behavior in general to the more specific case of polite language usage i.e. polite language, we encounter the same types of problem. To characterize polite language usage, we might resort to expressions like the language a person uses to avoid being too direct or language which displays respect towards or consideration for others. Once again, we might give example such as language, which contains respectful forms of address like sir, or madam .Language that displays certain polite formulaic utterances like 'Please', 'Thank you', 'Excuse me' or 'Sorry' or even elegantly expressed language and again we would encounter people as hypothetical, dishonest, distant, and unfeeling etc. talks about polite behavior.

Scholars from non-English speaking cultures tend to distance themselves from the first order concepts that exist in their own language, are the subjects of struggle in their own cultures, and tend to evaluate the rough translation equivalents of politeness in their understanding of politeness. Politeness is a bi focal phenomenon in the sense that it is an attempt to bridge the gap between interlocutors. However, politeness is not always directed towards the addressee. Politeness displays a kind of sympathy.

Politeness markers by which they mean expressions added to the utterance to show deference to the addressee and to mould for cooperative behavior. The most obvious example of politeness marker in English is please, but there is other way

For example: *'If, you wouldn't /don't mind'*.





Tag Question with the model verb will/would follow in imperative structure For example:  
*close the door will you/ would you?* etc.

Politeness for instance, is often a function of both standing features such as the social distance between participants interact with dynamic, is making on the hearer (request, advice, command etc.) to produce a degree of politeness appropriate to the situation.

There is constant interaction of politeness .It plays very significance role in the process of communication. It is believe that the intercultural must make an attempt to cooperative as well as politeness in communication. That is relative to some norms of behavior for a particular setting. They are regarded as typical the norms of a particular culture or language community.

Speech acts have been claimed to operate by universal pragmatic principles and claimed to vary in conceptualization and verbalization across cultures and languages. Their models of performance carry heavy social implications and seem to be ruled by universal principles of cooperation and politeness. With the growing interest in pragmatics in general and politeness in particular, present research has shown that Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory is the most comprehensive and applicable to cross-cultural research.

Lakoff (1977: 227) observes that, '*women tend to use questions in situations where declaratives would be acceptable*'. The truth of this remark can be seen in the following utterance taken from *Inside the Haveli*.

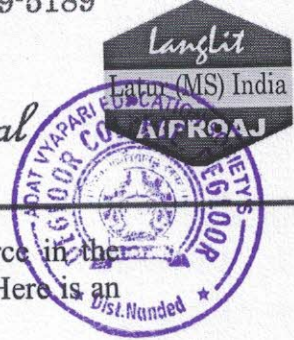
Geeta, the protagonist is a girl born and brought up in Bombay. She had studied in co-educational college and had an exposure to metropolitan life. She comes to Udaipur as the nineteen-year-old bride of Ajay Singh, a professor of science. Ajay's ancestors were the ministers of the Ranas of Udaipur and their Haveli, Jeevan Niwas, was one of the biggest and the most prestigious Haveli of Udaipur. It is an immense cultural shock for a spontaneous, vivacious and educated girl like Geeta to adjust and adapt to the stringent and traditional ways of the Haveli, Wherein women kept purdah.

The moment she lands in Udaipur, she is chastised for being bare faced and made to realize that she is an outsider even by the maids of the haveli who had come singing to the railway station to receive the new bride:

*One of them came forward, pulled her sari over her face and exclaimed in horror, Where do you come from that you show your face to the world?' (17)*

Geeta finds herself suddenly enclosed and engaged in a huge haveli where she is all the time surrounded by women. From a nuclear and educated family she has come to find a horde of maids, their children and women from other Havelis who keep visiting one another on the slightest pretext in addition to her *mother- in -law and grandmother- in -law*.





The utterance appears to be very mild, but in fact has a strong illocutionary force in the context. Questions can be used for admonishing somebody in an indirect manner. Here is an utterance from *Inside the Haveli*:

*I will give the crochet bag to the woman who gives me ladoos. But, what if she never comes again?"*

(157)

Here, the above utterance Sita said to the maid in the Haveli. When she went to school that time the old lady offered her Puri & Ladoos.

Of the three social factors (P.D.R.), which decide weightiness of the FTA, the last one, i.e. Rx- the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition, is belittled here as a strategy. Thus, D and P are treated as weighty factors. Expressions like 'just a little', 'a tiny bit', 'any', 'merely', achieve the purpose behind this strategy. Look at this utterance from *Inside the Haveli*:

*'Just a few minutes more, Bai', said Geeta.* (41)

Dhapu, the maidservant of the Haveli, one day takes Geeta to the portion of the Haveli reserved for men only. Together they watch through a window the concert of a singer attended only by men. As some time elapses, Dhapu urges her mistress to leave. Geeta wants to stay for some more time. She suggests through the utterance that they are not very late; they have stayed in the forbidden corner just for a few minutes. She is aware that her imposition on Dhapu's time has to be minimized. She does it with the help of 'Just a few minutes.'

*'Just a minute, Hukkum. You can't leave without giving Vir Singh your blessing.'* (173)

Here, DaulatSinghji's wife requesting to 'Hukkum' wants to stay for some more time to give blessing to her son because in this novel the most important is given to blessing its tradition in the haveli. For, that purpose Vir Singh's mother requested to Hukkm.

**The use of plural pronouns** for singular addressee is a kind of honorific. Vijay Sa in the same novel asks' Bara Bhabhi about monkey man

*'The man wants money! The monkey can do a hundred tricks! We have asked him to come again'. (147)*

The use of deferential plural pronoun 'our' is to be noticed here. The first person singular 'I' substituted here by plural 'We', distancing oneself from ordinary people by using deferential pronoun for one's own self.

In the Indian context kinship terms like 'father', 'brother', 'mother' are used with extended meaning for strangers and non-kins also.

e.g. *My mother-in-law? That old woman my mother? Stuttered Sita unbelievably.* (184)

By using the kinship, term addresser shows the warmth of her feelings.





The use of the honorific suffix 'Ji' or 'sahib' is a typical Indian phenomenon. Thus, *Bhagwat Singhji, Bhabhi Sa, Bapu Saheb.*

A woman in the Indian context is addressed via the name of her husband.

*Kaluji's wife (76),  
BhagwatSinghji's wife (158) in Inside the Haveli, refers to her husband as 'your father-in-law' (163), while talking with Geeta.*

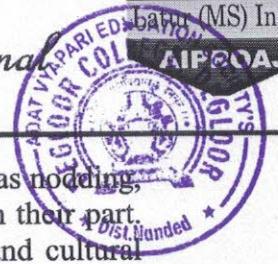
Deference can be shown through non-verbal acts too. The following examples are culture-specific because they refer to the age-old practice of showing deference to seniors in a silent non-verbal manner:

- 1) *Geeta came in and silently bent down and touched the feet of the veiled ladies. (121)*
- 2) *Vijay quickly put her hand on the little girl's head and repeated helplessly, Sita, don't cry. Please don't cry.*
- 3) Brown and Levinson propose three ways to communicate regret or reluctance while doing an FTA. 1) Admit the impingement, 2) Indicate reluctance, 3) Beg forgiveness. It is seen that all these strategies overlap. Inside the Haveli, has the following stretch of conversation where in Geeta apologizes to Bhabhi for permitted the girls to join Class:
- 4) *Bhabhi, it's all my fault, please forgive me. I should never have permitted the girls to join Classes from tomorrow I will tell them not to come,. (139)*
- 5) The apology gives reason for the FTA. It also makes use of non-verbal act of standing up for showing deference and hesitation.
- 6) Bhagwat Singhji's wife in her own way apologizes for neglecting other women like *Kanta, Nandu, and Manji.*
- 7) *'I am sorry, that in my old age I should merit such criticism. Even my husband became the Prime Minister of Udaipur.' (134)*
- 8) The above example Bhagwat Singhji's wife listened silently for a moment to the maid servant' whatever they discussed but, later on Bhagwat Singhji's wife
- 9) Slow and measured voice uttered the above sentence ironic manner to them.
- 10) Another utterance from same novel; Nandu uttered to Bhagwat Singhji's wife
- 11) *Nandu touches her feet and, her voice had lost its harshness when she said, 'forgive me, Kaki Sa. I did not mean to upset you. (135)*
- 12) Nandu is the servant of the Haveli and Bhagwat Singhji's wife is owner of the Haveli when Nandu realized she has made mistake she should not behave in such manner, for that she felt very bad the she apologize to Bhagwat Singhji's wife.

The analysis of politeness strategies acts from the novel *'Inside the Haveli'* reveals how the characters produce the utterances to fulfil their hidden intentions and desires. Moreover, many times the characters use utterances to do more than only stating. They make request, complain, order, emphasize prediction, arouse expectation, and ask question etc. sometimes they also express their inner feelings by using the indirect speech acts.

The strategy of 'self-denigration and other elevation' is used to create distance between superiors and inferiors in the novel *'Inside the Haveli'*. Not only this but the characters from





the lower strata while dealing with seniors and superiors perform verbal acts such as nodding, bowing, touching the feet and saluting invariably. This shows self-denigration on their part. The use of honorifics like 'Ji', 'Sa', and 'Hukkum' is indicative of the social and cultural practice of showing deference to the superiors. Sometimes the plural pronoun 'we' is used by the socially superior and/or those senior in age to distance themselves from the common people.

For example - *we cannot forget Dhapu's children or Ganga's* (118)

The superiors are addressed even though the person is present before speaker.

The study reveals that the characters of the novel 'Inside the Haveli' use the rhetorical questions to produce strong elocutionary effects on their hearers. Rhetorical questions play a vital role in characterization and throws light to show the working of the characters' minds. It is observed that by using the rhetorical questions the characters convince, deter, persuade and dissuade their interlocutors. Rhetorical questions to maintain the politeness strategy. By this tool, they minimize the risk to threatening the face of the addressee.

Towards the end, it is being emphasized that politeness is a functional device to understand the fictional discourse. Understanding and interpreting the fictional discourse of the sociological novel of Rama Mehta with the help of politeness helps to arrive at the authentic interpretation.

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