

# POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN ODISIA

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## Abstract

This study discusses how various politeness strategies are implemented linguistically and how linguistic usage is related to social and contextual factors in the Indic language Odia<sup>1</sup>. The study extends the validity of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978) with reference to Odia speech-patterns and shows that Odia usage of politeness would be more differentiated according to the social relationship and gender than the content of the message. In Brown and Levinson's model, individual speech acts are considered to be inherently polite or impolite. However, in Odia, it is found that communities of practice, rather than individuals, determine whether speech acts are considered polite or impolite. Thus, politeness should be considered as a set of strategies or practices set by particular groups or communities of practice as a socially constructed norm for themselves.

**Keywords:** gender; politeness strategies; pronouns; address forms; Odia language

## Izveček

Razprava predstavi, kako se različne strategije vljudnosti izražajo skozi jezik in kako je izbira jezikovnih sredstev povezana z družbenimi in kontekstualnimi dejavniki v indijskem jeziku orija. Študija pokaže, da teorija vljudnosti (Brown & Levinson, 1978) velja tudi za govorne vzorce v oriji, saj so razlike v izražanju vljudnosti tesneje povezane s spolom in družbenimi razlikami, kot pa s samo vsebino sporočila. V okviru Brownovega in Levinsonovega modela so posamezna govorna dejanja inherentno ljudna ali nevljudna. Na primeru odije se je izkazalo, da je dojemanje govornega dejanja kot vljudnega ali nevljudnega, v večji meri odvisno od jezikovne skupnosti, in ne toliko od posameznega govorca. Na podlagi tega bi morali vljudnost obravnavati kot nabor strategij in dejanj, ki jih zase določijo posamezne skupine ali skupnosti kot dužbena pravila.

**Ključne besede:** spol; strategije vljudnosti; zaimki; oblike nazivov; orija

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<sup>1</sup> Odia, formerly known as Oriya, is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in Odisha, a state in the eastern part of India.

## 1. Introduction

Politeness is defined by the concern for the feelings of others. For Holmes (1995), politeness refers to “behaviour which actively expresses positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behaviour”. It is “a battery of social skills whose goal is to ensure everyone feels affirmed in a social interaction” (Mills, 2003). In terms of Brown and Levinson (1978), politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearers’ “face”, whereas “face” refers to the respect that an individual has for him-/herself, and maintaining that “self-esteem” in public or in private situations. This refers to the situation, where the addresser usually tries to avoid making the addressee feel uncomfortable. Hence, politeness means some manners or etiquette which is grafted on to individual speech acts in order to facilitate interaction between speaker and hearer. Such etiquette emerges over stretches of talk and across communities of speakers and hearers. Brown and Levinson assume the speaker’s volitional use of language, which allows the speaker’s creative use of face-maintaining strategies towards the addressee. In Japanese, however, as (Matsumoto, 1988; Ide, 1989) claim politeness is achieved not so much on the basis of volition as on discernment (*wakimae* “finding one’s place”), or prescribed social norms. It adheres to formality norms appropriate to the particular situation. This study investigates how politeness strategies are followed in Odia and what types of politeness strategies are transmitted through linguistic channels.

Odia is an Indian language, belonging to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family. It is one of the official languages of India, and is mainly spoken in the Indian state Odisha. According to the census data 2001 (censusindia.gov.in), the language is spoken by over 33 million people in India; and globally over 45 million speak Odia. In Odisha, good manners are most highly esteemed, and the children are taught that it is very essential for them to show respect to their superiors and elders, to be friendly with the peers, and to be always kind and courteous to their inferiors. The custom of greetings and salutations, of visiting, of eating, of giving gifts, of introductions, writing letters, and the like, are all strictly defined<sup>2</sup>, and they are like the code of laws which binds society together, and no one is allowed to transgress them so easily. It is a fundamental part of civilization and also a very essential characteristic of religion.

Since the social status of each individual is not equal in Odia society, one person typically has a higher/lower position than his/her peers, and such position is determined by a variety of factors including profession, age, caste, gender, family relationship or even a particular situation or psychological state (Sahoo, 2003). The person in the lower position in a particular situation, usually, uses a polite form of speech with a person in the higher position, for example, a person asking for a favour tends to do so politely. Strangers usually speak to each other politely. Except for a few situations, children usually use less-polite speech until their teens. Educated people use more polite forms than the uneducated people, women use more polite forms than men. Females have a long tradition of addressing their husband and other members of the in-law’s family with reverence. Also, in many other situations, females usually use more polite forms than men.

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<sup>2</sup> The rules vary for both the sexes, though.

The use of honorifics is a common feature in Odia. Some of the common honorifics are: *āgyān* “yes sir/madam”, *bābu* “Mr.”, and some honorific titles borrowed from English like Professor, Dr., Mr., Miss, Mrs, sir/madam, etc. *āgyān* “yes sir/madam” is perhaps the only honorific term that can be used for nearly all kinds of persons irrespective of their caste, sex and occupation. *bābu*<sup>3</sup> can be used with either the first name or the last name of the person. However, “sir/madam” is not confined to vocative contexts only, but is freely used in nominative & objective cases as well; eg, *sir/madam mote kahile je...* (“sir/madam told me that...”), *mū sir-nku kahibi...* (“I will ask sir...”).

The structure of the paper is as follows. Section 2 discusses variants of the second person singular pronoun and different levels of politeness found in Odia society. Section 3 considers politeness strategies like choice of lexical words, use of indirectness, indirect speech and sophisticated vocabulary, avoidance of negative questions, etc. Section 4 focuses on linguistic sub-strategies implemented for making requests, commands, suggestion, prohibition and seeking permission. Section 5 concludes with a summary of the discussion.

For the data in this paper, I have consulted the EMILLE/CIIL corpus.<sup>4</sup> Also, being a native speaker of the language, some of the examples are provided by me.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Levels of Politeness

### 2.1 Positive vs. Negative Politeness

Brown and Levinson’s (1978) model analyses politeness in two broad groups: positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness “anoints the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, S[peaker] wants H[earer]’s wants (e.g. by treating him/her as a member of an in-group, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked)”. On the other hand, Negative politeness which is “essentially avoidance-based and consist(s)...in assurances that the speaker...will not interfere with the addressee’s freedom of action.” Thus, Positive politeness is concerned with demonstrating closeness and affiliation, whereas Negative politeness is concerned with distance and formality. On the other hand, for Holmes (1995), “polite people” are those who “avoid obvious face-threatening acts ... they generally attempt to reduce the threat of unavoidable face threatening acts such as requests or warnings by softening them, or expressing them indirectly; and they use polite utterances such as greetings and compliments where possible.”

Brown and Levinson (1978) proposed that communicator’s choice of super-strategies (such as, bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off the record, and no communication) depends on power, distance, and level of the imposition. Specifically, as power, distance, and imposition increase, individuals will

<sup>3</sup> A term like *bābuāNi* “Mrs” also exists, but that is used to refer to the wife of a *bābu* rather.

<sup>4</sup> The use of EMILLE/CIIL corpus is gratefully acknowledged.

<sup>5</sup> In a non-systematic enquiry, I have verified all the data with some 11 native speakers of the language.

use higher level super-strategies. In other words, politeness theory suggests that negative strategies are more “polite” than positive strategies and individuals will use more negative strategies than positive strategies when speaking with a powerful person.

In Odia, categories that capture positive politeness strategies include being affiliative, attentive, concerned, approving, encouraging, supportive, positive, seeking agreement, and even giving gifts to the target. These categories correspond to Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies of noticing or attending to the target, showing interest, approval, and sympathy for the target, seeking agreement, asserting common ground, joking, asserting knowledge of the target’s wants and concerns, being optimistic, and asserting reciprocity. On the other hand, categories that capture negative politeness include being indirect, not being open, being apologetic, being avoidant, being uncertain, and being professional. These categories correspond to Brown and Levinson’s strategies of being indirect, hedging, being pessimistic, minimizing the imposition, being deferential, and being apologetic.

## 2.2 Pronouns as Markers of Politeness

In Odia, personal pronouns are marked for politeness. 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun is marked for politeness conveying three morphological variants of the form denoting three layers of honorificity. 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun *se* (s/he) is marked for politeness through plural agreement with the verb (Sahoo, 2011)<sup>6</sup>, as shown in example (1). (1b) marked with plural agreement is more polite than the counterpart (1a) with singular agreement.

- (1) a. *se ās-u-chh-i*  
 s/he come-PROG-Aux-3sg[-Hon]  
 “S/he is coming.”
- b. *se ās-u-chh-anti*  
 s/he come-PROG-Aux-3pl./3sg[+Hon]  
 “S/he<sub>[+Hon]</sub> is coming.”

3<sup>rd</sup> person genitive pronoun like *tā(ra)* (his/her) vs *tānka(ra)* (his/her<sub>[+Hon]</sub>/PL) shows that *tānka(ra)* is marked for politeness as it is used in the plural form.

The second person singular pronoun “you” in Odia has three lexical realizations: *tu*, *tume* and *āpaNa*. These lexical variants of the second person singular pronoun, as far as their usage is concerned, differ in their semantics and are used under specific social circumstances, with a distinctive social distribution (Sahoo, 2003):

- *tu* is an intimate pronoun which is used for close friends, relatives, female family members or younger people. Due to its lack of honorific content, it is used with servants, socially low class people, etc.

<sup>6</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun is also used in plural form to mark politeness. However, it is restricted to literary use only.

- *tume* occupies an intermediate position between *tu* and *āpaNa* both in terms of intimacy and respect or honorification. It is therefore employed in a wide range of contexts, e.g. in addressing one's spouse, in-laws, male family members, colleagues, strangers (of the same age-group), neighbours, all the elders, etc.
- *āpaNa* is a honorific form and is used for teachers, officials, senior colleagues, people of high social status, etc.

In terms of politeness, we can refer to them as the plain form, the simple polite form and the advanced polite form, respectively. The distribution of the three variants of the pronoun is thus determined by the dimensions of honour, intimacy and social status with respect to the societal role-relationship. For example, one uses the *tu* variant of “you” for his/her elder brother and sister as well, but uses *tume* [+honorific] for his/her sister-in-law (brother's wife), and the brother-in-law (sister's husband). This is because of the difference in the degree of intimacy between brothers and sisters and the in-laws. Thus, a polite form is used for the in-laws. Parents use the *tu* form for their children. Intimate friends can use *tu* and little less intimate friends can use *tume* for each other, whereas colleagues in an office can choose *tume* or *āpaNa* for each other. Students use *āpaNa* for a teacher, while the teacher can use either *tu* (in primary school) or *tume* (in secondary or high school, university, etc.). Thus, the degree of politeness can be determined from the usage of the variants of the second person pronoun.

Based on the variants of the second person singular pronoun, there are at least three levels of politeness in Odia: the plain form, the simple polite form and the advanced polite form.

- (i) The plain form is casual speech, which is used among children, close friends, kins, family members (either very intimate or younger to the addresser), friends of the same age-group. Due to its lack of honorific content, this is also used for servants, socially low class people, etc.
- (ii) The simple polite form occupies an intermediate position between casual and honorific, both in terms of intimacy and respect or honorificity. It is therefore employed in a wide range of contexts, e.g. among family members, colleagues, strangers (of the same age-group), neighbours, in-laws, elders, while praying gods, etc.
- (iii) The advanced polite form is a honorific form which is used with teachers, officials, people of high social status, etc.

In addition, there is the rude form, which is not in use in a normal conversation. It is either rough language or blunt speech that consists of talking down to the listener, or it is very colloquial and appropriate only in a very familiar group.

### 3. Politeness Strategies

Politeness theory posits that, as the social distance between the speaker and the listener increases, politeness increases (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Holmes, 1995). This is true for Odia. In Odia, power, social distance and contextual factors affect different

politeness strategies. Individuals simply tend to use more strategies as power and distance increase. Some strategies are more sensitive to distance differences and some are more sensitive to power differences. One tends to be more polite to someone who is socially more distant (e.g. a stranger) than to someone who is socially more close (e.g. a family member). Moreover, age and sex also play important roles in it (Sahoo & Babu, 2012). As distance is greater with superiors and subordinates than with peers, thus, one would expect more politeness with superiors and subordinates than with peers. Peers are likely to have more or less similar experiences, they tend to be more familiar with one another, and interact more informally with one another.

Politeness depends not only on the semantic content of the utterance but also on the accompanying kinesics such as body movements, gestures and facial expressions--that contextualize the utterance. However, in this paper we will focus on linguistic means only.

### 3.1 Distance Differences

Let's consider a situation of distance differences. In a socially intimate or zero distance situation, while making a request, a child might use a sentence like (3) for his/her mother, instead of (2) (with the use of light verb *die* "give"/particles *Tike* and *ma* /past tense to mark politeness), which is more appropriate for a request with people of distant differences.

- (2) a. mili, mo frock-Tā **Tike** silei kari-**die** **ma**  
 Mili, my frock-CL PRT stitch do-give 2sg PRT  
 "Mili, will you stitch my frock, please?"
- b. mili, mo frock-Tā **Tike** silei kari-**delu**  
 Mili, my frock-CL PRT stitch do-give-PAST  
 "Mili, could you please stitch my frock?"
- (3) mā, mo frockTā silei kare/kari-die  
 mother, my frock stitch do-IMP/do-give-IMP  
 "Mom, stitch my frock."

In (3), imperative constructions are quite compatible in a mother-son/daughter relationship, while in (2), distance in social relationship demands an appropriate politeness strategy while making requests.

### 3.2 Choice of Lexical and Structural Means

Choice of lexical words as well as the structure of the sentence contributes towards politeness. E.g. (4b) is a more polite construction than (4a), although both the sentences mean the same. In fact, (4a) is considered to be a rude speech.

- (4) a. rādhuā-Tā chanDāLa-Te  
Radhua-CL mean-CL  
“Radhua is so mean / such a nuisance!”
- b. rādhuāTā bhala pilā nuhan  
Radhua-CL good child not  
“Radhua is not a good boy.”

### 3.3 Indirectness

Another aspect of Odia politeness is its indirectness. The real art of Odia communication is steering the conversation without being obvious about it, so that the addressee feels comfortable. Especially, requests are often made indirectly, by keeping oneself from the potential to be imposing. For example, for using the phone of somebody, instead of directly asking him/her as in (4a), it is more polite to say a softer sentence such as (4b), and just leave it hanging.

- (5) a. mū Tike tama phone-ru kathābārtā karibi-ki  
I little your phone-from talk will do QUE  
“Can I use your phone, please?”
- b. mū Tike phone karibi boli bhābuthili je...  
I little phone will do COMP thinking COMP...  
“I was thinking of making a call, but...”

Then the other person responds by inviting you to use the phone. Similarly, asking for a company to go out one would express as in (6):

- (6) mū bāhāroku jibāku bhābuthili je, kintu ekuTiā jibāku mana heuni  
I outside go-INF was thinking COMP, but alone go-INF mind be-NEG  
“I was thinking of going out, but don’t feel like going alone.”

Then the other person may offer to accompany him/her for going out or may arrange somebody/somethingelse to get the work done.

### 3.4 Avoidance of Negative Questions

Positive questions are considered to be more polite than negative questions. So in a situation where one just enquires if the addressee has a pen, one avoids to ask a negative question like (7a):

- (7) a. tama pākhare kalama nāhin ki?  
your near pen not QUE  
“Don’t you have a pen?”

Instead, one asks a positive question like (7b):

- (7) b. tama pākhare kalama achhi ki?  
 your near pen is QUE  
 “Do you have a pen?”

This is so, because, although both (7a) and (7b) denote that the addresser is enquiring if the addressee carries a pen with him/her at that particular moment or for that particular occasion; (7a) connotes that the addressee should have carried a pen with him/her at that particular moment or for that particular occasion; and in case s/he does not have a pen at that moment, then s/he is below the social norms. So, using such a construction might be impolite and face-threatening. Hence, the addresser uses a polite construction like (7b).

### 3.5 Nominalization

In Odia, as the verb agrees with the subject noun for honorificity, use of nominalized form of the verb is more prevalent with strangers, when the addresser does not know which level of politeness needs to be used for the addressee. As second person singular pronoun is marked for honorificity and three variants of this pronoun are available, and the language allows pro(noun)-drop (Pattanaik, 1987; Sahoo, 2010), nominalization of the verb is used to show politeness without using the pronouns. For example, instead of using a construction like (8a), where the verb is marked for honorificity, one uses a construction like (8b), that is, by nominalizing the verb and dropping the subject pronoun:

- (8) a. kuāDe jāucha/jāuchu/jāuchanti  
 where going<sub>[±Hon]/[-Hon]/[+Hon]</sub>  
 “Where are you going?”
- b. kuāDe jibāra achhi?  
 where go-NOM is  
 “Where do you have to/ need to go?”

### 3.6 Sophisticated Vocabulary

As sophistication denotes educated, cultured and well-mannered, people attribute positive traits to sophistication. A little sophisticated vocabulary also makes the construction sound more polite as politeness demands sophistication. So, a sophisticated construction like (10) would be more polite than a casual construction like (9):

- (9) busre gale bus rāstāsārā pakāi pakāi neba  
 by bus go-COND bus road-throughout drop drop take-FUT-3sg  
 “If we go by bus, it’s no good, as the bus will be slow by making stops on the way.”



- (10) mū bhābhuchi, busre gale āme ete shighra pahanchi pāribā nāhin,  
I thinking, by bus go-COND we that fast reach can not,  
kāhinki nā bus rāstāre sabu sTapre Tikie Tikie rahi rahi jiba.  
because bus road-on all stop-in little little stay stay go-FUT-3sg.

“I think if we take the bus, we will not be able to reach there in time as the bus tends to arrive late by making frequent stops.”

(10) justifies the statement by providing a reason for it, hence, it is sophisticated and more polite than (9), which is just a statement. Similarly, a casual talk would be like (11), while a more polite one would be like (12), giving all the rights to the addressee to do the work as s/he likes:

- (11) chāla dekhibā tame kaNa/kemiti karipārucha  
let see you what/how do-can 2sg.  
“Let’s see what you can do/ how you can do it.”

- (12) tume jemiti kariba/jāhā kariba chaLiba, mora kichhi asubidhā nāhin  
you however do-FUT/whatever do-FUT ok, mine any objection not  
“Whatever/ however you do is fine (with me), I don’t have any objection in this regard.”

While confirming something, a softened interrogative construction is used to sound more tentative, so that it can have a polite effect on the interlocutor. For example, in a situation, where the addresser does not find his/her pen and asks the addressee if s/he has left the pen with him/her, s/he would use a construction like (13b), instead of asking a direct question like (13a).

- (13) a. mo kalama-Tā kāin tuma/āpaNanka pākhare achhi ki?  
my pen CL where your near be QUE  
“Is my pen with you?”
- b. mo kalama-Tā kāin tuma/āpaNanka pākhare rahi jāini ta?<sup>7</sup>  
my pen CL where your near be PRT  
“Is it by mistake I left my pen with you?”

#### 4. Linguistic Sub-strategies

Certain linguistic sub-strategies are also used to communicate in a polite manner. In certain cases, syntactic means are used/preferred over lexical means. Requests are made by asking for a favour, commands are made by demanding to do the work by using direct or indirect strategies, proposals are made by asking for agreement by the hearer etc. There are polite forms for giving suggestions, permission, and prohibition of actions. Like commands, these have the potential to sound too abrupt, and so they are treated carefully. However, intonation also plays a major role for polite forms.

<sup>7</sup> An example like (13) also can be used when the speaker doubts that the hearer has taken/even stolen the item from him.

## 4.1 Performative Utterances

For explicit performative utterances (Austin, 1962) like “thank you” or “sorry”, Odia rarely uses lexical means for politeness, but it uses certain morpho-syntactic structures to sound polite in the entire utterances or the whole dialogue. Instead of using formulaic expressions like “thank you” and “sorry” one uses constructions like (14) and (15), by expressing the consequences in a positive and negative tone, respectively:

- (14) o, bhāri bhala helā, tume eiTā karidela  
oh, very good happened, you this did  
“Oh, it is very good that you did it (for me)”
- (15) oho! bodhe bhul hoigalā, mū jāNi pārili nāhin  
oh! probably mistake happened, I know could not  
“Oh! probably, it is a mistake, I could not understand”

## 4.2 Requests

Requesting somebody to do a work is made more polite by first asking the person to do a favour, and then mentioning about the work. This way the addressee gets an opportunity for a preparatory phase before agreeing/ disagreeing to do the work. E.g. while asking somebody to repair your watch in a shop, you would ask the person in a way as it is in (16):

- (16) e, mo pāin goTe kāma karidebu ki? mo ghanTā-Tā-ku dokāna-re  
hello, me for a work will do QUE? my watch-CI-ACC shop-in  
Tike marāmati kari āNibu?  
little repair do bring-FUT-2sg.  
“Hello, will you do me a favour? Can you please get my watch repaired in a shop?”

Request forms are made by using light verbs, particles, quantifier, past tense form of the verb, interrogatives, etc. In (17), while requesting somebody for a bucket of water, the addresser uses particles like *ma/lo*<sup>8</sup>; in (18), while asking for some rice, one uses the past tense form of the verb. In (19), there is a formulaic quantifier<sup>9</sup>, a light verb and a question marker; and in (20), a light verb and a question marker have been used for making a request.

<sup>8</sup> The particle *lo* is used as a fondling term for females only (especially, children and young females), while the emphatic particle *ma* can be used for both male and female.

<sup>9</sup> The formulaic quantifier *Tikie* “little” connotes the meaning “please”, and is very often used in making requests, asking for permission, etc.

- (17) e jhia, mote goTe bālTi pāNi die **ma/lo**  
 oh, daughter me a bucket water give PRT  
 “Oh daughter, could you please give me a bucket of water?”
- (18) mote ganDe/muThe bhāta **delu**  
 me CL/QUAN rice give-PAST 2sg  
 “Give me some rice, please.”
- (19) mote **Tikie** gāDi-re bas-āi **de-b-a-ki?**  
 me little bus-in sit-CAUS give-FUT-2sg.-QUE  
 “Could/will you please make me sit in the bus?”
- (20) mo pāin khanDe/goTe lugā kiNidebu?  
 me for CL/QUAN saree buy-give-FUT 2sg.  
 “Will you please buy a saree for me?”

Note that constructions like (17)-(18) are usually used among family members, while (19)-(20) are with familiar people.

A request can also be made polite by passivizing the construction and omitting the by-phrase. Such types of constructions are usually used among less-familiar people or strangers. In the following example, the addresser expresses that s/he would feel happy if the work is done by the addressee.

- (21) ei kāmaTā hoigalā māne bhāri khusi lāgiba  
 this work-CL is done means very happy will be felt  
 “I/(you) will feel happy once this work is done.”

The intended meaning here would be “I will feel happy once this work is done by you.”

An assurance to the request is also made in a similar way as in (22), (23) by using a passive voice. Here, the addressee assures that he would do the work and would feel restless until the work is done completely, as in (22); or he would try his best to do the work, as in (23).

- (22) ei kāmaTā na-saribā paryanta munDa-ru chintā jibani  
 this work-CL not done until head-from worry go-FUT-NEG  
 “Worries will not go out of my head until this work is completed.”  
 [I will feel worried until this work is done.]
- (23) dekhibā, kaNa karā-jāipārība  
 see-FUT-PL what do-PASS  
 “Let’s see what can be done.”

The intended meaning would be “Let’s see if I can do something for you.”

### 4.3 Proposals

In a social interaction, proposals are usually made by asking the addressee’s consent first, and then only progress is made. So, in a situation where a person wants to apply

for a joint project with another, s/he seeks the consent of the other person in the following way, as in the example (24). It characterizes one's desire not to be imposed upon the other.

- (24) āme duijaNa mishi goTe project pāin apply karibā ki?  
 we both combined a project for apply do-fut QUE  
 “Shall we both apply for a project?”

#### 4.4 Polite Commands

Command forms are difficult to handle as they denote the superiority of the commander. Commands are usually dealt with carefully, demanding the work by making the hearer feel comfortable and assured. Note that as there is subject verb agreement, the use of the imperative verbal form depends on the honorific variant of the second person singular pronoun. So, the commander has the choice to pick a particular variant of the imperative form depending on the situation and the social status of the addressee.

Depending on the levels of honorificity (as discussed in section 2), there are four types of command forms available in Odia. Let's look at the verb *kar* (to do). By using the imperative form of this verb, various command forms can be listed as follows:

##### Impolite, true command form:

There is a true command form, which is used with inferiors, children, servants, etc. For example, *kar* /do-IMP/, *kar(e) kar(e)* /do-IMP do-IMP/ [repetition of the verb is done to quicken the process of doing], *tu kare* /you<sub>[-Hon]</sub> do/. The addressee also can be obliged to do the work, as in (25).

- (25) tote eiTā kar-ibāku paD-iba/he-ba  
 you<sub>[-Hon]</sub>-DAT this do-INF fall-FUT 3sg. /be-FUT 3sg.  
 “You<sub>[-Hon]</sub> have to do it.”

##### Casual command form:

The casual polite form is appropriate for children, close-friends, younger family members, etc. This is the same as the true command form (as mentioned above) but is made polite simply by changing the intonation only. For example, *kare* /do-IMP/, and sometimes by using an interrogative negative marker *karu-nu* /do-IMP-NEG<sub>INT</sub>/ “Why don't you do it?”.

- (26) tu ei kāmaTā kare, se seiTā karu  
 you this work do-IMP, he that do-IMP  
 “You do this work and let him do that.”

##### Polite command form:

There is a normal-polite form which can serve as the command form for friends or equals, family members, colleagues, among the people of the same age group. This form can be used for strangers too. E.g. *kara* /do-IMP/, *kara nā* /do-IMP tag que/, *tame*

*kara* /you [<sub>±Hon</sub>] do/. The command can be stiff but polite too. For example, while giving dead-line to complete some work in a particular duration of time, the command can be given as the following:

- (27) *ei kāmaTā āji ārambha kari dui dina bhitare sāri-dele*  
 this work today start do two day within complete-give-COND  
*bhala heba*  
 good be-FUT 3sg.

“It will be good if you start this work today and complete it within two days.”

### Honorific command form:

Then, there is the honorific command form, which is very polite, as in (28); in addition, with a negative marker and exclamation, as in (29); with a negative marker, question marker and an emphatic particle, as in (30). It is used while giving commands to a superior<sup>10</sup> by reducing one’s self-importance (which makes the hearer sound like polite requests or suggestions). For example, while asking a senior colleague to complete some work to submit it to the higher authority, a junior colleague can use as it is in (28)-(30).

- (28) *āpaNa karantu / karantu nā*  
 you<sub>[+Hon]</sub> do-IMP / do-IMP tag que  
 “You<sub>[+Hon]</sub> do it.”
- (29) *āpaNa kar-u-nā-hā-nti!*  
 you<sub>[+Hon]</sub> do-PROG-NEG 2sg<sub>[+Hon]</sub>  
 “Why don’t you do it!”
- (30) *ārambha karunāhānti kāhinki ma?*  
 start do-PROG-NEG why PRT  
 “Why don’t you start, ya?”

Note that there is a negative marker used in this construction, and certain change in the intonation makes the meaning that “You are privileged to do the work.”

Conditionals also can be used for this purpose, to soften the command by clarifying the situation. For example,

- (31) *āpaNa āsile bhāri bhala huantā, mū se bisayare Tike*  
 you<sub>[+Hon]</sub> come-COND very good will be, I that about little  
*kathābārtā karibāpāin chāhunchi*  
 talk do-INF want

“It would be good if you come, I would like to talk (a little) about that.”

Note that in the above examples (25)-(31), the agreement markers on the verb are very different depending on how polite one wants to be. The appropriate choice of

<sup>10</sup> Here, “superior” means not superior in official authority, but may be superior in age, colleagues in the profession, etc.

honorifics is based on complex rules evaluating addressee, referent, and entities or activities associated with.

#### 4.5 Suggestion

Suggestions are offered among the familiar folks only, guiding the subject in thought, feelings or behaviour. It is handled carefully to minimize any threat to the hearer's positive face. Suggestions are expressed by using conditionals and double negatives. E.g. while suggesting somebody to go to a particular place, or to give something to somebody, the interlocutor may use constructions like (32) and (33), respectively.

(32) tu seThāku na-ga-le bhala he-b-a-ni  
 you there NEG-go-COND good be-FUT-3sg.NEG  
 "It won't be good if you don't go there."

(33) āme tānku kicchi nadele bhala hebani  
 we him something NEG-give-COND good be-FUT-3sg.NEG  
 "It won't be good unless we give him something."

Other imperatives also can be expressed with a conditional and double negatives:

(34) na-khā-ile he-ba-ni  
 NEG-eat-COND be-FUT 3sg.-NEG  
 "It won't do unless you eat."

The intended meaning is "You have to eat."

In the above types of constructions, "it won't be good" / "it won't do" denotes that the world will end if that particular action (i.e. "giving", "eating") is not performed. So, the addressee feels more comfortable about doing it — after all, by doing that action, the s/he is not only obeying the addresser's wish, but also is saving the world.

#### 4.6 Prohibition

Prohibition is expressed with the same phrase as above (for suggestion), but by using only a single negative. So, instead of expressing it in negative command form as in (35a), one could rephrase it politely as it is in (35b), that is, by using a conditional and giving reasons or constraints:

(35) a. basani  
 sit-2sg.-NEG  
 "Don't sit."

b. bas-ile he-ba-ni, kāma karibāku paDiba  
 sit-COND be-FUT 3sg.-NEG, work to be done  
 "It won't be (good) if you sit, one needs to work."  
 ["You must not/ are not allowed to sit."]

Also, one can politely prohibit somebody not do something by giving some reason or by showing the consequences that will happen if the action is done. For example, while prohibiting somebody to sit on the baby-bed, one might use a construction as in (36).

- (36) nāhin, sethira basa-ni, baDaloka chhoTapilā sejare bas-ile  
 No, in that sit-not grown-ups baby bed-in sit-COND  
 pilāra deha kasTa heba  
 baby's body-ache happen-FUT 3sg.  
 "Please don't sit in that (baby bed). If grown-ups sit on baby's bed,  
 then the baby will suffer from body-ache."

In (36), as elaborate precaution is given while prohibiting to do the act, the expression looks more polite, as it is more reasonable not to do that particular work.

#### 4.7 Permission

Permission is requested (or granted) by asking whether (or stating that) the action is good or acceptable. E.g. If one wants to sit down, in formal situations, one may seek permission directly like (37)<sup>11</sup>. However, in informal situations, for the sake of formality & social etiquette, one asks politely by using a conditional, as in (38).

- (37) mū eiThi basibi (ki)?  
 I here sit-FUT 1sg. (QUE)  
 "May I sit here?"  
 (38) eiThi bas-ile chaLibanā?  
 here sit-COND ok  
 "Is it ok to sit here?"

Then the request is granted by using expressions like (39) or like (40), as the addressee confirms that the action is most welcome:

- (39) han, basa basa, sei jāgāTā hin basibā pāin hoichi  
 Yes, sit sit that place EMP sitting for is  
 "Yes, please sit down, that place is meant/allotted for sitting."  
 (40) basa basa, basile shighra kāma ārambha karibā  
 sit sit, sit-COND, soon work begin do-FUT 1pl.  
 "Yes, please sit down, after sitting, we will start the work."

<sup>11</sup> Constructions like (37) are rather formal, and are used in situations like interviews, etc. where English language plays an important role. The norm looks like to have been borrowed from English.

## 5. Conclusion

Exploring different forms of pronouns employed in a wide range of contexts in Odia society, this study assumes that the choice of the appropriate variant of the second person pronoun by the interlocutors indicates the correlation of the structure of language and the structure of society including a differential treatment of women and men. Use of plural agreement with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun, variants of the second person singular pronoun, non-reciprocal usage of address forms, etc. indicate the types of politeness strategies practiced in the society. A further observation is that politeness is not only a set of linguistic strategies used by individuals in particular interactions, it is also a judgment made about an individual's linguistic habits; thus it is a general way of behaving as well as an assessment about an individual in a particular interaction. However, the assessment of an act as polite or impolite depends on the judgement whether the act is appropriate according to the norms in the particular community of practice, although there will be a lot of flexibility in these norms depending on the participants on the (speech)-act.

## Abbreviations

AUX	auxiliary
CAUS	causative
CL	classifier
COMP	complementizer
COND	conditional
DAT	dative
EMP	emphatic
FUT	future
IMP	imperative
INF	infinitival
NEG	negation
PASS	passive
PAST	past
PL	plural
PROG	progressive
PRT	particle
QUAN	quantifier
QUE	question
SG	singular
TAG QUE	tag question

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