CHAPTER III
A PERSPECTIVE OF POLITENESS PRINCIPLE IN THE SELECTED PLAYS OF KARNAD AND ELKUNCHWAR

3.0 Preliminaries

Pragmatics is basically interested in use of language by the speakers in a specific situation. Politeness principle holds a significant place in Pragmatics. It is an important part of social conventions since in all cultures, however different they are, politeness in addressing others is a kind of observed code of behavior that one has to adhere to Alaoui (2011). Linguistic strategies of the co-conversationalists in any situation are either polite or impolite. Commonsense and observation tell us that politeness plays a key role in making communication a successful activity. It shows good manners, etiquettes and consideration for others, and therefore, participants in conversation like polite approach. Impolite way of communicating disturbs or breaks the conversation process. Politeness also maintains the context of conversation to keep the ball rolling. It further reveals the nature, attitude, intention, desire and expectation of the speaker. Most importantly politeness avoids hostile antagonistic terms to maintaining the face of conversational partners. Along with pragmaticists; sociolinguists, psycholinguists, sociologists, anthropologists and authorities on business communication have worked on the phenomenon of politeness strategy in communication. The present chapter aims at studying politeness principle in the light of plays under consideration.

Robin Lakoff (1984) suggests that different cultural groups and different linguistic communities have different conceptions about politeness. In every society distance, deference, and camaraderie determine the basic strategies of politeness. Every culture has its own way of being polite with the members of the society.

All human languages have linguistic devices to show politeness and formality. But all these languages do not express them in the same way. Languages encode politeness in speech acts, in syntactic structures, in intonation patterns and in lexical choices. Social status, deference and humility also impact the politeness factor. In the present study, the main focus will be to see what happens when an addressee from a
deference-based culture like India uses English, a non-native distance-based language? It also aims to see whether the sense of cultural appropriateness is translated to English or not.

3.1 An Overview

Politeness is generally associated with good manners and etiquettes of social conduct. Goffman (1967) was the first sociologist who discussed the concept of politeness in relation with face. He defined face as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. It refers to that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize Yule (2011:60). Goffman’s concept of face is explained by Liu, cited in Rong Rong (2008), with the following diagram of “ego and extension of ego”. It discusses how one’s feelings of face are concerned with various elements in his/her day-to-day life.

![Diagram of Ego and the Extension of Ego](image-url)
The ‘ego’ is positioned at the center. It is the most significant constituent of our personality and includes personal feeling freedom. Other factors which affect the ‘ego’ are at different distance from the center. The factors which are at the far distance from the center do have less impact on ‘ego’, where as the factors which are in close position may have an enormous impact. However, Liu’s diagram is prototypical, hence the positions of the factors affecting ego are culture, place, situation and person bound. It means they can change in accordance with culture, place, situation and person.

Brown and Levinson developed in their Politeness Some Universals in Language Usage (2010), Goffman’s ideas into the concept of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ face. Positive face is an individual’s desire to be admired, esteemed, understood, and treated well by others. Negative face is the wish to be free from any imposition by others. It is a wish to have freedom of action. A person who praises his/her co-interactant is satisfying his positive face. On the other hand, if a person criticizes or reduces choice of action of his/her communiqué collaborator, it is a threat to the negative face of the other. It is an FTA. Brown and Levinson suggest a model for possible FTAs. It is schematized as follows.

1. Do the act on-record. It means to do without attempting to hide what we are doing. It has three sub-types. They are: (a) baldly, without redress; (b) with positive politeness redress; (c) with negative politeness redress.
2. Do the act off-record. It denotes to pretend to hide what we are doing and
3. Don’t do the act at all.

Geoffrey N Leech in his Principles of Pragmatics (1983:132) discusses certain maxims of politeness as follows:

1. Tact Maxim (in impositives and commissives)
   a. Minimize cost to other.
   b. Maximize benefit to other.
2. Generosity Maxim (in impositives and commissives)
   a. Minimize benefit to self.
   b. Maximize cost to self.
3. Approbation Maxim (in expressives and assertives)
   a. Minimize dispraise of other.
   b. Maximize praise of other.

4. Modesty Maxim (in expressives and assertives)
   a. Minimize praise of self.
   b. Maximize dispraise of self.

5. Agreement Maxim (in assertives)
   a. Minimize disagreement between self and other.
   b. Maximize agreement between self and other.

6. Sympathy Maxim (in assertives)
   a. Minimize antipathy between self and other.
   b. Maximize sympathy between self and other.

In any formal or informal conversation, pursuit of these maxims by the speaker and listener makes the communication process fruitful. In these maxims, listener is being taken care for feeling easy and comfortable.

Though face maintaining or threatening is a universal phenomenon, positive and negative strategies are culture, group and language specific. Face maintaining/threatening tactics in one culture, group and language may not be applicable to others. Let’s study an example in Chinese culture given by Wierzbicka (1997).

A (an English visitor): The dinner was very nice.
B (a Chinese hostess): No still there are certain shortcomings.

In the above mentioned dialogue, person A is praising the food made for the dinner by the Chinese hostess. His response ‘The dinner was very nice’ shows it. In English/Western as well as in Indian culture it is a polite act. The native speaker would have responded ‘I'm glad you liked it’ or ‘Thank you’. However in this context, A is offended to listen B’s speech act i.e. ‘No still there are certain shortcomings’. A expects B to say something which can maintain his face. A feels, that B doesn’t respond his compliment properly and flouts the Maxim of Approbation. The fact is B’s response is misunderstood by A, as is in Chinese culture compliments
are not given for the food though it is good. A was not aware of this fact so his compliment didn’t suit the situation in Chinese culture. It shows that polite acts in a speech community are established with the help of social and cultural systems within the community. Also these social and cultural systems guide the members of the community to follow these acts in various situations.

3.2 Politeness Principle and Drama

Politeness strategies are applied to real life conversations however, scholars have discussed the possibilities of applying these strategies to literary works. Apropos the usefulness of politeness principle in the study of drama, Jonathan Culpeper in his (Im)politeness in Dramatic Dialogues (2002) opines, “Broadly speaking, politeness is about the strategic manipulation of language, about expediting our conversational goals by saying what is socially appropriate. A framework that brings together *face* (an emotionally sensitized concept about the self) and sociological variables (such as power and social distance) and relates them to motivated linguistic strategies is going to be particularly useful in helping us understand:

1. how characters position themselves relative to other characters,
2. how they manipulate others in pursuit of their goals and
3. how the plot is pushed forward.

Such a framework will allow us to describe systematically, for example, how one character might ingratiate themself with another or how one character might offend another”. We can understand the linguistic behaviour by deciphering the linguistic discourse employed by the dramatist in the play. The study concentrates on how characters in the play communicate most effectively and harmoniously by using positive and/or negative strategies. The present study is an analysis of the six Indian plays. The context in which characters are presented and the language used by them is drawn from an Indian background. Social factors like solidarity, social status, power, role, distance, situation etc do affect politeness. Politeness strategies employed by the characters also helps us to reveal its nature and intention. Playwrights do make of use of these strategies in specific speech events in order to project intention through characters.
3.3 Positive Politeness Strategies

Lakoff (1973) has laid down three broad principles of politeness as below.

1. Don’t impose
2. Make the addressee feel comfortable and
3. Give options

Further Brown and Levinson developed in their *Politeness Some Universals in Language Usage* (2010) the ‘Positive and Negative Politeness Strategies’. Positive Politeness Strategies are as follows:

**Positive Politeness**

Notice/attend to hearer’s wants  
Exaggerate interest/approval  
Intensify interest  
Use in-group identity markers  
Seek agreement  
Avoid disagreement  
Presuppose/assert common ground  
Joke  
Assert knowledge of hearer’s wants  
Offer, promise  
Be optimistic  
Include speaker and hearer in the activity  
Give (or ask for) reasons  
Assume/ assert reciprocity  
Give gifts to hearers (good sympathy etc) (Brown and Levinson 2010: 102, 131)

Besides these Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Strategies, Yamuna Kachru and Lary Smith, in their *Cultures, Contexts, and World Englishes*, (2008) mention that there are twelve parameters through which politeness is observed in every speech community. They are ‘values’, ‘face’, ‘status’, ‘rank’, ‘role’, ‘power’, ‘age’, ‘sex’, ‘social distance’, ‘intimacy’, ‘kingship’, and ‘group membership’. 
Politeness works like a lubricant for the smooth functioning and progression of conversation. Agreeing and disagreeing with communication partner can be studied in terms of politeness principle. Showing agreement establishes good relationship yet, one should not say ‘yes’ when he wants to say ‘no’. Brown and Levinson, as mentioned above, have given the positive politeness strategies. These strategies are culture specific. For the purpose of the present analysis, we are going to make use of the following views on politeness.

1. The social-norm view,
2. The conversational maxim view,
3. The face saving view,
4. The conversational contract view,
5. The appropriateness or ‘maryada’ view,
6. The nativization view, and
7. The view that being polite is being courteous, civil, gracious and deferential.

Bruce Fraser (1990) in his *Perspective on Politeness* lays down four approaches to politeness: the social norm view, the conversational maxim view, the face saving view and the conversational contract view.

The social-norm view of politeness is basically a set of communal norms or rules which determine the behaviour of an individual, state of affairs, or a way of context specific thinking. Every society has a set of communal norms and expects that individual or communal manners should be akin to these social norms which is acceptable and polite behaviour. Impolite actions are contrary to these norms.

Sensible use of language in a talk which is potentially different from the linguistic rules of grammar is known as conversational maxim view. Use of language and linguistic restraints differ from context to context. Scope and limitations of varied linguistic restraints are provided by this maxim. Contravening grammar rules shows that the speaker doesn’t know the language whereas, contravening of a conversational maxim can convey speaker’s intention.
The face saving view affirms that in any conversation the face, being vulnerable, may be boosted, retained, or defeated by the conversational partners. If the face is defeated or threatened, the participants may defend it. Hence, speakers are careful enough to maintain the face of their partakers while conveying their intentions.

The conversational contract view presumes that politeness is an all time thing. Usually participants in an interaction are attentive enough to follow the limitations of certain restraints, and if they do not, they are treated as impolite or discourteous. Polite approach is expected by everyone in every conversation. Being polite doesn’t at all mean, as Leech or Lakoff propose, to make the hearer ‘feel good’ or as Brown and Levinson suggest, making the listener not ‘feel bad’. It simply involves getting on with the task at hand in light of the terms and conditions of the conversational contract Fraser (1990).

Pandharipande (1992) mentions that the terms of address and reference in Indian English differ significantly from those in British or American English. Indian or Indianized strategies of politeness are followed by the Indian authors and speakers of English. The appropriateness or ‘maryada’ (means limitations and constraints) view is the governing factor. An address or reference term is considered as polite if it is in accordance with appropriateness. Diverse cultures have diverse ways to determine the notions of reverence, honour, limitation, constraint and appropriateness. Address and reference terms in British and American speech community follow ‘equality’ where as in Indian culture ‘maryada’ is followed.

Thorat (2002: 84) mentions that Indian English is the transplanted variety of native English. It has deeply rooted in the socio-cultural constraints of India and emerged with an independent socio-cultural identity. When we read Indian literature in English we assume that the fictional characters are bilinguals. So we find the characters in Karnad’s plays are the speakers of Hindi/Kannad and English. And the characters of Elkunchwar are the speakers of Marathi and English. Therefore, the characters in a sense are forced to maintain a balance between the socio-cultural constraints of native English on the one hand and those of Indian languages on the other.

Common sense and observation tell us that being polite is being courteous, civil, gracious and deferential and strategies for them vary from culture to culture.
Politeness strategies observed in the selected plays are discussed below.

3.3.1 Expressing Concern for the Addressee, Complimenting, and Exaggerating

To expressing concern for the addressee, what do we use? Obviously words, form of a address, which carry meaning. Address and reference terms are the indicators of politeness. As Thorat (2002: 82) views that forms of address have meaning as well, but on a closer look the semantics of address variants turn out to be a complicated matter because there are several kinds of meanings involved as far as forms of address are concerned. Prominent among these are literal, referential and social. Literal or lexical meanings of forms of address point to certain groups as follows:

1. Master, senior, superior
2. Companion, comrade
3. Friend, acquaintance
4. Relative

Referential meanings and literal meaning of forms of address may differ occasionally. Literal meanings are the prime content of forms of address. In Indian culture, often kinship terms are used as address terms. It can create difficulty to reveal the meaning. For ex. A speaker addressing another person as his brother may use the term ‘brother’ in literal or extended meaning. It means if the addresser and the addressee are brothers, the form of address has literal meaning. And if the addresser and the addressee are not brothers, the use of kinship term brother has an extended meaning.

In Hayavadana, Devadatta and Kapila are good friends. However, their bond of friendship is so strong that when Kapila finds Devadatta’s truncated face in the temple of goddess Kali, he moans and makes use of following utterance where the term brother has extended meaning.

Kapila: You’ve cut off your head! You’ve cut off your head! Oh my dear friend, my brother, what have you done? (Act 1: 29)

Similarly, in Tughlaq the word ‘grandfather’ and ‘son’ are used with extended sense
and meaning. A young and an old soldier are performing their duties as sentries in the night at the fort in Daulatabad. They are not in any blood relation and differ in age. In India, it has been a tradition that youngsters use to call elderly people as ‘father’, ‘uncle’ or ‘grandfather’ and elderly people refer youngsters as ‘son’ or ‘grandson’. Strange people of the same age group, to establish rapport, refer each other with the kinship terms of brother or sister. In the following dialogue, to refer each other the use of kinship terms ‘grandfather’ and ‘son’ by the Young Man and Old Man respectively, carry extended meanings.

YOUNG MAN: You don’t love this fort very much, do you grandfather?
OLD MAN: I am the man of the plains, son. I find it hard to breathe in this eagle nest. (Scene viii: 51)

The extension of kinship terms to refer the non-real relationship is the unique feature of Indian culture. The use of English terms will not satisfy the complex set of connections in relationships in India and would not convey the norms of politeness and appropriateness prevalent in Indian society.

Indian culture is alien therefore; terms of address such as ‘sir’, ‘madam’, ‘master’ etc fall short to express cultural gradation in India. Terms of address and reference are culture specific. In Indian English, these terms are taken from both, Indian languages and English. It highlights the hybrid nature of Indian English.


The address and reference terms in Indian English perform the determining function, the pointing function and the predicting function. These terms determine the relation between the addressee and the addressee in a given situation. Thus, in Wedding Album (2009: 11), when the addressee addresses the addresser as ‘Hemakka’, the speaker indicates that the hearer is either an elder sister of the speaker or a person whom the speaker regards and respects as an elder sister. It points out the culture-specific
appropriacy and an emotional attachment where an elder sister or a person similar to an elder sister in age is addressed as ‘akka’. Address/reference terms also predict and justify other patterns of interaction. In Marathi, a married woman is supposed to call Vansa and Bhauj to her husband’s sister and husband’s brother respectively. In Old Stone Mansion, Vahini makes use of these terms to refer her brother in law as ‘Sudhirbhauj’ (2009:137) and ‘Prabha-vansa’(2009:167) to her sister in law. The use of the term ‘sister’ or ‘brother’ implies that the hearer has an edge over the speaker and (s) he has the right to advise the speaker. The reference term ‘bai’ is an honorific term for an older woman. Karnad in his Wedding Album (2009:12) makes the use of ‘Radhabai’ to refer the old maid servant in the Nadkarni family. Similarly, Elkunchwar, in his Reflection (2009: 208), uses the term ‘Bai’ to refer the old woman.

Two social factors - the power semantic and solidarity semantic signify the choice of address/reference terms. Oyetade (1995) adds three more dimensions of age, social status and kinship. In most social system, some people are superior or powerful to others by virtue of their rank, status or age. Their power is asymmetrical and the use of the terms reflects this asymmetry. The more powerful person uses a less polite form with an inferior and the less powerful person uses a more polite form with a superior.

While expressing concern for the addressee, various politeness strategies, as described by Brown and Levinson (2010), are employed by the speaker. Noticing hearer’s interests or wants, use of ellipsis, point of view operations, presupposing familiarity in S-H relationship or presupposing hearer’s knowledge are observed in the following set of speech acts by Kapila in Hayavadana. In Act One, when Kapila meets Devadatta, he asks, “why didn’t you come to the gymnasium last evening?” to see the wrestling. Kapila describes how he could defeat a wrestler from Gandhara but observes that Devadatta is confused and not paying any attention to what he says. He guesses that Devadatta is mad after a girl and not willing to share the fact with Kapila. There following interaction takes place between them.

KAPILA: …who’s it this time?
DEVADATTA: What do you mean?
KAPILA: I mean - who - is - it - this- time?
DEVADATTA: What do you mean who?
KAPILA: I mean - who is the girl?
DEVADATTA: No one. [Pause.] How did you guess?
KAPILA: My dear friend, I have seen you fall in love fifteen times in the last two years. How could I not guess?
DEVADATTA: Kapila, if you have come to make fun of me …
KAPILA: I am not making fun of you. Every time, you have been the first to tell me about it. Why so shy this time?
...
KAPILA: ... Don’t you know I would do anything for you? Jump into a well-or walk into fire. Even my parents aren’t as close to me as you are. I would leave them this minute if you asked me to. (Act 1: 12)

In this interaction, Kapila’s approach towards Devadatta is very polite. His speech acts ‘who’s it this time?’, ‘I mean - who - is - it - this- time?’, ‘I mean - who is the girl?’ notice hearer’s wants or interests. Devadatta’s response ‘No one’ and after pause ‘How did you guess?’ proves that speaker/Kapila knows hearer’s/Devadatta’s interest. In the first two expressions ellipsis are used. Because of the reliance on shared mutual knowledge an inevitable association between the use of ellipsis and the existence of in-group shared knowledge is established (Brown and Levinson 2010:111). Here speaker and hearer are good friends and are well acquainted with their habits and nature and share some knowledge about the context that makes the utterance understandable. Context includes, as Niazi and Gautam (2010:215) say, factors such as the place and time of the utterance, interlocutor’s background knowledge of the world, shared experience, and interpersonal relationship (social status, sex, age etc). Ellipses and contraction help to increase the endearment between conversational partners. Kapila’s expression ‘My dear friend, I have seen you fall in love fifteen times in the last two years. How could I not guess?’ shows presupposition of familiarity in S-H relationship. Devadatta feels that Kapila is threatening his face but it is not the fact. Being good friends they share many things and here Kapila just wants Devadatta to share the fact of his love with him. Kapila’s utterances fit exactly the framework of the Generosity Maxim, i.e. minimize benefit to self or maximize
cost to self. Brown and Levinson (2010: 128) mention that giving or asking for reasons is a polite act as giving reasons is a way of implying ‘I can help you’ or ‘you can help me’. It assumes cooperation and shows what help is needed.

Whilst expressing concern for the addressee, sometimes indirect references are made. For instance, in Indian culture, instead of calling his own wife directly, a person will refer her, as the mother of his child. Similarly, a woman will refer her husband as He or the father of her child. In *Old Stone Mansion*, we come across such indirect references.

BHASKAR: So? They haven’t come, have they? Your darling brother-in-law and sister-in-law?  
(Act 1, sc i: 135)

ANJALI: Speak to your brother. It’s not for me to say. Whatever he decides...  
(Act 1, sc ii: 149)

AAI: My dear, even when He was alive, I didn’t have the power to give anything to anybody. Now I am altogether different.  
(Act 2, sc ii: 181)

While conversing with his wife i.e. Vahini, the expressions ‘brother-in-law’ and ‘sister-in-law’ are used by Bhaskar to refer his own Brother Sudhir and his wife Anjali. He calls them in this way from his own wife / Vahini’s point of view. While talking to Prabha, Anjali calls her own husband as ‘Your brother’. She takes into account Prabha’s point of view. Aai refersVyankatesh, her husband, as He. This indirect way of referring the family members is one of the distinct features of politeness in Indian languages.

Complimenting or paying tribute is one of the rapport building strategies in communication. Compliments have differing socio-linguistics functions in various cultural groups. Certain cultures make balanced use of compliments; others are ungrateful and stuck-up. Some cultures are parsimonious and some are very munificent and prolific. Certain cultures accept compliments more willingly than others do. Certain culture groups offer abundant compliments. High-compliment giving and low-complimenting taking and vice versa are again the schemes of some of the cultural groups. A compliment is a personal and subjective assessment of a
person, thing, or an event. This assessment is based on observations and experiences.

In *Tughlaq*, Barani, the historian pays tribute to Muhammad for showing mercy to Ain-ul-Mulk. Muhammad defeats Ain-ul-Mulk in the battle even though gives him back the Kingdom of Avadh. Step-Mother and Najib do not like this fact. However, Barani compliments Muhammad for his generosity in the following manner.

BARANI: You are a great man, Your majesty, ...
MUHAMMAD (*laughing*): And you are a good man, Barani, and that’s more important. Look at Najib-look at the expression on his face! He can’t even believe I can be generous. (Scene iv: 28)

Muhammad likes Barani’s Compliment. Following politeness principle, Barani’s compliment is returned with a compliment by Muhammad as he feels indebted to him. It is important to think here that when a person receives a compliment he feels indebted to the person who has offered it. This puts him under certain moral obligation. If he receives the compliment as it is and does nothing about it, he will be called an arrogant person. Therefore, he has to repay the verbal debt in verbal currency. In other words, the compliment has to be returned with another compliment. In Indian context, it is explained in terms of weighing. The complimenter has put the weight of his compliment in one pan of the weighing scales and it is the responsibility of the complimentee to put an equal weight, sometimes more, in the other pan. This can be seen as the direct result of the indebting nature of the compliment. It helps the responder to get out of the obligation by returning the verbal gift to the complimenter. In the above dialogue, Barani’s compliment ‘You are a great man, Your majesty’ is weighed properly by Muhammad and Muhammad responds it with more weight by saying ‘And you are a good man, Barani, and that’s more important’. Latter part of his expression ‘Look at Najib-look at the expression on his face! He can’t even believe I can be generous’ shows that Najib doesn’t compliment Muhammad for his decision. Muhammad’s response creates an embarrassment for both Barani and Najib. This response creates challenge to the complimenter at the literal level. But, at another level, it shows camaraderie and familiarity with both Barani and Najib.
In Elkunchwar’s *Sonata*, Dolon and Shubhadra compliment Aruna when she bags an award for her writing.

DOLON (*icily*): You know Subhadra, she has won an award for ...

ARUNA (*hurriedly getting up*): ... C’mon. Let’s go out eat ...

SHUBHADRA: What award? When?

ARUNA: Give us a ride in your car, Subhe.

SHUBHADRA: Nobody ever tells me anything. What award?

DOLON: For her short story. What’s it called? Something called ...

SHUBHADRA: You didn’t even ring me, Dolon.

ARUNA: What’s going on here? I pushed my pen and wrote some minor stuff. That doesn’t make me Tagore.

DOLON: An award is an award.

SHUBHADRA: Yep. It’s important. (Act 1: 268)

Here Aruna, the complimentee finds, herself between scylla and charybdis. She wants to get out of the double bind. She does neither accept a compliment nor rejects it outrightly but finds a way to escape from the difficult situation. She conveys to the complimenter that the object of compliment is not an invaluable or precious belonging. In a sense, she implies that the qualities or belongings are not praiseworthy. She doubts the praiseworthiness of the object of compliment. Johnson (1979: 43-44) believes that when someone compliments the only response should be ‘thank you’. He opines that complimentee should not disparage himself.

Exaggeration in positive politeness is quite remarkable. In *Hayavadana* when Kapila and Devadatta get exchanged bodies due to Padmini’s mistake, they start quarrelling over the right to own Padmini. They seek advice of a great *rishi* to get solution to their unfortunate life. He tells them that the head is superior to the body, and therefore, the body with Devadatta’s head must possess Padmini. Devadatta’s and Padmini’s joy knew no bounds. Due to immense pleasure they exaggerate each other.

DEVADATTA [*embracing Padmini*]: My Padmini ... My lovely Padmini ...

PADMINI: My King-My Master ...
DEVADATTA: My little lightning ...
PADMINI: The light of my joy ...
DEVADATTA: The flower of my palm ...
PADMINI: My celestial-bodied Gandharva ... My sun-faced Indra ...
DEVADATTA: My Queen of Indra’s court ...
PADMINI [caressing his shoulders]: Come. Let’s go. Let’s go quickly.
Where the earth is soft and the green grass plays the swing.
DEVADATTA: Let us. Where the banyan spreads a canopy and curtains off the skies ...
PADMINI: What a wide chest. What other canopy do I need?
DEVADATTA: My soft, swaying Padmini. What other swing do I want?
PADMINI: My Devadatta comes like a bridegroom with the ornament of a new body ...
DEVADATTA [a manly laugh]: And who should wear the ornaments but the eager bride ...
PADMINI: Let’s go. (Act 2: 41)

3.3.2 Reciprocating, Avoiding Disagreement, Promising, Notice Hearer’s Wants

Politeness is reciprocating. Brown and Levinson (2010:112) list certain safe topics which are indicative of the speaker’s interest in maintaining a healthy relationship with the addressee. Topics like- weather, beauty of gardens, the incompetence of bureaucracies and the irritations of having to wait line, establish rapport between speaker and hearer. This type of conversation is a part of reciprocating to the other persons query etc.

DOLL I: Not a bad house, I would say.
DOLL II: Could have been worse. I was a little worried.
DOLL I: This is the least we deserved? Actually we should have got a palace. A real palace!
DOLL II: And a Prince to play with. A real prince!
DOLL I: How the children looked at us at the fair! How their eyes glowed!
DOLL II : How their mothers stared at us! How their mouths watered!
DOLL I : Only those beastly men turned up their noses! ‘Expensive!
Too Expensive!’
DOLL II : Presuming to judge us! Who do they think they are!
DOLL I : Only a prince would be worthy of us.
DOLL II : We should be dusted every day...
DOLL I : ... dressed in silk ...
DOLL II : ... seated in a cushioned shelf...
DOLL I : ... given new clothes every week.
DOLL II : If the doll-maker had any sense, he’d never have sold us.
DOLL I : If he had any brains, he should never have ... given us to
this man...
DOLL II : ... With his rough labourer’s hands.
DOLL I : Palms like wood ...
DOLL II : A grip like a vice ...
DOLL I : My arms are still aching ...
DOLL II : He doesn’t deserve us, the peasant.. (Act 2: 44)

The Dolls in Karnad’s play *Hayavadana* converse with each other in reciprocal manner. Doll I takes initiative to begin conversation. It becomes successful when the conversational partner i.e. Doll II describes similar circumstances. Their topic of conversation is the trivialities of their household. They are not content in Devadatta’s house. Their expectations are defeated when they are brought in Devadatta’s house. They desire a princely life. Treatment they get is very average. They criticise the situations in which they survive. For, everything they discuss is reciprocated by each other. Reciprocating to each other is a positive politeness strategy that helps to attain solidarity which is essential for effective communication.

The conversation between dolls is an example of harmless gossiping. As human beings talk about general issues like weather, illness etc. the dolls, who have been attributed human characteristics by the playwright, exchange their views about the way they have been living.
Avoiding disagreements is another positive politeness strategy. In Scene I of Karnad’s *Wedding Album*, Pratibha and Rohit are discussing about the story for a tele-serial. Rohit suggests the theme of his sister Vidula’s wedding. He shows a video which is prepared to send to USA for the boy who cannot come to India to see the girl due to his busy work schedule. Pratibha disagrees or doesn’t find any meat in it. In Scene V, which is the continuation of Scene I, they avoid disagreement over the issue and finalise the story of Radhabai for their tele-serial.

ROHIT: As the old woman runs down-imagine-one staircase after another—we could build up the suspense. She is aged. Arthritic. Finds it difficult to run, but it is her daughter.

PRATIBHA: There is no lift?

ROHIT: That’s why I made it four floors. Old city regulations said you could build up to four floors without a lift.

PRATIBHA: I see. Actually, when you come to think of it, even if there were a lift there, it wouldn’t matter. I mean as she runs down she stops on each landing and presses the button. But can’t bring herself to wait till the lift arrives, so rushes on down the stairs.

ROHIT: True enough. That will also give us more footage on her run. A proper build-up.

PRATIBHA: So she reaches the gate then?

ROHIT: She finds the daughter gone.

PRATIBHA: That’s it. Bit of an anti-climax, isn’t it? (Scene v: 57)

In the above piece of conversation, Rohit and Pratibha agree over what they have to shoot in the scene for a tele-serial. Rohit’s view is supported by Pratibha and vice-versa. This agreement strategy by both speaker and hearer benefit both of them. This strategy helps them to achieve their intentions. It maintains their positions in the office where they work and strengthens the bond of professional relationship.

Promising is also one of the politeness strategies. In the selected plays, we see the characters establishing the bond as well as the rapport between themselves by the act of promising. Speech acts like the commissives play an active role in promising. The act of promising plays a vital role in the inter-relationships between people. In
Karnad’s *Tughlaq*, Step-Mother and Barani, the historian, win each other’s trust by making use of promising politeness strategy.

STEP-MOTHER: I don’t know what to say, Barani. I mustn’t complain against my own son-

BARANI: Your Highness may place full trust in me.

STEP-MOTHER: I know, that’s why I asked you to stay what to say.

I am worried about him. You know what he is like. He is such an intelligent boy and he works so hard for the people. He doesn’t even go to bed these days. (*Pause.*) But he is so impulsive – and when he gets into one of his moods I don’t know what he’ll do next. (*Pause.*) You are sober man, Barani, level-headed and honest, and he needs friends like you. I just wanted to ask you.... Oh, God! It all sounds so stupid.

BARANI: I fully understand Your Highness’s feelings.

STEP-MOTHER: It’s not that. It’s just that I don’t like so many of his advisers and friends. (*Suddenly.*) Please promise me not to live him – ever - whatever he does.

BARANI (*overwhelmed to the point of tears*): May God help me to retain such confidence un tarnished. I won’t live His Majesty, Your Highness I promise you. I love him too much to do that.

(Scene ii: 17)

Step-Mother is worried about Tughlaq’s actions and decisions. Barani notices Step-Mother’s anxiety and asks to share her views by placing full trust in him. Step-Mother also believes him and considers him ‘sober’, ‘level-headed’ and ‘honest’ man. She expects a promise from Barani not to leave Tughlaq in any situation. Barani fulfils her expectations by sincerely promising her for the same. It shows that both speaker and hearer are cooperators. This kind of politeness strategy demonstrates Barani’s good intentions and satisfies Step-Mother’s positive-face wants.

Notice or attending hearer’s interests, wants, needs and goods is one of the positive politeness policies. Elkunchwar’s play also holds examples of positive politeness. In *Sonata*, three women Aruna, Dolon and Subhadra are living postmodern metropolitan life. Their expectations, aims, desires, pleasures, peace and sorrows all continue to
exist with them. They dream but cannot escape from their dull, monotonous and an unexciting state of life. Aruna and Dolon are living together. When Subhadra comes to meet them following conversation takes place among them.

ARUNA: Subhadra Parashar!

SUBHADRA: Boliye Aruna Ranade.

ARUNA: What is that mark under the eye?

SUBHADRA: He hit me. Aur kya!

DOLON (gasps): Again?

SUBHADRA: It’s our routine, Sweet Pie.

DOLON (delicately touching her under the eye): Ma go!


ARUNA: Excellent!

DOLON: But who started it to-day? Not you, Subhe. How dare he?

SUBHADRA: It’s all right yaar. (Pause.) Dolon, don’t you like my sangram?

DOLON: From a distance. From a distance.

ARUNA: Ass! Don’t go back now for a few days.

DOLON: From a distance he is all right. All men in fact.

ARUNA: Let him come here and get down on his knees before you.

DOLON: Here? That boor – unwashed, unkempt?

ARUNA: Subhe, I am glad you didn’t marry him.

DOLON: I am sure he smells of diesel and petrol.

SUBHADRA (brings her hand under Dolon’s nose): Find out.

ARUNA: You can walk out on him any time.

SUBHADRA: I will.

DOLON (sighs): And get another one.

(Subhadra goes into peels of laughter.) (Act 1: 264)

As Brown and Levinson (2010: 103) mention that speaker should take care of hearer’s condition (noticeable changes, remarkable possessions, anything which looks as though hearer would want speaker to notice and approve of it). In the above quoted speech, Aruna and Dolon take care of Subhadra’s physical as well as mental
conditions. Through their speech, it is revealed that Subhadra has quarrelled with Sangram. Both have beaten each other. Aruna and Dolon notice Subhadra’s condition and advise her to be away from him. Aruna and Dolon’s approach is co-operative and benevolent i.e. of social accelerator. It has extended their intimacy of in-group membership bringing them closer to one another.

A form of address holds a social meaning too. The social module consists of the speaker-receiver relationship, the speaker’s evaluation of the receiver and the circumstances as well as speaker’s milieu. The information shared by the conversational partners creates the social meaning. This meaning is, knowingly or unknowingly, willy-nilly or otherwise, provided by the speakers while using a certain form of address.

3.3.3 Offering Sympathy, Cooperation and Intensifying Interest to H

The plays which are considered for study do have instances where characters offer sympathy and cooperation in helping others. Any utterance that helps listener to become comfortable and happy is to that extent, an act of politeness. In a dialogic conversation, it becomes impolite on the part of the speakers if (s)he ignores the conversational partner(s). Mutual sympathy for one another brings an intimacy, an assurance for sharing emotions, confidence, grief, pleasures etc.

In Karnad’s *Hayavadana*, Devadatta is mad after Padmini. But he doesn’t understand how to get her. He feels it is impossible to get her. The girl is beyond his wildest dreams. He swears before Kapila that if he ever gets her as his wife he shall sacrifice his two arms to the goddess Kali and head to Lord Rudra. Kapila recognizes Devadatta’s disappointment in love. He assures Devadatta that he is full of various qualities and achievements and ‘every parent of every girl in the city is only waiting to catch you...’ and asks him about her whereabouts. He also promises Devadatta not to worry as he would turn every stone for Devadatta’s marriage with Padmini. In their conversational exchange, Kapila comes to know that the girl Padmini lives in the Pavana Veethi street and the door-frame of the house had an engraving of a two-headed bird at the top. Following instance of dialogue of expressing sympathy and cooperation strengthens their bond of camaraderie.
KAPILA \([jumps \ up]\): Then why didn’t you tell me before? You’ve been wasting all this precious time …

DEVADATTA: I don’t understand …

KAPILA: My dear Devadatta, your cloud-messenger, your bee, your pigeon is sitting right in front of you and you don’t even know it? You wait here. I’ll go, find out her house, her name …

DEVADATTA \([incredulous]\): Kapila – Kapila …

KAPILA: I’ll be back in few minutes …

DEVADATTA: I won’t ever forget this, Kapila …

KAPILA: Shut up! … And forget all about your arms and head. This job doesn’t need either Rudra or Kali. I’m quite enough. [Goes out.]

DEVADATTA: Kapila-Kapila. … He’s gone. How fortunate I am to have a friend like him. Pure gold. … (Act 1:15)

One illustration of intensifying or developing interest to H, sympathy and cooperation is in Reflection. HE, the protagonist, looses his reflection so he is psychologically disturbed and is in utter mess. Flags, his colleague-friend, tries to raise his spirit. Flags tells him that it doesn’t matter though HE looses his reflection. He tells HE that almost ninety-nine percent people in the city have lost their reflection. They live their lives below the reflection line. And only the petite bourgeois like HE go whining about things like reflection. He even states him, “When you are not actually before me, I just can’t remember what you look like” and advises him not to worry about the fancy things like reflections.

HE: Okay! It won’t make any difference. But …

FLAGS: Of course it won’t. Stop worrying. Shave and go off to work in style

HE: But Flags, suppose everybody loses his reflection? What would happen then?

FLAGS: What’s going to happen?

HE: Wouldn’t it cause an upheaval? People will be frightened, furious. They will riot.

FLAGS: Nothing of that kind!

HE: Won’t they!
FLAGS: Never. It’s very simple. How many people are really conscious that they have a reflection? People in this city sweat away at their work from morning to night. They don’t have the time even to wipe their sweat in front of mirrors. How do you think it’s going to affect them even if they did lose their reflection? Only you conceited highbrow types can afford that luxury. And just suppose everyone, everyone single person loses his reflection – then it’s perfect, I say. It’ll be the realization of the dream we have struggled for night and day. Equality will be established. Inequality destroyed. Everyone reduced to a single class. Splendid! What more would one want (Act 1: 220)

In this dialogue, Flags exaggerates and generalises HE’s worry over the loss of reflection. It is a strategy to bringing optimism in H i.e. in HE. The exaggeration in this case redresses an FTA by minimizing agonized state of the H. It stresses the positive attitude and increases the interest of the conversational contributions by expressing them dramatically.

In Elkunchwar’s *Old Stone Mansion*, Ranju, Bhaskar’s daughter elopes with a teacher, to Mumbai. In Indian context, if a girl in the family elopes with someone, it brings stigma on the family status. In Deshpande family, Ranju, Bhaskar’s daughter, elopes with her teacher to Mumbai. Sudhir brings Ranju back from Mumbai. Bhaskar feels in debt of Sudhir for saving him as well as their family from social disgrace. Following interactions take place between them at the moment.

BHASKAR: Sudhir, how can I ever repay you for what you’ve done?
SUDHIR: Let’s just forget it, Bhau. It’s over and done with.
BHASKAR: The younger brother has become the elder and the elder younger today.
SUDHIR: We have found Ranju. Nothing else matter (Act 2, sc iii: 192)

The dialogue reflects Bhaskar’s helplessness. Sudhir’s sympathetic and cooperative attitude towards Bhaskar and his family strengthens the bond of brotherhood and the sense of togetherness in family.
Ogiermann (2009:37) mentions, “Conversations among intimates are likely to be more direct than communication with strangers and status superiors”. Bhaskar directly expresses his sense of gratitude towards his younger brother Sudhir. Sudhir makes use of sympathy strategy and makes Bhaskar comfortable by saying, ‘Let’s just forget it, Bhau. It’s over and done with’ and ‘We have found Ranju. Nothing else matters’. As Apte (1974) says, expressions of apology and gratitude such as pardon, please, and thank you are relatively rare in Indian social or speech situations as they create distance between persons.

Above discussed illustrations of politeness strategies play a vital role in both formal and informal conversations. There are less face threatening acts and more face saving acts between the people who are thrown together in certain situations.

3.4 Negative Politeness Strategies

Politeness principles are used to control the linguistic ways to maintain and consolidate our social relations. The addressee uses strategies so that the addressee’s freedom of action and freedom of imposition will be honoured. Negative politeness is redressive action. It is addressed to the addressee’s negative face. Negative politeness is oriented mainly towards a partial satisfaction of the addressee’s negative face. The concept of negative face centers around a person’s basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. Hence, negative politeness is characterized by self-effacement, formality, and restraint. Brown and Levinson (2010: 131) mention following ten ways of saving the negative self image of the addressee.

**Negative Politeness**

- Be conventionally indirect
- Question, hedge
- Be pessimistic
- Minimize imposition
- Give deference
- Apologize
- Impersonalize
- State the imposition as a general
Due to the limitation of the study, only a few significant methods, which are predominant in the selected plays, are highlighted.

### 3.4.1 Conventional Indirectness

In indirect politeness, two or more interpretations are made by the co-conversationalists. The relation between the speaker and the hearer and the amount of shared knowledge cannot be identified.

In the plays, under conditions characters make use of indirectness to convey what they have in mind. The intentions which occur in speaker’s mind may have different meanings, and the address may or may not interpret it in the same manner. Let’s study following act of conversation from *Tughlaq*.

MUHAMMAD: So, Najib, What do you propose?
NAJIB: I can’t think of anything right now, Your Majesty
- except that the Sheikh has a striking resemblance to you.
MUHAMMAD startled, stares at NAJIB.
BARANI: What has the Sheikh got to do with this?
MUHAMMAD: You are a devil, Najib! *(Pause. Then briskly).*

Good. We’ll think about that. In the meantime, the army should be ready to march. We’ll start for Kanauj the day after tomorrow in the evening. *(Scene ii: 16)*

In the second scene, Tughlaq is introduced as a ruler who wants to transform his kingdom into an ideal state. He also wants to transform history but he fails to anticipate the obstacles. Tughlaq’s loyal deputy Najib informs him about the problem of Sheikh Imam-ud-din. Najib informs that Sheikh is criticizing Tughlaq publicly by declaring him as the murderer of his own father and brother at prayer time, and thus, Tughlaq has forfeited the right to rule. Tughlaq wants to get rid of this problem. So he
asks Najib ‘What do you propose?’ Najib wants to see each and every enemy of the king killed. Hence he wants to kill Sheikh who he thinks is a traitor and also an enemy of the king. Najib’s advice ‘I can’t think of anything right now, Your Majesty - except that the Sheikh has a striking resemblance to you’, is an indirect suggestion for the execution of Sheikh-Imam-ud-din. The words “the Sheikh has a striking resemblance to you” don’t literally mean it. The hidden/indirect message is properly decoded by Muhammad only who is surprised by his advice. Tughlaq’s response ‘You are a devil, Najib!... Good. We’ll think about that’, shows that he is very much impressed by the idea. Thus, Najib very skillfully uses conventional indirect politeness strategy and passes his message to Tughlaq by hiding it from other conversational partners those are Barani and Step-mother.

In Hayavadana, Kapila makes use of conventional indirectness as follows.

KAPILA: In which case you’ll also know of Devadatta, his only son. A poet. A pundit. Knows the Vedas backwards. Writes the greatest poetry ever. Long, dark hair. Delicate, fair face. Age twenty. Height five feet seven inches. Weight …

PADMINI: Wait a minute! What’s he is to you?

KAPILA: Friend. Greatest in the world! But the main question now:

What’s he going to be to you?

[Sudden silence.]

PADMINI: [blushing as the import of the remark dawns on her]. Mother!

[Runs in. Kapila stands, staring after her.] (Act 1: 19)

This is the situation when Kapila meets Padmini for the first time. Kapila has come to ask if Padmini’s parents agree for Padmini’s marriage with Devadatta. He is asking Padmini whether she knows or has heard about Devadatta, the son of the reverend Brahmin Vidyasagara. He further goes on describing Devadatta. Then Padmini asks him what his relation with Kapila is. He directly mentions Devadatta to be his friend. But the statement ‘But the main question now: What’s he going to be to you?’, is a kind of hinting strategy. He hides the fact that he has come to ask for Padmini’s hand for his friend Devadatta. Padmini understands the intentional meaning of the speaker and runs in towards her mother in home. Kapila’s use of an indirect speech act is a
kind of circumlocution, an attempt to save the face of the addressee. The interpersonal relationship between the addressee and the addressee as well as specific context or situation determines the particular choice of direct or indirect speech act. Jenny Thomas (1995:143) proposes that the desire to make one’s language less/more interesting, to increasing the force of one’s message, competing goals and politeness matter for the motivation of indirectness. Indirectness shows that he has come to discuss the things and not to impose anything.

In Old Stone Mansion, one night, Sudhir and Anjali are sitting on a stone ledge in the open yard. They exchange following utterances.

ANJALI: How hot it is! It gets hot as soon as the rain stops.
SUDHIR: Sit near me.
ANJALI: Don’t get ideas.
SUDHIR: Ideas?
ANJALI: What else? Out here in the open ...
SUDHIR: I wasn’t even thinking that way. It’s all in your mind.
(Pause.)
ANJALI: We are in mourning. You should remember that.
SUDHIR: Have we stopped eating and drinking because we are in mourning?
Hunh?
ANJALI: Don’t get so desperate.
(Laughs.)
SUDHIR (fuming): What’s making you grin?
ANJALI: Ranju is also another abnormal creature.
SUDHIR: How does Ranju come into this?
ANJALI: You might think she’s stupid, but she’s interested in things she shouldn’t be at her age. (Pause.) She was asking me about birth control today.
SUDHIR: You should have shut her up. The bhaitaad.

(Act 2, sc ii: 176-77)

In the aforesaid conversation, Sudhir’s expression “Sit near me” is taken by Anjali as a call for romance. She avoids it by using the expression “Don’t get ideas”. The word
“ideas” is indirectly referred here for romance. Anjali reminds him that they are in mourning as Sudhir’s father has passed away so, he should control himself and behave properly. Further, she informs Sudhir about Ranju’s abnormal behaviour. Her indirect expression “she’s interested in things she shouldn’t be at her age” shows that Ranju is taking interest in the things related with sexual intercourse which is not appropriate at her age. Ranju is already attracted to her teacher. Probably she has established physical relations with him so she makes enquiry about birth control to Anjali. Sudhir’s utterance “You should have shut her up. The bhaitaad” shows that in Indian culture things related with sexual acts and physical relations are not discussed directly and openly. Generally, ladies avoid referring to birth, death, pregnancy, menstruation, sexual and excretory activities and semen. In the families children are not supposed to discuss such issues with parents or other family members and vice versa.

Politeness takes several forms in speech and writing. One of them is the use of an indirect style in writing and in speech. As Pingali Sailaja (2009:88) mentions euphemisms are preferred to direct expressions – passed away is used rather than die. In Old Stone Mansion, Bhaskar and Vahini make use of such Euphemistic statement while talking about Tatyaji’s death to Sudhir.

BHASKAR: Tatyaji gave us no time at all. He got up from his evening pooja and collapsed on the spot. I shouted ‘Tatyaji! Tatyaji!’ But it was all over.

VAHINI: So you couldn’t see him before the end, could you Sudhir-bhauji?

(Act 1, sc i: 137)

3.4.2 Being Pessimistic and Minimizing Imposition

The strategy of being pessimistic gives redress to H’s negative face by explicitly expressing doubt that the conditions for appropriateness of S’s speech act obtain. As has been discussed earlier, negative politeness is oriented mainly towards a partial satisfaction of the addressee’s negative face. The concept of negative face centers around a person’s basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination.
Karnad’s *Tughlaq* has an illustration of being pessimistic and minimizing imposition. In the third scene, the Sheilkh is presented as a holy man dedicated to the cause of Islam. He has lot of faith in Tughlaq’s learning and intelligence and in his capability to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth. But he feels that Tughlaq is violating the Tenets of Islam. He publicly criticises the king for his secular attitude towards the Hindus. He also accuses the king publicly of having committed the scene of patricide and fratricide. His public addresses are a threat to Tughlaq’s political authority as the Sheikh seems to incite and abate rebellious feelings against the king. He has publicly declared that the king has lost his right to rule and therefore must abdicate the throne. A direct encounter between Sheikh-Imam-ud-din and Tughlaq given below is an example of being pessimistic.

**MUHAMMAD** *(suddenly)*: I can’t bear this any longer!

**IMAM-UD-DIN**: Why Your Majesty? You should be happy if no one turns up.

**MUHAMMAD**: Do you think I would have gone to the trouble of arranging this meeting if I didn’t want my people to be dumb cattle, Sheikhsahib, and I do not claim to be omniscient myself. I am quite willing to learn from you—even eager.

**IMAM-UD-DIN**: Will you be as eager when you hear me, I wonder? You know I am not the type to sweeten my words because the Sultan himself is present.

**MUHAMMAD**: Don’t I know it? The whole of Delhi has heard of the courage and integrity of Sheikh Imam-ud-din. I would not have taken so much trouble for anyone else. *(Scene iii: 19)*

The strategy of being pessimistic gives redress to H’s negative face by explicitly expressing doubt. In the above dialogue, both Muhammad and Sheikh Imam-ud-din are doubtful about their communiqué partner’s speech acts. This polite pessimism and doubt indicate the tension between their relations. Their expressions maintain each others’ face. Both are showing their honest behaviour. Sheikh doesn’t understand the cunning craftsmanship of Tughlaq and finally gets trapped in his plan.
In *Old Stone Mansion* by Elkunchwar, Deshpande family is waiting for Sudhir and Anjali. They are in mourning as Vyankatesh has passed away. Bhaskar the elder son out of his restlessness makes following statement.

**BHASKAR:** So? They haven’t come, have they? Your darling brother-in-law and sister-in-law?

**VAHINI:** Chandu-bhaui says the bus got cancelled. Wonder if they’re stranded somewhere.

**BHASKAR (sarcastically):** Of course he’ll come. Full of love that he is!

(Act 1, sc i: 135-36)

Bhaskar’s cynical attitude with negative question tag shows that neither he nor listener i.e. his wife can do anything if Sudhir doesn’t turn up. In Indian languages, the tag particle, such as *na* in Hindi, attaches itself to a positive or negative statement. Tag forms express solidarity toward the addressee, encourage participation, soften a criticism or disagreement, or express politeness (Holmes 1995). It shows their helplessness to control the situation. Vahini’s subjunctive (stating possibility and not the fact) statement, ‘Wonder if they’re stranded somewhere’ is also showing pessimism.

In this strategy, as Brown and Levinson (2010:136) mention, the speaker chooses one of two courses. Either he wants to definitely convey the assumptions that H is unlikely to do the act A, and so he asserts it, or he wants to convey that he is unsure whether H can do A, so he questions it. The strategies are mutually exclusive, because if S questions the improbability of H’s doing A, he wouldn’t be assuming it. Social distance, power and ranking are the factors which play a vital role in the imposition of speech acts. In imposition the seriousness of a particular FTA is compounded of both risk to S’s face and risk to H’s face (2010:76). Apologies, confessions, advice, orders, requests and offers are the instances of imposition. Apologies and confessions are basically threats to S’s face and advice and orders are basically threats to H’s face, while requests and offers are likely to threaten the face of both participants.

The first scene in the play *Tughlaq*, introduces Tughlaq as an embodiment of justice. The king doesn’t discriminate between the powerful and the weak or on the basis of
religion or creed. The common masses are initially stunned by his decision to abolish the jizia tax. They are further baffled by the king’s decision to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. He has the sanity and wisdom to explain to the masses, the importance of his decisions. By shifting the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad the capital will be free from the fear of invaders and since Daulatabad is the city of the Hindus as the capital it will symbolise the bond between Muslims and Hindus. Tughlaq is the king even though he minimizes imposition in the following manner.

MUHAMMAD: ... I invite you all to accompany me
to Daulatabad. This is an invitation and not an order.
Only those who have faith in me may come with me.
With their help I shall build an empire which will be
the envy of the world. (Scene i: 4)

He hopes to transform his kingdom into a land of peace, prosperity and progress. As has been mentioned earlier, requests and offers threaten the face of both participants. Here, Tughlaq invites masses to join in his mission. His invitation has brought threatening in dual ways to his masses. Tughlaq feels that people will support his vision and decision. People feel that it is not easy to shift from Delhi to Daulatabad and though the king has invited his people it is almost like an order which is threatening his people’s face. People feel that following king to Daulatabad is not practically possible, at the same time, not accepting king’s decision is also risky.

3.4.3 Use of Deferential Modes

Deference is a double sided phenomenon which finds manifestation either in the lowering of the self or the raising of the other or both at a time. Yule (2011) calls it ‘formal politeness’ in which compliments, greetings and modes of address or honorifics are included. This type of politeness of raising the other is generally used in Indian fiction. Conversations are a constant flow of verbal interactions in which compliments are a part of making the other person happy, and become more cooperative. This strategy is used by various characters in the selected plays.
In *Hayavadana*, Kapila makes use of deference as follows.

KAPILA: In which case you’ll also know of Devadatta, his only son.


This is the situation when Kapila meets Padmini for the first time. Kapila has come to ask if Padmini’s parents agree for Padmini’s marriage with Devadatta. He is asking Padmini whether she knows or has heard about Devadatta, the son of the reverend Brahmin Vidyasagara. He describes Devadatta as the Pundit and the greatest poet. He also describes his physical charm and appearance. Kapila’s intention is to raise the status of Devadatta in Padmini’s eyes so that she can show her favour to marry Devadatta. After listening Kapila’s intention of coming to her house Padmini blushes and rushes to her mother. Finally, because of Kapila’s efforts marriage is solemnised.

Compliments are classified into two: face to face compliments and in absentia compliments. We praise somebody in front of that person because we want to satisfy his desire to be liked and approved of. When people are admired and their qualities are publicized and advertised, they feel elated and the complimenter and the complimentee are glued together in a bond of social solidarity and camaraderie.

In *Old Stone Mansion*, we come across one such example of deference. In one of the situations of family gossip, Vahini and Sudhir show admiration for each other’s children—Parag and Abhay respectively. It is a kind of establishing levels of mutual comfort, and promoting bond of relationship. The dialogue is as follows.

VAHINI: How he admires Abhay – his looks, his clothes, the way he plays cricket! When Abhay tops his class in Bombay this boy dances happily here. That’s how love works.

SUDHIR: Abhay’s also very fond of him.

VAHINI: That’s natural. There’s just two of them, brothers. They have only each other. If your letter says ‘blessings to Raghoba’, that’s enough to
send him into ecstasy. None of us is allowed to call him ‘Raghoba’. That name’s reserved strictly for Sudhir-kaka. For us he’s ‘Parag’. That’s how it is. How’s Abhay?

SUDHIR: Totally changed in the last here years. You’ll never recognize him if you see him now. He’s not seventeen yet, but he’s almost six feet tall.

VAHINI: Has he put on any flesh, though?

SUDHIR: All muscle. He can’t bear to miss even one day at the gym.

VAHINI: That’s wonderful. And he’s got Anjali’s looks. That’s good too. Why didn’t you bring him along? If he becomes too much of a Bombaywallah, he’ll have no feelings left for us.

SUDHIR: Oh no. He walks about this place all the time. Especially about Parag. Parag taught him to swim in the pond here. That’s a strong memory. They used to run riot all over the wada, remember?

(Act 1, sc iii: 154)

As has been discussed above, everyone likes if they are praised by somebody. Both Vahini and Sudhir’s sense of respect towards their children make them feel elated and their bond of social solidarity is strengthened.

Deference phenomena are also represented in the form of honorifics. Comrie (1976) argues that there are three main types of honorific. They are categorized in terms of the axes on which the systems are built.

a. The speaker-addresssee axis: the relation of speaker to hearer (addresssee honorifics)
b. The speaker-referent axis: the relation of speaker to things or persons referred to (referent honorifics)
c. The speaker-bystander axis; the relation of speaker (or hearer) to ‘bystanders’ or overhearers (bystander honorifics)

Among three types of honorifics, the one which needs special mention with regard to Indian writing is the third type as this belongs to address forms that people use to others. Use of these address forms depends on the extent of the depth of relationship between speaker and the hearer. A form of address can have a social meaning. The
social factor consists of speaker addressee relationship, speaker’s evaluation of address and situation and of speaker’s background. All these things are expressed in the given form of address. Solidarity, social status, camaraderie, equality, friendship etc also have an effect in the use of address forms. It is commonly known that address and reference are culture specific i.e. they differ from culture to culture.

‘Sir’, ‘madam’, ‘sahib’, ‘His Majesty’, ‘Your Highness’, ‘Your Excellency’, ‘Your Worship’ etc are honorific terms. In Karnad’s historical play *Tughlaq*, honorific terms such as ‘His Merciful Majesty’, ‘His Majesty’, ‘The warrior in the Path of God’, ‘the defender of the Word of the Prophet’, ‘the Friend of the Khalif’, ‘Your Highness’, ‘Your Excellency’, ‘Your Worship’ ‘Your Holiness’ are profusely used by various character to refer to King Tughlaq. The term Sheikhsahib (1988:20) is used to refer Sheikh-Imam-ud-din who is a holy man and preacher. Two social factors - the power semantic and solidarity semantic signify the choice of address/reference terms. Oyetade (1995) adds three more dimensions of age, social status and kinship. In most social system, rank, status or age make some people superior and powerful than others. Their power is asymmetrical and the use of the terms reflects this asymmetry. The more powerful person uses a less polite form with an inferior and the less powerful person uses a more polite form with a superior.

Valentine in his *Politeness Models in Indian English* (1996) opines “In a multilingual context such as India, when the language choice is one other than an Indian language it appears that the speaker resorts to her/his Indianans, i.e., the politeness strategies and conventions which are appropriated in the Indian cultural system. Therefore, a speaker's linguistic choices in English most often are based on the native conventions of politeness.” All speakers use language to convey politeness primarily to consider others feelings, establish levels of mutual comfort, and promote rapport, consequently minimizing the potential for conflict.

3.5 Interpretation of (Im)polite Dialogue and Characterization

So far we have discussed pragmatically, the linguistic work, on how speakers are polite in their verbal productions and how they mitigate impoliteness linguistically. According to Carter and Simpson (2005), one of the advantages of application of
linguistic theories to literature is that they can provide interpreters with a descriptive framework against which they can assess their claims. In this section, the focus will be on the approach to politeness/impoliteness in dramatic texts, especially to the issue of how politeness/impoliteness helps us understand a fictional character. Culpeper (1998: 83) suggests that the choice of an (im)politeness strategy of a particular character helps to increase our understanding of the personality of this character. More specifically, it helps us to understand, (1) how characters position themselves relative to other characters, and (2) how they manipulate others in pursuit of their goals’ (1998: 83). Due to the limitation of the study only selected characters are studied in the light of (im)politeness theory.

In the play *Tughlaq*, Tughlaq is introduced as an embodiment of justice. Justice works in his kingdom without bias or discrimination. The king doesn’t discriminate between the powerful and the weak or on the basis of religion or creed. The common masses are initially stunned by his decision to abolish the jizia tax. They are further baffled by the king’s decision to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. He is skillful and wise enough to explain to the masses the importance of his decisions. In order to make the capital free from the fear of invaders, Tughlaq is shifting it from the city of Delhi to Daulatabad. Daulatabad being the city of Hindus will strengthen the bond between Muslims and Hindus. It will symbolise the unity between Muslims and Hindus. Tughlaq makes a polite announcement in inviting his mission in the following way.

MUHAMMAD: ... I invite you all to accompany me to Daulatabad. This is an invitation and not an order. Only those who have faith in me may come with me. With their help I shall build an empire which will be the envy of the world. (Scene i: 4)

He hopes to transform his kingdom into a land of peace, prosperity and progress. As has been mentioned earlier, requests and offers threaten the face of both participants. Here Tughlaq invites masses to join in his mission. Tughlaq feels that people will support his vision and decision. Tughlaq’s liberal and caretaking attitude represents
him as an ideal king. He prays to God to save him from sleep. Through the day he is busy looking after the routine affairs of the kingdom, it’s only at night that he can spend some time to the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. His Step-mother/Queen is worried about his late nights. She wants to know why Tughlaq never seem to go to bed at all these days. To which, Tughlaq answers very politely. It reveals his desire to transform his kingdom into a land of peace, prosperity and progress.

MUHAMMAD (theatrical): ... I look at the Pleiades and I think of Ibn-ul-Mottaz who thought it was an ostrich egg and Dur-rumma who thought it was as swallow. And then I want to go back to their poetry and sink myself in their words. Then again I want to climb up, up to the top of the tallest tree in the world, and call out to my people: ‘Come, my people, I am waiting for you. Confide in me your worries. Let me share your joys. Let’s laugh and cry together and then, let’s pray. Let’s pray till our bodies melt. And flow and our blood turns into air. History is ours to play with - ours now! Let’s be the light and cover the earth with greenery. Let’s be darkness and cover up the boundaries of nations. Come! I am waiting to embrace you all!’ But then how can I spread my branches in the stars while the roots have yet to find their hold in the earth? I wish I could believe in recurring births like the Hindu but I have only one life, one body, and my hopes, my people, my God all are fighting for it. Tell me, how dare I waste my time by sleeping? And don’t tell me to go and get married and breed a family because I won’t sleep.

(Scenario ii: 10)

Tughlaq is burning his midnight oil to be wise by reading poetry and philosophy of the great masters in order to lead his country towards utopia. He wants his citizens to live a dignified life of high morale. He wishes to see everyone happy. He wants to make his kingdom heaven on the earth. He wants to be away from the routine things of life. He is waking when the whole world is sleeping in order to make his kingdom a perfect place. Tughlaq’s noble views through polite speech acts elevate him to the sublime position. This is how the readers or the audience come to know about
Tughlaq’s ideals of peace, prosperity and harmony through his own words. He also possesses the virtue to strive hard in order to bring his dream into reality.

From the dialogue of the other characters, readers/audience come to know about Tughlaq-the tyrant. In Scene one, when Tughlaq is posed before us as an embodiment of justice, an old man and a Hindu person make following statements which kindles a suspicion about Tughlaq’s approach towards his people.

OLD MAN: What folly is this! May Heaven guide our Sultan.
HINDU: I don’t believe a word of it. There is something more to this, that much is obvious – (Scene i: 3)

Again people are not happy with his decision of shifting the capital to Daulatabad.

THIRD MAN: This is tyranny! Sheer tyranny! Move the capital to Daulatabad! Such things never happened in his father’s days - may his soul rest in peace. Now he’s got his father’s throne. He isn’t happy with that and - (Scene i: 4)

Through the conversation of the masses, a fact is revealed that Tughlaq has murdered his own father in order to get the throne. And Sheikh-Imam-ud-din is publicly sharing this fact. In Scene iv, through the dialogues of Shihab-ud-din and Ratansingh, it is brought into light that Tughlaq has manipulated the Imam. He sends him as an envoy to Ain-ul-Mulk, who is marching towards Delhi. He defeats Ain-ul-Mulk in a carefully planned war tactics and also eliminates Imam-ud-din, his arch-rival in politics. He is shrewd enough to anticipate the conspiracy hatched by his Amirs to assassinate him. He kills all the conspirators including Shihab-ud-din.

Tughlaq’s transformation from a just ruler to a vicious, scheming and cruel tyrant is a result of the descent among his courtiers and Amirs against his decisions. While Tughlaq thinks he is a visionary, his Amirs and courtiers view his decisions as the whims of a derailed tyrant. At heart he knows that his Amirs are unwilling or reluctant at least to concede. If he cannot convince them by arguments, he goes on using his powers i.e. he kills them.
MUHAMMAD: Najib, see that every man involved in this is caught and beheaded. Stuff their bodies with straw and hang them up in the palace-yard. Let them hang there for a week. No, send them round my kingdom. Let every one of my subjects see them. Let everyone see what … *(Chokes.)*

(Scene vi: 43)

In *Hayavadana*, the politeness by Kapila reveals his character. When Devadatta is mad after Padmini, the following dialogue takes place between Devadatta and Kapila.

DEVADATTA: …What’s the use of these hands and this head if I’m not to have her? My poetry won’t live without her. Shakuntalam will never be excelled. But how can I explain this to her? I have no cloud messenger. No bee to show the way. Now the only future I have is to stand and do penance in Pavana Veethi…

*(Act 1: 14-15)*

Kapila, after enquiring Padmini’s whereabouts, very politely responds Devadatta in the following manner.

KAPILA: My dear Devadatta, your cloud-messenger, your bee, your pigeon is sitting right in front of you and you don’t even know it? You wait here. I’ll go, find out her house, her name … *(Act 1: 15)*

Here, Devadatta’s positive face is maintained by Kapila. He understands his situation and treats him well with the above cited statement. This polite attitude shows Kapila’s strong bond of friendship towards his friend Devadatta. In fact, due to Kapila’s attempts Devadatta and Padmini’s marriage is solemnised.

In *Old Stone Mansion*, Prabha is a revolting character. Her speech reveals her attitude. Her comments on the situation and on various characters show her anxiety.

PRABHA: When father dies, the daughter must look out for herself.

SUDHIR: What do you lack?
PRABHA: I must live off whatever crumbs you brothers throw on me now. You’re all right. You’ll take your share and go off to Bombay. But let me tell you Sudhir, it’s not even five days since Tatyaji died. Five days. And Vahini has changed already. The house keys moved instantly to her into her keep. And Aai went instantly into the shadows of the backroom. When Tatyaji was alive, you couldn’t hear Vahini’s footfall on the Verandah. But within five days her orders are heard way outside the wada. (Act I, sc i: 141)

In traditional Indian culture, a girl is considered burden in the family till she gets married. A girl becomes guest to her family once she is married. Her relations with her family members become delicate after marriage. A girl is considered to be dependent on her father till she gets married. After marriage she is dependent on her husband and in her old age she has to depend on her son. In Old Stone Mansion, after Tatyaji’s death, Prabha feels there is no one to look after her. Her brothers are married and they have their own families to look after. Prabha, the only sister of Bhaskar and Sudhir, feels insecure. She doesn’t like the fact that after Tatyaji, Vahini centralizes everything in her hand so she complains it to Sudhir.

In one of the nights after dinner, the Deshpandes were discussing over their family matters. Bhaskar begins the issue of Prabha’s marriage. Prabha blames her brothers for not getting her a suitable husband and for not allowing her to learn further after matriculation. She points out that her brothers are responsible for the frugal status in which she lives. She is a girl who doesn’t like to get suppressed under any unsuitable situation. She doesn’t believe in patriarchal system and has a strong desire of studying higher classes.

BHASKAR: That’s how it is. Now didn’t I try my best to find a match for Prabha? But nothing worked at first. When it did, Prabha turned up her nose?

PRABHA: They were all bullocks off the farm. Not a single educated man amongst them.

BHASKAR: Two of your brothers are farmers as well.

PRABHA: I wanted an educated man.
BHASKAR: Why would an educated man marry you?

PRABHA (almost shouting): That’s right! First stop me from studying and then blame me for it! Weren’t you, as brothers, responsible in any way? You, Sudhir. Every time you came here you said you’d look for a match in Bombay. You never found time for me did you? You couldn’t even manage a simple thing like sending me books. Don’t think I’m panting to get married. It’s done with now. It’s too late. But don’t think that’ll stop me from holding a mirror up to your faces.

(Act 2, sc i: 166)

Bhaskar and Sudhir have a wordy combat over the issue of expenditure on the thirteenth and fourteenth day rituals. And to get money for the same they decide to sell the portion of the property which is in Aai’s name. Prabha gets angry at this solution. She feels that Bhaskar and Sudhir earn money so they should bear the expenditure and should not think of selling property which is in Aai’s name. She reacts in the following way which reveals her revolting temperament.

PRABHA: My dear able-bodied brothers! Why don’t you wear bangles? Selling the morsel from your mother’s mouth! And these two women, pretending as if they don’t know what’s going on.

(Act 2, sc i: 172-73)

Aai is compassionate, loving, sympathetic and a patient woman. When Vyenkatesh, her husband dies, she feels alone. She is a woman who is born and brought up in traditional rural life where patriarchal system has a strong hold in family and social structure. She has never disobeyed her husband nor argued over any matter. She even doesn’t feel irritated towards her mother-in-law, Dadi. She believes in patriarchal system and feels that all family members should obey the elder males of the family.

Chandu is working in the family like a servant. Aai is very much worried about her. Aai asks Chandu to eat something outside. Vahini pokes her nose in and behaves impolitely with Aai.

AAI (calling him as he passes): Chandu …

CHANDU: Coming
AAI: Have you brought the groceries?
CHANDU: No, Not yet.
AAI: Have you eaten anything since morning?
CHANDU: No.
AAI: Have a few bites, son. Parched rice, or something. How long will you starve?

(Vahini suddenly emerges from inside)

VAHINI (voice slightly edgy, raised): Nobody else has eaten either.
AAI: Yes dear. I only said it because he was fasting yesterday, Thursday.
He didn’t eat at night.
VAHINI: Was he the only one fasting? Now give up all these worries, please. Really!

(Act 1, sc ii: 147)

The dialogue reveals that Aai is now in the backdrop. In Indian family, mother-in-law is always given a due respect by the daughter(s)-in law. In fact a daughter-in-law has to show due respect to all family members of her in-laws though these members happen to be younger to her. She is supposed to speak very politely. In this piece of interaction, Vahini’s impolite statements ‘Nobody else has eaten either’ and ‘Was he the only one fasting? Now give up all these worries, please. Really’ show her disrespect for Aai and she insults Aai directly and Chandu indirectly.

In dramatic terms, impoliteness is particularly interesting because it generates the disharmony and conflict between characters which generates audience’s interest and often moves the plot forward (Culpeper 2002:83).

### 3.6 (Im)politeness and Playwrights

Positive face is an individual’s desire to be admired, esteemed, understood, and treated well by others. Negative face is the wish to be free from any imposition by others. It is a wish to have freedom of action. A person who praises his/her co-interactant is satisfying his positive face. On the other hand, if a person criticizes or reduces choice of action of his/her communique collaborator, it is a threat to the negative face of the other. It is a Face Threatening Act/FTA. Just as politeness strategies depend on the status, age, background etc., between the addressee and the addressee, impoliteness strategies are also measured using the same scale.
Fraser (1990:220) says, “It assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe certain behaviour.” Fraser (1990:220) also states “a positive evaluation (politeness) arises when an action is in congruence with the norm, a negative evaluation (impoliteness = rudeness) when action is to the contrary.” In defining the term ‘impoliteness’, Culpeper (1994:350) firstly defines ‘politeness’, quoting Lakoff (1989:102) who suggests, “Politeness can be defined as a means of minimizing confrontation in discourse”. Culpeper (1996:350) then says “impoliteness [is] the use of strategies that are designed to have the opposite effect – that of social disruption.”

As Apte (1974) says, expressions of apology and gratitude such as pardon, please, and thank you are relatively rare in Indian social or speech situations as they create distance between persons. As Lakoff (1990) mentions in native varieties of English question or interrogative statements are used to make request. It is comparatively more polite than the declaratives. And declaratives are more polite than imperatives. It gives a little chance to the addressee to refuse the request and increases the impact of politeness. In contrast, we find use of imperatives and declaratives to make request in the Indian context. This is the culture specificity of Indian English. Choice of politeness patterns of an Indian English speaker is reliant on various factors. First of all, deferential linguistic strategy which is an inevitable part of the Indian community is recognized by the speaker. Again number of factors do affect an Indian English speaker's choice of politeness patterns. Being a member of Indian community, the speaker knows the limited deferential linguistic strategies, recognizes his own social status among the conversational participants, and has knowledge of the underlying Indian politeness principle. Secondly, in a multilingual country like India when a speaker chooses a language other than an Indian language, (s) he prefers her/his Indian language artifacts, i.e., the politeness strategies and conventions which are appropriate in the Indian cultural system. It means most often for the linguistic choices of English, Indian speakers do follow the native conventions of politeness. Framework of politeness is no doubt universal but the strategies for politeness differ from one culture or community to another. Underlying principles in Asian culture assign a structure of appropriateness and politeness. In every interaction politeness principle directs conversational partners for-
i. knowing the relation of the speaker with the other members of the group

ii. realizing the acceptance or rejection of speaker’s intention by the members

iii. identifying the speakers dependence on the other members and as Asif Agha (2006:14) says-

iv. presenting self as a member of some social group, class and occupation or other category of personhood.

All these aspects comprise a context for construing the effect of speech.

Politeness being the universal phenomenon encompasses not only the politeness in the dialogues of the characters but also the playwright’s notion on the concept of politeness. The creator of any fictitious work, behind the scenes, has power over the actions in the plot of any genre, be it fiction, play or any other genre. In spite of their invisibility, they are considered to be omnipresent. A playwright does communicate to the audience through his characters. Some playwrights like Shakespeare, have created the character of Fool in their plays to communicate their intention to the audience. Hence, their involvement in the area of politeness is unavoidable.

Politeness in the use of language by the authors or playwrights, when they communicate to the readers, needs to be analyzed. Drama consists mainly of dialogues. The playwright’s presence is almost negligible. However, the dialogues by the characters bring out the extent of politeness used by the playwrights in their respective texts. And this becomes the language of the playwrights- polite or impolite which has an effect on the readers. Studies have been conducted on the politeness of the language used by the authors, playwrights, and poets in their works. For instance, Alexander Pope belonged to what we call the age of politeness. His poem The Rape of the Lock is greatly accepted inspite of a totally different perspective, which has been portrayed in the work. In other phases of culture, his politeness has been valourized in anything like the Augustan manner. But T S Eliot’s The Wasteland was not accepted. For many of its first readers, politeness consideration was certainly raised, and in that they found profoundly shocking and insulting. Hence politeness is an inseparable part of the writer’s language. Consciously or unconsciously, the reader will always have an immediate response to the degree of politeness experienced in the author’s writing and the author being aware of it takes note of it while writing.
Some scholars fully do not realize that writing does have a politeness dimension. The fullest study of politeness is done by Penelope Brown and Stephen C Levinson in their *Politeness Some Universals in Language Use* (1987), but all their examples are drawn from face to face, real life spoken conversation. And it has been applied to the verbal interaction of the characters in the plays in this chapter.

Geoffrey N Leech in his *Principles of Pragmatics* (1983:109) extends speech act theory to the collaborative illocutionary functions where the illocutionary goal is different from the social goal where politeness becomes paradoxical. Politeness basically includes asserting, reporting, announcing and instructing and as Leech proposes “most written discourse come in to this category as well”. In comparison with speech, writing is less politeness-oriented. Boldness in the language, expressed by the author, determine the degree of politeness.

Karnad and Elkunchwar are the dramatists with different perspectives of writing. Elkunchwar’s plays show the harsh realities of life with full transparency. It is quite evident in his language too. To depict the raw emotions of his characters in his plays, he uses language which is real hence without any shred of politeness. His characters, specially from *Sonata* and *Reflection*, are less polite, when compared to the characters portrayed by Karnad in *Tughlaq* and *Hayavadana*. There are instances in the selected plays, where the characters make of use of aggravating language like expressing dislike for the addressee, offending addressee’s beliefs and sensibilities, use of sarcasm, use of interruption etc.

Characters from all the selected plays are subjected to impoliteness from other characters. Just as politeness strategies depend on the status, age, background etc, between the addressee and addresser, impoliteness strategies are also measured using the same scale.

Following is an example of impoliteness strategy from Karnad’s *Wedding Album*.

YOUTH 2: And I won’t mention this to your brother. Go now. Don’t repeat this mistake. We’ll take care of this attendant.

VIDULA (*in a low voice*): Why don’t you fuck off?
(The young men gasp.)

YOUTH 1: Did you hear that? Did you hear what she said? And you say she is one of you?

VIDULA (her voice rising): I have paid for the computer time. I have paid to be left alone in this room. To work here without being disturbed. What gives you right to come in here? I’ll do what I like here. Who the hell are you to question me?

YOUTH 1: We are here as the guardians of our tradition, our ancient …

VIDULA: You have no bloody right. You have no fucking right to harass me.

YOUTH 1: Mind your words, lady. Don’t use fuck and bloody to us.

VIDULA: I’ll say what the hell I like. Why are you here?

(A new thought strikes her.)

You have come here to rape me, haven’t you? You want to attack me.

(Screaming)

Fucking rapists …

ATTENDANT: Easy, madam. Easy now. (Scene vi: 70-71)

Use of abusing words, in Karnad’s Wedding Album, by Vidula, explicitly shows her impolite behaviour. In scene vi, when Vidula is secretly enjoying pornographic site in café, two youths, who call themselves as the protectors of Indian culture, arrive in the café. These youths get angry with the attendant of the café and Vidula. Their approach towards Vidula becomes softened as one of the youths knows her brother well. But Vidula gets annoyed and impolitely make use of words ‘fuck off’, ‘bloody right’, and ‘fucking right’. These face threatening words by Vidula are an example of negative aggravation.

In Elkunchwar’s Sonata, the bond of friendship between Aruna, Dolon, and Subhadra influences the language used among them. The familiarity quotient among them results in a not-so polite language. The three of them have lived together for so long, that they have taken one another for granted. It is clear by the following utterances used by them.

ARUNA: How she ignores me, meli! (Act 1: 246)
DOLON: Shubhodra!

SUBHADRA: Ari ari! Kya kar rahi ho!

DOLON: Esho naa ma.

SUBHADRA: What has come over her Aru? (To Dolon) Meri hathini. Sookh gayi hai. (Act 1: 263)

ARUNA: Subhe, I am glad you didn’t marry him. (Act 1: 265)

SUBHADRA: Aruna!

ARUNA: Bolo Bhavani! (Act 1: 269)

SUBHADRA (mockingly sad): Duniya kya kahati hogi hame?

DOLON: Fuck duniya. (Act 1: 271)

SUBHADRA: Get me some wine darling. (Act 1: 271)

One can see that the familiarity between individuals can bring about a change in the use of polite language. People are polite with strangers, because they have the desire to be liked and appreciated. But they can afford impoliteness in their interaction if they are friends or well acquainted, and in most cases, this type of behaviour is not considered as a face threatening act by the addressee.

The opening of Reflection, where the character of Woman, who is about fifty, makes a lengthy list of advises to her paying guest HE, regarding what to do and not. It reveals her impolite behaviour. The Woman is the house owner and an elderly lady. Due to her age and position, she has an authoritative approach towards HE.

In Hayavadana, When Devadatta and Kapila exchange their bodies due to Padmini’s mistake, they start quarrelling over the right to win Padmini. Which head or body should possess Padmini is a question that they cannot easily settle. At this critical juncture, impolite language has been used by them.

KAPILA [explaining]: I mean you are Devadatta’s wife. I have Devadatta’s body now. So you have to be my wife …
PADMINI: Shut up . . .
DEVADATTA: Don’t blather like an idiot! I am Devadatta . . .
PADMINI: Aren’t you ashamed of yourself? (Act 1: 36)

. . .

PADMINI: Come, Devadatta, It’s no use arguing with this rascal.
Let’s go.
DEVADATTA: Come on . . .
KAPILA [stepping between them]: Where are you taking my wife friend?
DEVADATTA: Will you get out of our way or should . . .
KAPILA: It was you who got in my way.
DEVADATTA [pushing Kapila aside]: get away, you pig. (Act 1: 37)

. . .

KAPILA: I know what you want, Padmini. Devadatta’s clever head and
Kapila’s strong body . . .
DEVADATTA: Shut up, you brute. (Act 1: 38)

. . .

PADMINI [crying out]: How can we get rid of this scoundrel? Let’s go-let’s go
anywhere-to the woods-to the desert-anywhere you like. (Act 1: 38)

Use of impolite language by Devadatta and Padmini for Kapila, show their strong
social position. One who has clever head and strong body can easily take over the
otherwise. They lack respect for one another and impoliteness in their behaviour
shows crumbling in their relations.

Paying no heed to one’s attention or overlooking it is also a kind of impoliteness. This
rises from the hierarchal system that is prevalent in Indian society. An instance of it is
found in Karnad’s Tughlaq.

HINDU WOMAN: Please let me go sir . . . My child . . . please have mercy on
it . . . only for a day, sir . . .
AZIZ: I told you I can’t. No one can be allowed out of sight until we reach
Daulatabad. I’m sorry, but I have my orders.
HINDU WOMAN: But I’ll return tomorrow . . . I swear by my child I will . . .
It’s dying, Your Excellency, I have to take it to a doctor. . . .
AZIZ: But what can I do? There’s the hakim’s tent. Go to him. He’ll give you some medicine. *(In a low voice)* I’ve told you I could try and bribe my senior officials, but you’ll have to pay for it.

HINDU WOMAN: But I haven’t got a paisa on me, Your Excellency. And what will I give the doctor? My husband’s also ill, sir, please, I hold your feet- please let me go.

AZIZ: I can’t waste any more time on you. There’s a lot of work here. Stop screaming and get back to your tent- I said, get back to your tent!

*The HINDU WOMAN goes out weeping.*

(Scene vii : 47)

In this scene, a Hindu woman is pleading in front of Aziz to get permission to leave the camp to show her ill child to a doctor. Aziz, an in charge officer of a camp of citizens, who are on their way to Daulatabad, considers woman as an inferior and doesn’t show mercy on her. He also expects bribe from her. The authority with which Aziz addresses the woman, shows his dominance over the woman and the citizens in that camp.

*Old Stone Mansion* has an example of negative evaluation. It is also an impolite way of treating people.

BHASKAR: Has the crown prince come home?

SUDHIR: Bhau-

BHASKAR: Take a good look at your Raghoba’s ways. I warned him-if You dare step out, you’ll have to face me. He couldn’t stay indoors Even for these ten days of mourning. Where’s the scoundrel?

VAHINI: Sleeping. He looked startled when he saw Bhauji. Felt ashamed to face him. Now don’t start shouting at him. He’s feeling miserably guilty as it is poor soul.

BHASKAR: This … this is how you shield him! That’s what’s spoilt him. If his ass has been whipped at the right time, things wouldn’t have come to such a pass.

VAHINI: Sudhir-bhauji’s taking him to Bombay. He’ll improve in Abhay’s company.
BHASKAR: He? Improve? Hah! Abhay will get spoilt in his company.
VAHINI: I wish you wouldn’t lash out at him like this all the time.
BHASKAR: You think it makes me happy to say such things? What a fine body he had! Like a piece of gold! And now his ribs stick out all over.
VAHINI: Please!
BHASKAR: We kill ourselves working all day, and this fellow loafs or sleeps like a buffalo. If anybody’s to bring credit to the Dharangaonkar Deshpande name, it’ll be your Abhay. Don’t let even the shadow of this family wastrel fall on him. (Act 1, sc iii: 155)

Negative evaluation is an impolite way of treating the people. In the above dialogue, Bhaskar makes negative evaluation of his son Parag aka Raghoba. He considers Parag to be good for nothing. He refers him as ‘crown prince’, ‘scoundrel’, and ‘buffalo’. Literally, the word ‘crown prince’ means a respected fellow belonging to an elite class. Here the contextual meaning of the term ‘crown prince’ is not less than an abusing word like rascal or a useless fellow. He uses such words as being a father he is authoritative enough to scold him. Besides, Parag is neither serious at his studies nor doing any help for his family. Moreover, he takes drinks secretly. Bhaskar uses such insulting words to show his anger and care for his son.

The above discussed examples of both politeness and impoliteness strategies bring out the stylistic features of the duo playwrights. They have an impact on the audience in their own way. Use of aggravating and polite language by various characters in the selected plays soothe as well as shock the audience. The language used by the characters make the conversation effective. It also shows the style of language prevalent in different historical, political and social era and conditioning. The selected plays thematically refer to the incidents ranging from mythological, historical, modern and postmodern era. The language use of characters signifies the acceptance and non-acceptance of certain politeness terminology. For instance, the politeness terms used in the historical play Tughlaq are not suitable for the postmodern life discussed in Reflection and Sonata. It doesn’t stir up the quiescent sentiments in the readers, but let them know the undercurrents of the context and the relations between/among the characters. Except exceptional occasions as discussed above, aggravating and
impolite language is not used by the characters. Hence, Karnad and Elkunchwar have driven their oint across, in their own styles of writing. We also observe that, there are certain differences but in many ways Leech’s principles of Pragmatics are similar to those of Brown and Levinson’s.

To understand politeness is also basic to bilingualism, for nowadays bilingualism is promoted due to the usefulness of language in literary and non-literary fields. Karnad and Elkunchwar both have written their plays in native Indian languages like Hindi, Kannada and Marathi. Their works have been translated into English. Hence, it becomes essential to study politeness in both, Indian as well as non-Indian language like English, while making the analytical, critical or linguistic study of such plays.

3.7 Conclusion

Politeness rules regulate inter-personal relationships so as to ensure that harmony as a social good may prevail. Politeness is essential in social interaction whether it is between people of the same culture, the same social status, the same age and level of education or not. As Vimala Herman (2005:190) mentions, the rights, responsibilities, taboos, of speech with respect to status race, gender, age, of the participants affect the way language can be used in contexts of communication. Also, norms of social behaviour require attention since linguistic behaviour in interaction is often assessed socially.

The focus in this chapter is on politeness in language usage rather than in non-linguistic behaviour. An analysis of the expressions in the light of politeness principle has been done. Characters’ positive and negative strategies and manner of expressions reveal the relationships between themselves. Familiarity, Sincerity, Reciprocity and Indirectness in verbal behaviour of the character(s) reveal the polite dimension in Indian society. The chapter also discusses the politeness strategies employed by the playwrights through their characters. Aggravating and impolite linguistic strategies disclose the playwrights’ styles of writing. Politeness principle also helps in revealing thematic concerns of the selected plays.