

Translating Politeness: Case of Hindi and English

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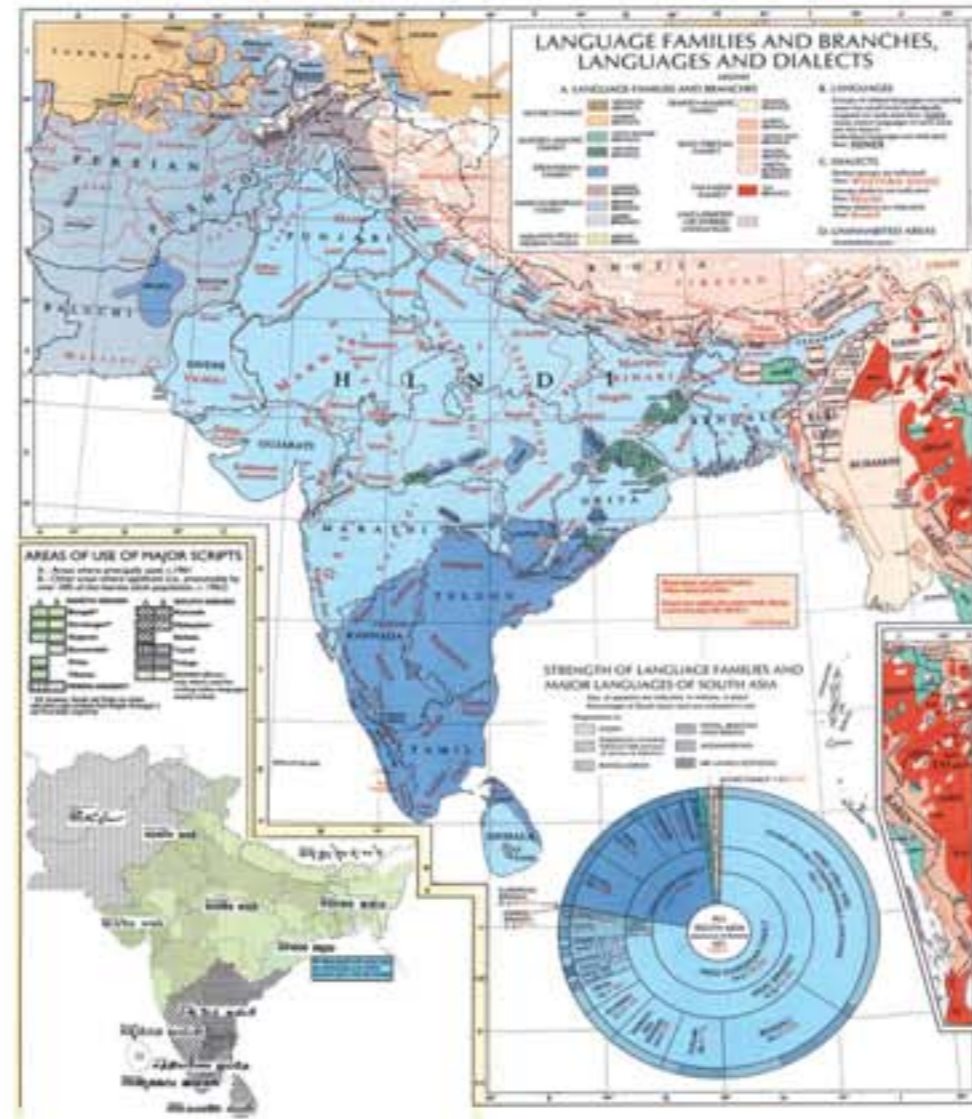
Description

Polite (or, politic) behaviour has been defined as “socioculturally determined behaviour”, which implies that it differs across different societies and cultures, thereby, being a fertile breeding ground for intercultural misunderstandings and conflicts. We present here a corpus based study of politeness across two languages-English and Hindi. It studies politeness in a translated parallel corpus of Hindi and English and sees how politeness in a Hindi text is translated into English.

Using the framework mentioned below and the taxonomy of speech acts given by Searle, we have studied 4000 sentences till now (2000 in each domain). Since the corpus mainly comprises formal data taken from newspapers, magazines etc, we have found only assertives and directives till now. In between these two, politeness value could be attached only to the directives.

On the basis of this small sample, it could be concluded that situation 2 is indeed the most common situation. However, contrary to our initial hypothesis, situation 1 is also quite a common situation while situation 4 is quite rare. These conclusions need to be verified with further data.

Our aim is to further systematise the differences in terms of precise grammatical categories so that the differences between the two languages could be generalized in broader grammatical and pragmatic terms which could be later implemented for other purposes like machine translation and language pedagogy.



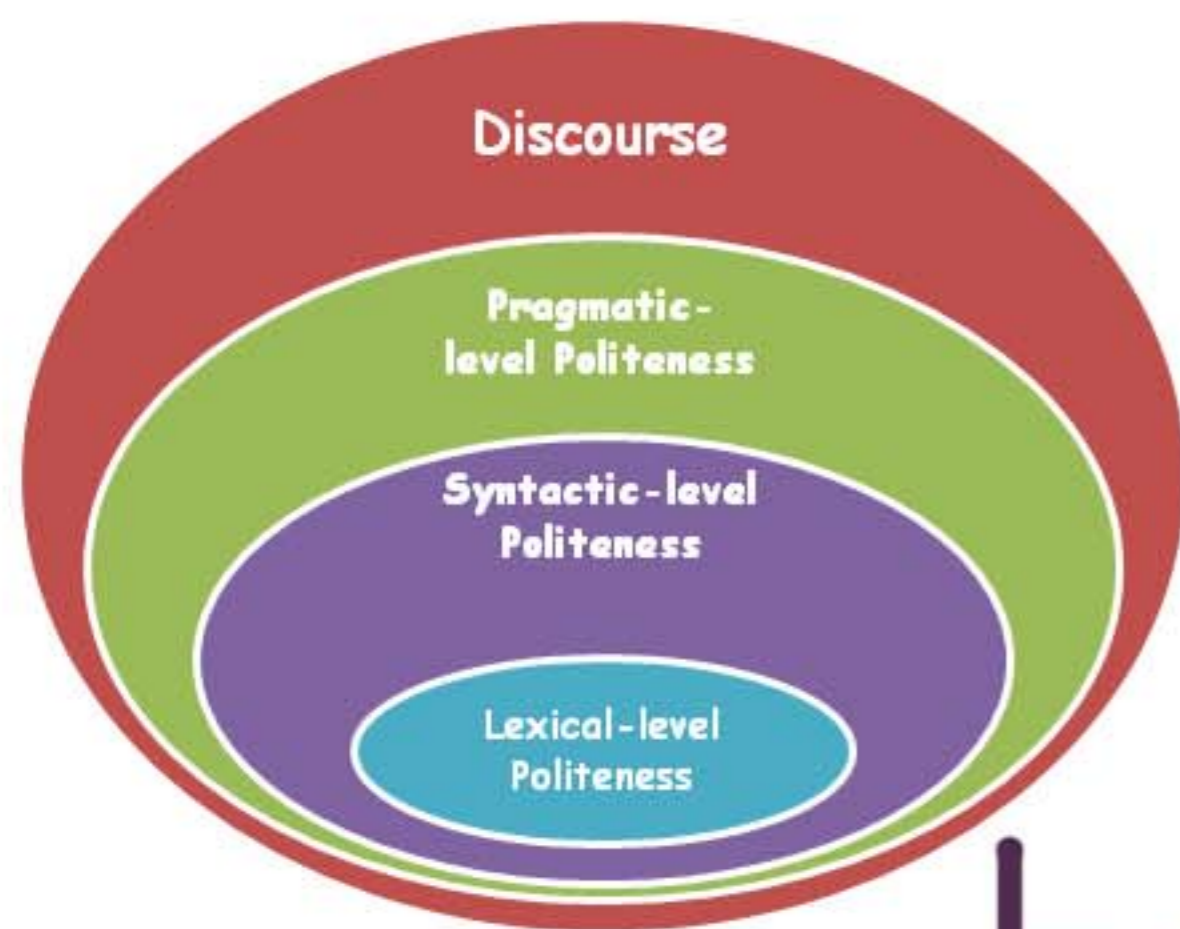
Applications

[IN A COUNTRY LIKE INDIA
WITH 1635 MOTHER TONGUES
22 SCHEDULED LANGUAGES
AND 2 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES]

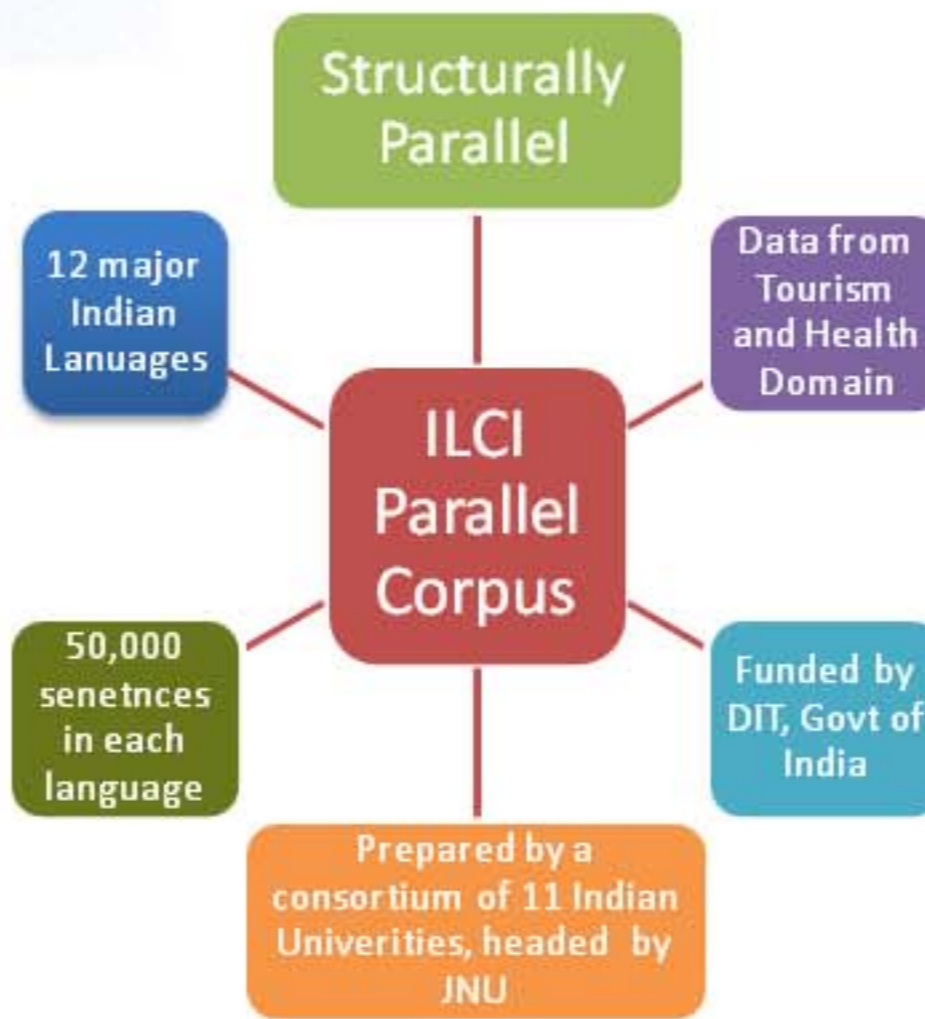
Machine Translation, particularly of official and sensitive documents

Language Pedagogy, where the students are systematically told about the contrast between the two languages in such speech acts as requesting, commanding, questioning, apologizing, etc.

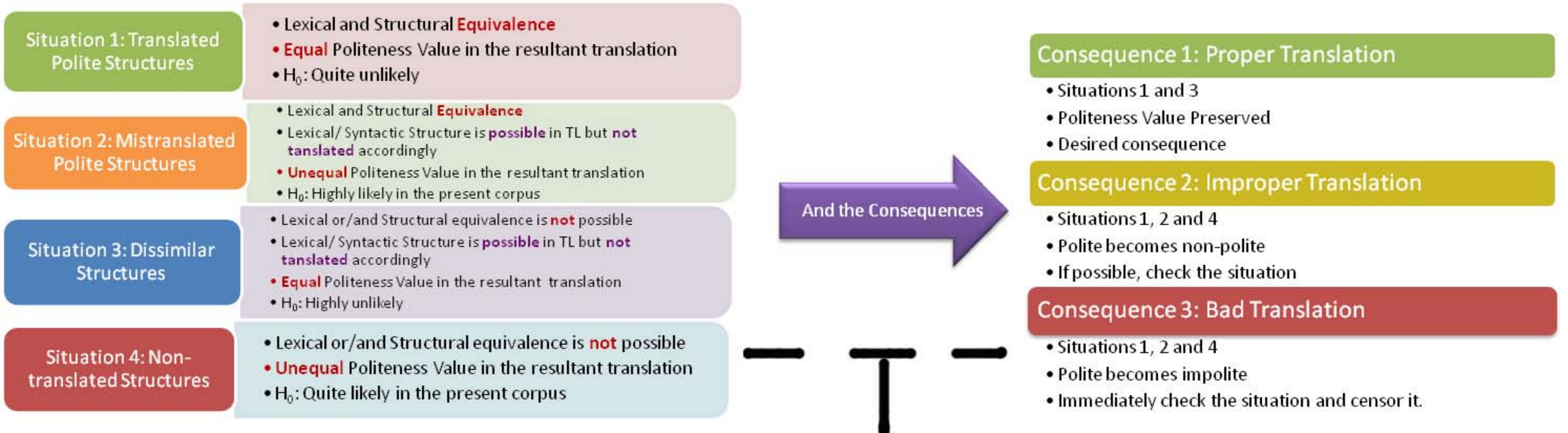
In theoretical politeness studies, a kind politeness typology could be developed



Levels of Politeness

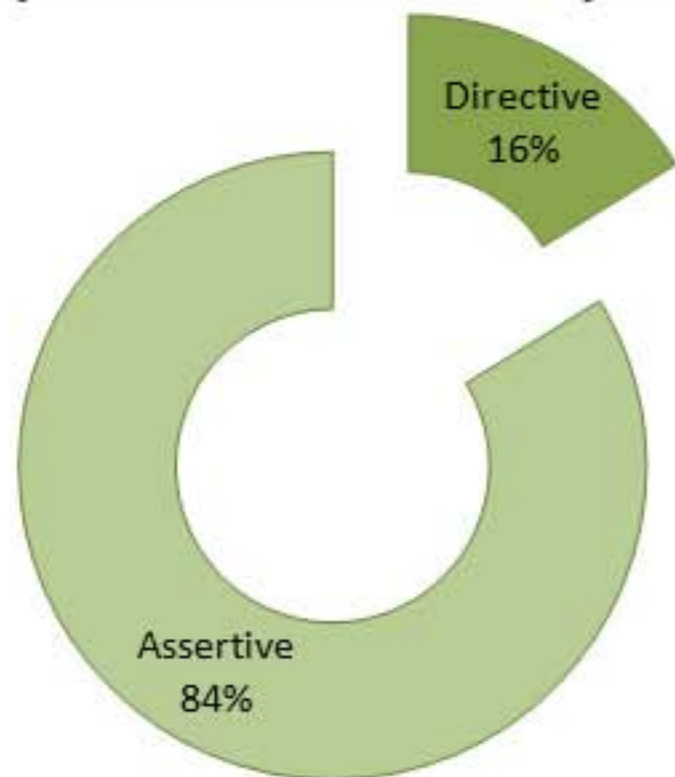


The Framework

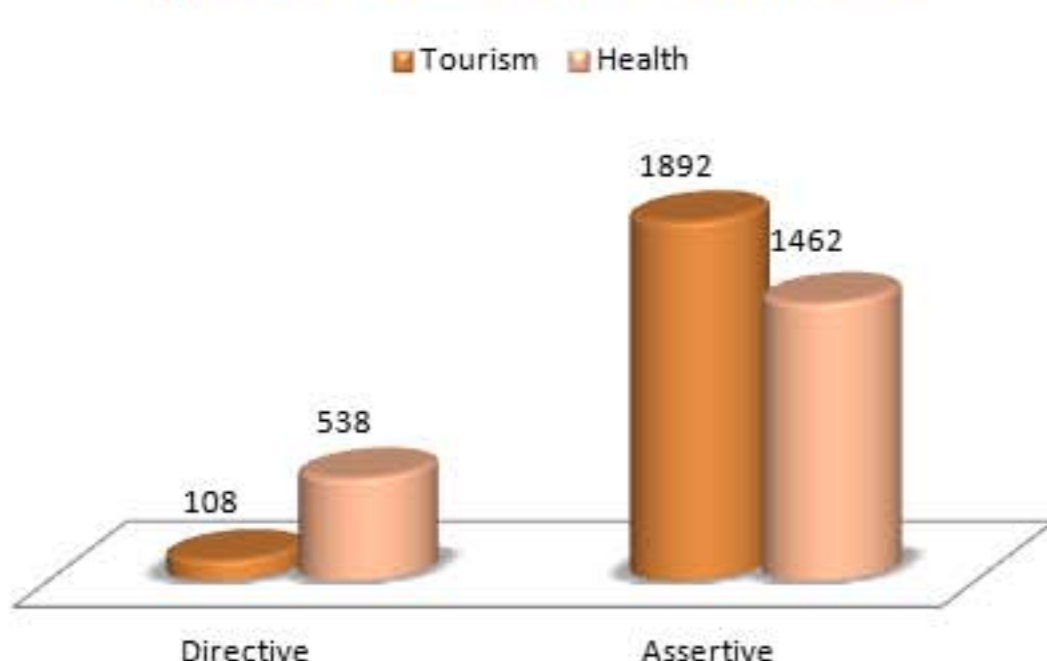


The Corpus and the Results

Speech Acts in the Corpus



Speech Acts and the Domains



An Example of Different Situations and Consequences

| Situation | Consequence 1 | Consequence 2 | Consequence 3 |
|-------------|--|---|---------------|
| Situation 1 | सोनभद्र में बारीक जल की धारा देखी जा सकती है। Fine stream of water can be seen in Sonbhadra | NA | NA |
| Situation 2 | NA | किसी भी हालत में बच्चे को दस्त लगने पर उसे प्यासा न रखें। At any cost do not keep the child thirsty in dysentery | NA |
| Situation 3 | अगर बच्चे के शरीर का तापमान फिर चढ़ता है, तो स्पॉजिंग को दोहरा सकते हैं। If the body temperature of the child again increases, then sponging can be repeated. | NA | NA |
| Situation 4 | NA | रामघाट से लगभग डेढ़ दो किलोमीटर की दूरी पर जानकी कुंड है जहाँ नौका द्वारा जाया जा सकता है। At a distance of about one or one and a half kilometre from Ramghat is the Janki Kund where one can go by boat. | NA |

Situations in the Corpus



Consequences in Different Situations

