

relative power of the speaker and the age of the hearer, while neither sex nor relative social distance have a strong predictive value.

From an etic point of view the findings of the above study may be interpreted as reflecting the distinct culture-specific interactional style of the Israeli society. The low value attached to social distance manifested in language by a relatively high level of directness suggests that the interactional style of the society is basically solidarity-politeness oriented. From an emic point of view, the findings indicate that in Israeli society, as elsewhere, variation in requesting behaviour is to a large extent determined by social factors inherent in the situation. Thus, the study is an example of the inter-dependence of language and social situations.

9.2 The Present Research

Brown and Levinson model provides to assess the Weight of the face threat depending upon the three social parameters. They are :

1. relative social distance between speaker and hearer
2. relative power of speaker vis-a-vis the hearer
- and 3. the degree of imposition involved in performing the act.

Brown and Levinson admit that relative power, relative distance and degree of imposition need not be the factors that affect assess-

ment of face, yet they claim that "they subsume all others (status, authority, occupation, ethnic identity, friendship, situational factors, etc.) that have a principled effect on such assessments" (Brown and Levinson, 1987 : 80). Taking the point of view that within the same society or cultural group some variables can cause variations in the language use, this research has aimed to study the following :

1. The general pattern of request available in Tamil language.
 2. Characteristic features of request in relation to different social groups.
 3. Pattern of request with reference to different social groups.
- and 4. Analysis of the linguistic elements/structures involved in politeness or authoritative mechanisms, and counting their occurrences for quantification to findout their frequency of occurrence.

9.2.1 Data for the Study

The informants selected for this study have been asked to make a request for a given situation. Six categories of subjects have been selected and asked to make the request. The selected category of subjects are :

- (1) Unacquainted person (2) Neighbourhood (3) Friend (4) Colleague
(5) Superior and (6) Subordinate.

One will have no idea about the background of the stranger. Age and mode of dressing of the person gives some clue about the stranger. Community leader is usually respected by his community people and he is the person having some control over the conduct of the local people's ceremonies and rituals. Quite often he serves as an opinion leader. Neighbourhood is the place where one establishes a lot of contact in the day-to-day activities. Outside the house, the informant spends most of the time with his friends. Hence, these categories are selected. In office/working place, the informant has to spend his time with his colleagues. So this category also is selected. Though he has limited contact with his superior, (the language use between them also may be limited) this category is selected because the rank or social position difference will lead to usage of different linguistic patterns. Subordinates were taken into consideration because this will supply data on how the informants exercise power through language while talking with their subordinates.

Community leader is selected from each community on the basis of informant's caste and the question 'how he will request on his community leader to do something?' was asked. Neighbourhood is the actual neighbourhood of the informant. Colleague is considered

as the co-worker to the informant. For instance, to an agricultural labourer, another agricultural labourer is a colleague; to a landlord, another landlord is a colleague; to a clerk, another clerk is a colleague; to a gurukkal, another gurukkal is a colleague. Similarly, superior means boss/employer. Thus to an agricultural labourer, the landlord is a superior; to the gurukkal, the dharma-kartta is a superior; to the service caste people, the landlord is a superior; to the bank cashier, the branch manager is a superior; to the postman, the postmaster is a superior; to the teacher, the headmaster is a superior; to the student, the headmaster/principal is a superior and so on.

Subordinates are those who assist in the work. For instance, a landlord may have pannaiya:l 'farm labourer' who works in the farm of the landlord throughout the year. For landlord, pannaiya:l is a subordinate. Similarly for agricultural labourers, service caste people such as to:tti 'menial servant' or sweeper are subordinates. In offices peons are subordinates.

9.3 General Pattern of Request

The patterns of request varies from person to person. However, based on the role played or the position of the person in the society, linguistic elements get changed in the pattern of request. The

relationship between the speaker and hearer who take part in the speech event destines the linguistic structure.

When a person requests something from other, he actually interferes in other person's activities i.e., he is disturbing the freedom of action of that individual. Hence the requester uses a polite language which ultimately pacifies the hearer. However, if the requester is a known person to the requestee, then their statuses play a vital role over the choice of linguistic items in making the request. That is, the linguistic structures get changed based on their role relationship.

9.3.1 The Structure of Requesting Sentences

An analysis of the following sentence enables us to understand the mechanisms involved in making the request.

sa:r pe:ppar paṭicciṭṭi:ṅkanna:

sir paper read + pas.Ten. + If.

koñcam kuṭun̄ka

pa:ttuṭṭut

tarre:n

Persu. give + Hon.Suf. see + Aux. Com. give + Pre.Ten. I PT

"Sir, if(you) have read the paper, please give, (I) will return after going through it".

In the above mentioned sentence, two mechanisms are involved in making this request. They are,