

SPEECH ACT OF SUGGESTION IN ENGLISH AND MARATHI: A CONTRASTIVE PERSPECTIVE¹

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Abstract

The present research paper seeks to analyze the speech act of Suggestion performed by the Marathi speakers both in English and Marathi languages. For the purpose, the responses of 50 post-graduate students of Shivaji University to Discourse Completion Tests in English and Marathi are collected and analyzed using the model of speech act of Suggestion proposed by Martinez-Flor (2005). The focus of analysis is on the manner and nature of speech act, the semantic strategies in which the head act is realized, the organization structure of the response and the preferred supportive moves. The analysis and the resultant conclusions are presented in terms of comparison between English and Marathi Suggestions.

Key words: Speech act of Suggestion, Marathi, English, Head Act, Semantic Strategy, Organization Structure, etc.

Introduction

Suggestions are one of the sub-types of the Directive Speech Acts. In the use of the Speech Act of Directives, the purpose of the Speaker is to make the hearer commit him/herself to some future course of action. Thus, this type of Speech Act attempts to make the world match the words. Directives contain different types of Speech Acts like Request, Commands and Suggestions. Haverkate (1984) distinguishes between Impositive and Non-Impositive Directives. The Impositive Directives include more threatening acts like Request, Order, and Pleading. The Non-Impositive Directives are Suggestion and Instruction. The major difference between them is that of benefits: in the Impositive Directives, the carrying out of the action benefits the Speaker, whereas in the Non-Impositive Directives, the benefits are meant for the Hearer. Nonetheless, the fact remains that Suggestion is a Face-threatening Speech Act, because in its realization, the Speaker in a way intrudes into the Hearer's world by performing an act about what the hearer should do. Therefore, in the performance of the Speech Act of Suggestion, many factors should be taken into consideration: the urgency of

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the suggestion, the degree of embarrassment in the situation, and above all the social Distance and Power between the Speaker and the Hearer.

The Speech Act of Suggestion, can be classified into two types: the ‘Inclusive– We Suggestions’, where the Suggestion benefits both the Speaker and the Hearer; and, the ‘Non-Inclusive Suggestions’, for the benefits of the Hearer alone. On the basis of this discussion of the Speech Act of Suggestion, the following facts of the Speech Act can be enlisted:

1. Suggestion includes performing the Speech Act for the benefits of either both the Speaker and the Hearer, or only for that of the Hearer.
2. The Speaker believes that a particular action of the Hearer will be profitable for both of them or only for the Hearer.
3. It is a Face-threatening Speech Act, in which the Speaker intrudes the world of the Hearer, making the situation embarrassing.
4. Since it involves asking the Hearer to do something, it should be done with appropriate linguistic realization.
5. It requires the use of Politeness formulae to soften the burden that the Speaker is imposing on the Hearer.

Review of Literature

Koike (1996) claims that the speech act of suggestions are generally made for the best interest of the listener. However, they are also made sometimes in the best interest of the speaker. Since, this is a directive speech act; it requires a future action on the part of the listener. He further argues that due to the complexity of this speech act, even the native speakers of the language sometimes misunderstand the intention of the speaker. In his study, he identifies certain similar and different strategies of suggesting in English and Spanish.

Pearson (2006) investigates the acquisition of L2 Pragmatic Competence by the novice learners of L2 Spanish. Particularly, he assessed the various strategies in the realization of directives. Using the role-play technique for data collection, Pearson investigated quantitatively and qualitatively the relationship between L2 Grammatical Competence, L1 transfer and L2 Pragmatic development. Pearson (2006: 489) found that Pragmatic Competence precedes Grammatical Competence and also that L1 pragmatic system plays a role both in interpreting and processing L2 data in production.

Data Collection and Model of Analysis

Martinez-Flor (2005: 175) elaborates the linguistic strategies used in the realization of the Speech Act of Suggestion and it is presented in the table 1.

TYPE	STRATEGY	EXAMPLE
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DIRECT	Performative Verb	I suggest that you... I advise you to ... I recommend that you ...
	Noun of Suggestion	My suggestion would be...
	Imperative	Try using...
	Negative Imperative	Don't try to...
	Specific Formulae (interrogative forms)	Why don't you...? How about...? What about...? Have you thought about...?
CONVENTIONALISED FORMS	Possibility/Probability	You can... You could... You may... You might...
	Should	You should...
	Need	You need to...
	Conditional	If I were you, I would ...
INDIRECT	Impersonal	One thing (that you can do) would be Here's one possibility: ... There are a number of options that you... It would be helpful if you... It might be better to ... A good idea would be ... It would be nice if...
	Hints	I've heard that...

Table 1: Linguistic Realization of Suggestion

For the present study too the same model is used. For the collection of the data, two Discourse Completion Tests – one in English and one in Marathi – each consisting of three situations demanding the response of speech act of suggestion are used. The DCTs are

administered to 50 Marathi learners of English randomly selected from post-graduate departments of Shivaji University. The situations in both the DCTs are the same and they are provided at the end of the paper. However, the DCT in English is administered first; and, after the gap of a month, the second DCT in Marathi is administered to the same students. The purpose was to minimize the unnecessary variation caused due to individual factors of the respondents. The collected responses of the respondents are analyzed for the manner and the nature of the speech act, the semantic strategies in which the head act of the response is realized and the organization structure of the response with preference of supportive moves. The following is the discussion of the analysis.

Suggestion in English

When the responses received to all the three situations demanding speech act of suggestion as a response are put together, it is seen that out of 150 expected responses, in six cases the response is not provided and the nine received responses are inappropriate. Therefore, 135 responses are analyzed. Out of them, the majorities (113 responses) make use of implicit speech act; whereas the speech act in remaining 22 responses is explicit, mostly performed with the help of a performative verb.

When the responses are studied for the nature of the speech act used, Table 2 emerges.

Nature of Speech Act	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Direct	32	40	23	95
Conventionally Indirect	14	9	17	40
Inappropriate Response	4	0	5	9
No response	0	1	5	6
Total	50	50	50	150

Table 2: Nature of Speech Act of Suggestion (all Situations)

As the table shows, the tendency visible in the first situation changes in the remaining two situations. In second situation, where the addressee is 'a friend', the number of direct nature of speech act increases and that of the indirect nature decreases. On the contrary, in situation 3 where the addressee is 'a professor', the number of direct speech acts decreases and that of the indirect ones increases. However, one thing has to be noted and that is even though the addressee is 'a professor', not all the suggestions are realized in indirect manner. Following examples show the tendencies of the respondents:

Direct: just read the book with your own understanding and read again & again.* (ES2/1)

(Note: Here and hereafter the symbol ‘*’ indicates that the utterance is ungrammatical.)

Direct: I will meet the professor, I will request him to, please held the oral examination in next week, because next weak will be convenient for all the students.* (ES3/2)

Conventionally indirect: I cant explain the whole topic to you. So If you read XYZ book you will easily understand the topic.* (ES1/39)

Conventionally indirect: Sir, next week is very suitable to all students. So will you decide oral examination in the next week.* (ES3/35)

Table 3 details the situation-wise preference for semantic strategy used as the Head Act.

HA Semantic Strategy	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Performative verb	10	2	10	22
Imperative	20	35	8	63
Negative Imperative	0	1	0	1
Interrogative form	1	2	7	10
Possibility / Probability	7	2	4	13
Should	1	4	2	7
Need	1	2	0	3
Conditional	3	1	0	4
Impersonal	3	0	8	11
Hints	0	0	1	1
Inappropriate Response	4	0	5	9
No response	0	1	5	6
Total	50	50	50	150

Table 3: HA Strategy of Speech Act of Suggestion (all Situations)

The table shows that the total number of strategies used by the respondents for this speech act is ten. Out of them, five strategies are importantly used. The ‘performative verb’ strategy is associated with the direct reference to the illocutionary force of the utterance. There are 22 responses in which this strategy is used. But the number of responses in which this strategy is used for situation 2 is very less as compared to the other situations, possibly

because the addressee here is 'a friend'. The most preferred strategy for suggestion is 'imperative form', but as we go from situation 2 to situation 1 and to situation 3, the number of such responses decreases, possibly because of the identity of the addressee in the respective situations. The indirect strategies like 'interrogative form' and 'impersonal statement' are preferred more in case of situation 3. Following are the examples of various semantic strategies used by the respondents:

Imperative: I will suggest him that solve the good papers and achieve the Good marks.* (ES2/32)

Should: you should study hard unless you study you will not achieve or It will get one year extra for your achievement.* (ES2/39)

Interrogative: "Sir can we take the oral examination on next week?"* (ES3/16)

Possibility: Sir you can conduct oral examination in the next week.* (ES3/26)

Impersonal: Next week is comfortable for all students.* (ES3/37)

The structure of the responses in which they are expressed needs to be analyzed, which is shown in Table 4. As the table indicates, out of seven organization structures deployed for this speech act, three are the most preferred ones. The first structure, 'only HA', is present in 63 responses; 'HA+SM' structure is present in 33 and 'SM+HA' structure is present in 20 responses. Thus, the respondents are of the opinion that for the three suggestions given here, the speech act of suggestion does not require more than one supportive move.

Organization Structure	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Only HA	13	27	23	63
SM + HA	6	6	8	20
HA + SM	16	10	7	33
SM + HA + SM	8	2	0	10
(SM) + HA	1	0	2	3
HA + (SM)	1	4	0	5
SM + HA + (SM)	1	0	0	1
No Appropriate Response	4	0	5	9
No response	0	1	5	6
Total	50	50	50	150

Table 4: Organization Structure of Speech Act of Suggestion (all Situations)**Suggestion in Marathi**

The bringing together of the data received for all the three situations will give clear picture of the way the speech act of suggestion is realized in Marathi. Considered together, out of the 150 expected responses, three are not received and two received responses are inappropriate and all the remaining 145 responses realize the speech act of suggestion in implicit manner.

The situation-wise preferences for the nature of the speech act are provided in Table 5. The table clearly indicates that across all the situations, the direct nature of the speech act is preferred. Therefore, there are total 101 responses in which the direct speech act is employed. On the contrary, the conventionally indirect nature of the speech act is used more for situation 3 and the least in situation 2, where 'a professor' and 'a friend' are the addressee respectively.

Nature of Speech Act	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Direct	35	41	25	101
Conventionally Indirect	14	9	21	44
Inappropriate Response	0	0	2	2
No response	1	0	2	3
Total	50	50	50	150

Table 5: Nature of Speech Act of Suggestion (Marathi)

The following examples show the nature of speech acts used by the respondents:

Conventionally indirect: मी तुला माझ्याकडे असलेलं पुस्तक देईन, ते तू वाचन करून टॉपीक समजून घेऊ शकतेस.* (MS1/16)

Conventionally indirect: सर, कृपया तुम्ही पुढील आठवड्यातील तारीख मौखिक परीक्षा घ्याल का?*(MS3/12)

Direct: वेळेचे योग्य नियोजन करून अभ्यास कर असा सल्ला देईन.* (MS2/4)

Direct: सर,पुढील आठवड्यातील तारीख योग्य राहिल. त्या आठवड्यात सुट्ट्या नाहीत.* (MS3/8)

The preference given to the semantic strategy for the realization of the head act and its situation-wise distribution is given in Table 6.

HA Semantic Strategy	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Performative verb	10	5	22	37
Imperative	25	36	3	64
Interrogative form	0	0	2	2
Possibility / Probability	1	0	14	15
Conditional	0	0	1	1
Impersonal	12	8	3	23
Hints	1	1	1	3
Inappropriate Response	0	0	2	2
No response	1	0	2	3
Total	50	50	50	150

Table 6: HA Strategy of Speech Act of Suggestion (Marathi)

The table clearly indicates that 'imperative' is the most preferred semantic strategy for the first two situations; but in case of the last, the preference is given to 'performative verb' and 'possibility/probability'. The intimate relation with 'a friend' as the addressee is seen in situation 2, where more number of responses are found using 'imperative' as the semantic strategy.

The following examples show the various semantic strategies used by the respondents:

Performative verb: अशा वेळेस मी त्या मित्राला अभ्यास कसा करावा व गुण कसे मिळवावे हे सुचवेन.* (MS2/14)

Performative verb: सरांना सुचवणार कि पुढील आठवड्यात सगळ्यांना मौखिक परीक्षेस योग्य वेळ राहिल.* (MS3/15)

Imperative: तू त्या टॉपीक वर एक पुस्तक आहे ते तू घे आणि त्याचा तू अभ्यास कर.* (MS1/9)

Imperative: तू परीक्षेत लिहिण्याची पद्धत थोडी वेगळी कर. मुद्द्यांचा वापर कर.* (MS2/7)

Impersonal: तिला तिचा confidence वाढविण्यासाठी मदत करेन.* (MS2/27)

Possibility/Probability: सर मला वाटत मौखिक परीक्षेची तारीख पुढच्या आठवड्यात योग्य राहील.* (MS3/17)

The organization structure of the responses received for all the three situations is presented in Table 7. The table indicates that in all the three situations, the first three structures are prominently used. It means, the respondents believe that a suggestion with a single supportive move or without a supportive move at all is appropriate.

Organization Structure	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Only HA	8	16	21	45
SM + HA	17	9	11	37
HA + SM	11	15	11	37
SM + HA + SM	6	5	2	13
(SM) + HA	7	0	1	8
HA + (SM)	0	4	0	4
(SM) + HA + SM	0	1	0	1
No Appropriate Response	0	0	2	2
No response	1	0	2	3
Total	50	50	50	150

Table 7: Organization Structure of Speech Act of Suggestion (Marathi)

Findings:

Suggestion in English

1. Out of the expected 150 responses, six are not received and nine responses out of the received ones are inappropriate.
2. Out of the 135 analyzed responses, the manner of realization of speech act of Suggestion in 113 responses is implicit, while that of 22 responses is explicit. It means, implicit manner is preferred across the three situations of speech act of Suggestion.
3. Only direct and conventionally indirect natures of speech act of Suggestion are stressed in the data. However, the number of responses in which the direct nature of speech act is

used is greater (95 responses) in contrast to 40 responses in which the nature of the speech act is conventionally indirect.

4. The data shows that varied semantic strategies are used by the respondents for performing the speech act of Suggestion. The dominant strategies present in the data are – Imperative (63 responses), Use of performative verb (22 responses), Possibility/Probability (13 responses), Impersonal form (11 responses) and Interrogative form (10 responses).
5. The organization structure of 63 responses is ‘Only HA’ but in the remaining responses, the speech act set has varied structures and at least one supportive move is employed.
6. The total number of pre-HA supportive moves in the responses to this FTA is 39, while that of post-HA supportive moves is 58. The total number goes to 97 supportive moves in the data, which in turn mitigate the threat present in the speech act.

Suggestion in Marathi

1. Three responses are not received and two of the received responses are inappropriate.
2. All the 145 on record responses are realized in implicit manner.
3. The direct nature of speech act of Suggestion dominates in the data and there are 101 out of 145 such cases. In the remaining 44 responses, the speech act is realized in conventionally indirect manner.
4. The respondents are found using various semantic strategies for performing the speech act of Suggestion in Marathi. The important among them are – Performative verb (37 responses), Imperative form (64 responses), Possibility/Probability statement (15 responses) and Impersonal strategy (23 responses).
5. The organization structure of the 45 speech act sets is ‘Only HA’ and in the remaining 100 responses, at least one supportive move is used for downgrading the threat of the speech act.
6. The total number of pre-HA supportive moves in the data is 69 while that of post-HA supportive moves is 61.

Comparison and Conclusions

1. Though both implicit and explicit manner of speech act of Suggestion is seen in English, in Marathi Suggestion, only implicit manner of speech act is used.
2. It is found that both the direct and conventionally indirect nature of speech act of Suggestion is used by the respondents and there are no much differences in English and Marathi Suggestion in this regard.
3. The semantic strategies used as the Head Act of the response are also the same for both English and Marathi Suggestion.
4. Though no much difference is seen in the organization structure of the speech act of Suggestion in English and Marathi, the number of supportive moves used in Marathi Suggestion is greater.

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Appendix

Discourse Completion Test:

1. One of your classmates complains that s/he has not understood a topic in the classroom. You want to suggest the classmate a name of a book useful to understand the topic. How will you do that?

2. Your friend is repeatedly getting fewer marks in the examination. What will you suggest to your friend so that s/he can get good marks?

3. One of your Professors has to decide a date for oral examination. The Professor, therefore, requests the students to suggest a suitable date for the same. You think that a date in the next week will be convenient for all the students. What will you say to the Professor?

१. तुमच्या क्लासमेंटला वर्गामध्ये शिकवलेला एक टॉपीक समजलेला नाही. त्यासाठी एक योग्य पुस्तक तुम्हाला माहित आहे व ते त्या क्लासमेंटला सुचवायचे आहे. तुम्ही काय म्हणाल?

२. तुमच्या मित्राला / मैत्रिणीला सातत्याने परीक्षेमध्ये कमी गुण मिळत आहेत. या परिस्थितीमध्ये तुम्ही त्याला / तिला काय सुचवाल जेणे करुन त्याचे / तिचे गुण वाढण्यास मदत होईल?

३. तुमच्या प्राध्यापकांना मौखिक परिक्षेची तारीख निश्चित करायची आहे. त्यासाठी त्यांनी विद्यार्थांकडून सूचना मागविल्या आहेत. पुढील आठवड्यातील तारीख योग्य राहिल असे तुम्हाला वाटते. तुम्ही प्राध्यापकांना काय म्हणाल?