

CORRECTION IN ENGLISH AND MARATHI: A STUDY IN CONTRASTIVE PRAGMATICS¹

Dr. A. M. Sarawade, Department of English, Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra

Abstract:

The present research paper analyzes the speech act of Correction performed by the Marathi speakers both in English and Marathi languages as a response to three situations each in English and Marathi demanding speech act of correction in Discourse Completion Tests. 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 by preparing a model of speech act of Correction. The focus of study is to explore 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 Correction.

Keywords: *Speech act of Correction, Marathi, English, Head Act, Semantic Strategy, Organization Structure, etc.*

Introduction

As are the Speech Acts of Request and Refusal, the Speech Act of Correction is also a Face-threatening act. Such Face-threatening acts require the speaker to be sensitive to the 'face' of the addressee. Therefore, they need to use some Mitigation Devices or Politeness Strategies so that they may not be misunderstood. That is to say, they need to be very tactful in their use of language. In the Speech Act of Correction, in order to provide Politeness, the addressor needs to use some positive remarks, some softeners and some other similar formulas. Such use of Politeness Strategies is aimed at the conduction of smooth communication and also to disarm the potential for aggression. Politeness Strategy is the language usage developed in order to make a situation less Face-threatening. Both the Power and Solidarity between the addresser and the addressee and the social context plays a much greater role than is generally perceived. Sometimes, in order not to disturb the social relation between the speaker and the addressee, the speaker does not perform the speech act in 'on record' manner and prefers the 'Do not perform FTA' strategy. The Speech Act of Correction involves the following preconditions and interaction goals:

1. The realization of the speaker that the addressee has committed a mistake according to some norms-social, behavioural, academic, or others.
2. Speaker's assessment that s/he can ask the addressee to correct the mistake or at least to make him/her realize that s/he has committed a mistake.
3. Use of appropriate language with reference to Power and Solidarity between the addresser and the addressee and the socio-cultural context surrounding the Speech Act.
4. Use of Politeness Strategies is required so that the addresser may not be misunderstood.

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5. The Direct or Indirect Correction would be used depending upon the relation between the participants and the severity of the mistake.

Review of Literature

Takahashi and Beebe (1993) have studied the cross-cultural differences in the performance of various face-threatening speech acts. In the present paper as well, they have examined the performance of American and Japanese speakers of the speech act of correction. They specifically focus the variation in the performance of the speech act caused due to unequal status of the participants, i.e. a lower status person addressing a person of higher status and vice-versa. For the purpose, they have collected correction responses from 55 subjects; in which 15 Americans responded in English, 15 Japanese responded in English and 25 Japanese who responded in Japanese language using a discourse completion test consisting of two situations.

Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2003) study the speech act of correction in German as a foreign language classroom. They compare six student-initiated and teacher-initiated correction strategies: (1) (partial) repeat, (2) (partial) repeat and question word, (3) candidate understanding, (4) unspecified understanding check, (5) request for repetition, and (6) request for definition, translation/explanation.

Cheng and Cheng (2010) study the speech act of correction and self-correction available in business sub-corpus of the one-million-word prosodically transcribed Hong Kong Corpus of Spoken English (HKCSE). They find that there are differences in the strategies of correcting reported in studies based on elicited data and the naturally occurring data, as in a corpus, they have studied.

Data Collection and Model of Analysis

Since, there is no earlier model of correction, on the basis of the research done so far, the following model is prepared for the analysis of the data in the present study:

Table 1: Model for Speech Act of Correction

Explicit / Implicit	Nature	HA Strategy	Examples
Explicit	Direct	1. Imperative form and use of 'correct' or 'correction'	Please correct it. Make this correction. It needs to be corrected.
		2. Request for correction	Will you please correct this? Will you mind correcting it?
Implicit	Conventionally Indirect	3. Statement Accusation	There is a mistake in ----. I think, I believe that there is a mistake in ----. You made a mistake. You are wrong. It seems that you have made a mistake.
		4. Interrogative forms:	Do you mean -----? Did you say -----?
	Non-Conventionally Indirect:	5. Hint	
		6. Do not perform FTA	

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 correction 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. 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.

Correction in English

The observations about the general facts that emerged after combining all the responses of three situations together are given below. Out of the 150 responses expected for all the three situations, 14 responses are inappropriate and three respondents preferred not to perform the FTA. Thus, the analysis of 133 responses is given below. Out of them, 117 responses are implicit speech act of correction, whereas the remaining 16 are explicit speech act of correction.

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

Nature of Speech Act	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Do Not Perform FTA	0	2	1	3
Direct	15	1	20	36
Conventionally Indirect	26	37	25	88
Non-conventionally Indirect	4	2	3	9
Inappropriate Response	5	8	1	14
Total	50	50	50	150

The situation-wise preference for the nature of the speech act is displayed in Table 2. As the table shows, there are 36 direct speech acts; out of them, 15 are for situation 1 and 20 are for situation 3. Surprisingly, only one direct speech act of correction is used for situation 2. The use of conventionally indirect act seems to be a general tendency of the participants, for 88 out of 150 responses are realized in this form. The use of hint as a non-conventionally indirect speech act is present in the responses for this speech act and their number is nine. The following are some of the examples of different natures of speech act of Correction used by the respondents:

Direct: Please check the date once again carefully, because it's change.* (ES1/1)

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

Direct: Excuse me Sir/Madam, You have written wrong spelling of a word. Please correct it.* (ES3/8)

Conventionally indirect: I am said to my friend I study this topic deeply so, answer D is correct.* (ES2/6)

Conventionally indirect: Sir, I think the spelling is in this way.* (ES3/5)

Non-conventionally indirect: I tell him the right answer, and also suggest him to check it in book.* (ES2/30)

Non-conventionally indirect: I will say that sir please look at the blackboard I will not say

him directly.* (ES3/41)

It is necessary to find out the situation-wise tendency of the respondents for the use of specific semantic strategy as a head act for the response and Table 3 provides the details.

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

HA Semantic Strategy	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Use of Verb or Noun of 'Correct'	15	1	17	33
Request for correction	1	0	2	3
Statement	23	36	18	77
Interrogative forms	0	1	8	9
Hint	6	2	3	11
Do not perform FTA	0	2	1	3
Inappropriate Response	5	8	1	14
Total	50	50	50	150

In 33 responses, the verb 'correct' or its corresponding noun is used as the head act. But the majority of the responses contain a statement which works as a conventionally indirect way of correction. There are nine responses in which interrogative forms are used as the head act of the response and out of them, eight are for situation 3. 11 responses contain hint as a means of performing the speech act of correction and they are present in the responses received for all the situations. The following are some examples of various semantic strategies used by the respondents:

The verb 'correct': Madam/Sir please make it correct because there is mistake on that sentence.* (ES3/9)

Statement: Sir I think this word is misspelt. I think it would be by mistake.* (ES3/25)

Interrogative: Excuse me Sir, sorry to disturbing you but the word is misspelt could you please check it.* (ES3/18)

Hint: Sir one alphabet is missing.* (ES3/26)

When the responses are analyzed for their organization structure, the facts that emerge are tabulated in Table 4. 60 out of 133 responses use 'only HA' as the organization structure. The two structures 'SM+HA' and 'HA+SM' are used in the realization of 35 and 20 responses each. The other structures are used by a few respondents. The table also points out the fact that the respondents have not used any supportive move or if they have used, they use only one supportive move for this speech act.

Table 4: Organization Structure of Speech Act of Correction (all Situations)

Organization Structure	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Do Not Perform FTA	0	2	1	3
Only HA	25	15	20	60
SM + HA	6	8	21	35
HA + SM	9	9	2	20
SM + HA + SM	3	2	0	5
(SM) + HA	0	4	4	8
HA + (SM)	0	1	0	1
SM + HA + (SM)	1	0	1	2
(SM) + HA + SM	1	1	0	2
No Appropriate Response	5	8	1	14
Total	50	50	50	150

Correction in Marathi

In order to reach at the general tendency of the respondents in realizing the speech act of correction, it is necessary to club the findings of all the three situations; which is done in the following pages.

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

Nature of Speech Act	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Direct	2	0	18	20
Conventionally Indirect	33	41	28	102
Non-conventionally Indirect	14	4	1	19
Inappropriate Response	1	5	2	8
No response	0	0	1	1
Total	50	50	50	150

Table 5 shows the situation-wise nature of speech act in the responses. As is evident in the table, conventionally indirect form of speech act is the most preferred one. However, there are 20 and 19 responses in which direct and non-conventionally indirect nature of the speech act is evident respectively. One interesting finding that needs to be underlined here is the second preference given to non-conventionally indirect nature of speech act in the responses of situation 1 and direct form of speech act in situation 3.

Following are some of the examples of various natures of speech act of Correction in Marathi used by the respondents:

Direct: त्याला मी time table ची कल्पना देईन व 25 April ला यायला सांगेन.* (MS1/30)

Direct: सर माफ करा पण एका शब्दाचे स्पेलिंग चुकले आहे. ते कृपया दुरुस्त करा.* (MS38)

Conventionally indirect: मी तिला त्वरित कळवेन की तुला चुकीची माहिती मिळाली आहे, आणि बरोबर

तारीख तिला कळवेन, की ज्यामुळे तिचे नुकसान टळेल.* (MS1/2)

Conventionally indirect: मी तास सुटल्यानंतर असे विचारेन कि सर ह्या शब्दाची स्पेलिंग बरोबर आहे का?*(MSCR3/22)

Non-conventionally indirect: तू एकदा वेळापत्रक चेक करून घे.* (MS1/10)

Non-conventionally indirect: नाही मी त्याचा अभ्यास केला आहे किंवा तुला जे योग्य वाटेल ते लिह.* (MS2/20)

Table 6 registers the details about the semantic strategy used in the responses of all the situations.

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

HA Semantic Strategy	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Use of Verb or Noun of 'Correct'	2	0	15	17
Request for correction	0	0	2	2
Statement	33	41	27	101
Interrogative forms	0	0	2	2
Hint	14	4	1	19
Inappropriate Response	1	5	2	8
No response	0	0	1	1
Total	50	50	50	150

In 101 responses, 'a statement' is used; in 17, the word 'correct' is used and in 19, 'hint' is used as strategy for the head act of the speech act. A thing that needs to be pointed out here is that in the responses received for situation 3, different types of semantic strategies are used. Following examples show various semantic strategies used by the respondents:

Use of verb/noun 'correct': मी त्याला सांगेन की परीक्षेचे बरोबर Time table असे आहे.* (MS1/32)

Use of verb/noun 'correct': सर शब्द चुकला आहे लिहायला, तो दुरुस्त करा.* (MS3/40)

Statement: परीक्षेची तारीख बदलली आहे. इंटरनेटवर परीक्षेची बदललेली तारीख आली आहे. तरी तू बघ.* (MS1/6)

Statement: मी तिला सांगेन की प्रश्न क्र. 12 चे उत्तर पर्याय 'ब' नसून त्याचे उत्तर पर्याय 'ड' आहे.* (MS24)

Hint: तू पुन्हा एकदा ऑफिसमध्ये चौकशी कर असे सुचवेन.* (MS1/1)

Hint: ठीक आहे आपण परत एकदा तपासून पाहू.* (MS2/19)

The situation-wise details of the organization structure in which the responses are realized are presented in Table 7. The table shows the preferences of the respondents to three organization - 'only HA' (56 responses), 'SM+HA' (45 responses) and 'HA+SM' (25 responses). However, there are also certain differences in the organization structures from situation to situation as detailed in the table.

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

Organization Structure	Situation			Total
	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	
Only HA	26	13	17	56
SM + HA	7	15	23	45
HA + SM	14	10	1	25
SM + HA + SM	1	4	0	5
(SM) + HA	1	2	5	8
HA + (SM)	0	1	0	1
SM + HA + (SM)	0	0	1	1
No Appropriate Response	1	5	2	8
No response	0	0	1	1
Total	50	50	50	150

Findings:**Correction in English**

1. Though all the participants responded to all the situations of the FTA of Correction, the 14 on record responses are inappropriate.
2. However, three respondents have preferred not to carry out the speech act and consequently not threatening the face of the addressee.
3. The respondents have preferred the implicit manner of performing the speech act of Correction in 117 responses and the manner of 16 responses is explicit.
4. Direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect natures of speech act are used in the responses. However, the number of responses having conventionally indirect nature of speech act is dominant (88 responses) while the number of direct nature is 36 responses and that of non-conventionally indirect nature is nine responses.
5. The respondents seem to have used varied semantic strategies to perform the speech act of Correction. However, the respondents have preferred Statement (77 responses), Use of verb or noun of Correct (33 responses), Hint (11 responses) and Interrogative form (9 responses) as semantic strategies for the realization of FTA of Correction.
6. Interestingly, the 'Only HA' organization structure dominates in the collected data and six responses are realized in this manner. But in the remaining 73 responses, at least one supportive move is found used to mitigate the potential threat in the speech act.
7. In all, 63 pre-HA supportive moves and 32 post-HA supportive moves are used in the responses and the total number of supportive moves is 95.

Correction in Marathi

1. Out of the received 149 responses, eight are inappropriate.
2. From the remaining 141, the speech act of Correction is realized in implicit manner in 125 responses while it realizes in explicit manner in 16 responses.
3. All the three natures of speech act are present in the data. The number of responses in which the speech act is realized in conventionally indirect manner is 102, in non-conventionally indirect manner is 19 and in direct manner is 20. The respondents have preferred indirect nature of speech act in Marathi.

4. The data shows that five semantic strategies are deployed for performing the speech act of Correction in Marathi. The prominent among them are Use of a statement (101 responses), Use of a hint (19 responses) and Use of verb or noun of correct (17 responses).
5. The 'Only HA' organization structure is present in 56 responses, but in the remaining, at least one supportive move is used to mitigate the potential threat in the speech act.
6. The total number of pre-HA supportive moves is 68, while that of post-HA supportive moves is 36.

Comparison and Conclusions

1. Though all the respondents use on record strategy for correcting in Marathi, the same respondents have relied upon the 'do not perform FTA' strategy in three cases while performing the speech act of Correction in English.
2. Interestingly, while performing the speech act of Correction both in English and Marathi, all the three natures of speech act - direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect are employed. However, in Marathi Correction, there are more number of responses in which conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect strategies are used.
3. However, the respondents use the similar semantic strategies while performing the speech act of Correction.
4. In the use of organization structure also, there are similarities in English and Marathi Correction responses. It is also seen in approximately the same number of supportive moves in the performance of the speech act in two languages.

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Appendix

Discourse Completion Test:

1. Your classmate believes that the examination of Paper II is on 25/12/10. But you know that it is on 20/12/10. What will you say to your classmate?
 2. After completing the examination of Paper IV, your friend says that the answer to the question No. 12 is the option B. But you have studied this topic very closely and know that the correct answer is D. What will be your response to your friend?
 3. Your Professor has misspelt a word on the blackboard. You realize the mistake. What will you say to the Professor?
1. तुमच्या क्लासमेटला परिक्षेची तारीख 20 एप्रिल आहे असे वाटते. परंतु 25 एप्रिलला परिक्षा आहे हे तुम्हाला माहित आहे. तुम्ही क्लासमेटला काय म्हणाल?
 2. परिक्षेचा पेपर दिल्यानंतर प्रश्न क्र. 12 चे उत्तर पर्याय 'ब' आहे असे तुमच्या मित्राला / मैत्रिणीला वाटते. परंतु तुम्ही संबंधित विषयाचा सखोल अभ्यास केला असल्यामुळे या प्रश्नाचे उत्तर पर्याय 'ड' आहे याची तुम्हाला खात्री आहे. तुम्ही मित्राला / मैत्रिणीला काय म्हणाल?
 3. प्राध्यापकांनी बोर्डवर लिहिलेल्या एका शब्दाचे स्पेलिंग चुकले आहे, हे तुमच्या लक्षात येते. तुम्ही प्राध्यापकांना काय म्हणाल?