LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION: INDIA

Indira Y. JUNGHARE

University of Minnesita, Minneapolis, MN, USA

Abstract: *We use language to express our emotions and attitudes, to give our ideas and opinions, to complain, to gain acceptance or approval, and to receive and transmit information. Essentially, language is a means of cultural communication. There are different ways we can communicate. In this world, just about everyone--his/her intelligence, competence, social status, group membership, and the value system are often judged from the language through which one communicates. The tone, the speed of the speech, and the accent can evoke reactions not only in monolingual but more so in bilingual and multilingual societies, causing tensions and conflicts related to social identity and belonging. Language influences our thinking, feelings, and behaving. This paper discusses diverse socio- linguistic variants, such as, gender, race, ethnicity, class, caste, and religion with reference to Marathi, Hindi and India's diverse cultures. The paper also discusses extra-linguistic factors, including biological and evolutionary selves, individualism, collectivism and attitudes. Finally, the paper suggests some skills and strategies for successful cross-cultural communication, which are expected to help reduce cultural conflicts and ethnic tensions and promote peace.*

Keywords: *India, thinking system, language, culture, communication, Marathi language*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern world of globalization, urbanization, industrialization, technological development, resulting immigration patterns have meant diversity of people, languages, and cultures to an extent unknown before. Conversations occur in a language foreign to both speakers. Language is not only representative of culture, but part of culture, which is defined differently by scholars.

According to Edward Sapir,

Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols (Sapir, 1921:7).

An argument against this definition of language is that other species are known to have a system of communication. Morris (1946) described language as an arrangement of arbitrary symbols possessing an agreed-upon significance within a community, and these symbols can be used and understood in immediate contexts. This means meanings of utterances are embedded in socio-cultural traditions. Edwards (2009:53) combines these views and states that "languages differ from one another in the ways in which they assign meaning to sounds and symbols."

Furthermore, he notes that there are numerous language communities whose patterns of communication are not mutually intelligible although the languages might belong to the same language family.

Language systems differ in basic structural arrangement conventionally agreed upon meanings and use for communicative purposes by the language community. Language serves not only as a tool of communication but also 'an emblem of groupness, a symbol, a psychological rallying-point' (Edwards, 2009:55). The language of daily use is also the language of ancestral and cultural heritage, a powerful underpinning of shared connotations; hence we are always translating and interpreting. Our ability to read between the lines depends upon a cultural continuity in which language is embedded and which is not open to all. Translating and interpreting depend on paralinguistic nonverbal cues of various kinds. According to Edwards (2009:55),

research has shown that in determining the truth of the message or utterance, we place more emphasis on the nonverbal accompaniments than we do on the actual utterance *per se*.

'Outsiders' who have learned a language for practical reasons may develop highly fluent command of a language but they may also find that certain deeper levels of communication remain closed to them. Those who grow up within a community may be able to participate fully in

interactions because they can make the necessary 'translations' (Edwards, 2009:55).

Complex and complicated interweaving of language and culture in pragmatic linguistic skills and more intangible associations carried out by language are not always apparent to native speakers within a majority-speech community. Given communicative and symbolic aspects of languages, the latter may be of more importance in the absence of the former in minority communities, which are undergoing adaptation and acculturation. So, the questions: "Who am I?" "Who are we?" "How are we perceived?" become important. These questions are not simply about social constructs, such as "Marathi speaker" or "Hindi speaker." Implicit is the questioning of values: What am I? or How am I? or Is my community valued? Behind these questions is the need for protection and preservation as well as the desire to live a respectable life. Everybody wants to be recognized and respected. Language is dialogical; conversation takes place between two parties. Communication depends on attitudes towards 'others' in terms of languages and cultures—individually and collectively.

In the following sections, communication issues are examined in the context of biological as well as social constructs, some relatively stable and some constantly changing.

2. LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

Language is inseparable from community. The very nature of language includes and excludes. This simultaneous inclusion/exclusion function is reflected in the Marathi pronoun 'āpan' meaning 'us' or simply 'you.' Indian boys in the U.S., although English monolinguals, occasionally interject a Hindi word into their speech (kyaa be? Kyo re?). In this case, language, even when minimally shared, points to a common basis/for identification. There is a particular quality in the nature of language: those who share the language (i.e., those who understand) are included in the relationship which is called "community," and those who do not are excluded. The U.S.A consists of various linguistic communities and has been making efforts to preserve immigrant languages. Immigrants feel the need to maintain cultural heritage through their children. These diverse linguistic communities who want to maintain cultural identity and languages are the means of communicating cultures. So diasporic children become somewhat confused with two cultural

heritages - American and the other of their parents. So the American children of two cultures constantly make efforts to define themselves. Of course, self-definitions are matters which go far beyond linguistic considerations.

3. LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

Thought is much larger than language. Many problems are caused due to language limitation and the person's inability to know the language of communication fully and to express ideas accurately. For example,

> I said to the secretary, "Can you do this for me?"
> She replied, "Yes, I can but I do not want to because you did not ask me politely."

Miscommunication occurred because both Hindi and Marathi mark politeness on the verbal ending rather than by using separate words.

> Marathi: tumhī mājhyāsāṭhi he karu śaktā?
> Hindi: āp mereliye ye kar sakte?
> 'You for me this do can?'
> 'Can you do this for me?'

Speakers of Indian languages mark politeness on verbs but also express the possibility of some limitations, personal or professional. The meaning of the utterance transcends linguistic structures. This means people's minds/thoughts are larger than their languages.

4. WHAT IS CULTURE?

Every people has a culture, and no individual can live without it. Culture helps us manage our daily lives because we and other people we encounter attach similar meanings to the same things. Culture is defined differently by different scholars. According to E. B. Taylor, culture is a complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other capabilities or habits acquired by members of a society (from O'Sullivan, 2004:2). O'Sullivan (2004:2) defines culture as 'the ways people agree to be'. Over periods of time groups of people (societies) reach agreements about how they will see the world, behave, interact with each other, judge each other, and organize themselves—in other words, how they will exist. We learn the agreements—the 'rules' as part of growing up. Since language and culture are related, we learn both language and culture together. However, our 'culture' is not necessarily the same as our 'nationality' and

ethnicity. Labels describing people can be problematic. Terms such as 'American', 'Australian', can refer to nationality and culture, but not to ethnicity. The term 'Indian' refers to all the three. So, the issue of identity is complex. People often engage redefining themselves or reasserting their identity (O'Sullivan, 2004:2).

5. LANGUAGE-CULTURE EVOLUTION

All species evolve. Languages being a part of speakers also evolve. Hence the historical development of any language is the evolutionary history of speakers and cultural traditions. In the process of historical development, people come in contact with others. This contact leads to social interaction, socio-linguistic borrowings and creation of pidgin and creole languages. This process has produced several dialects-languages of India and of the world. The interaction between the Mughals and the natives of India created Hindi, and Urdu.

5.1 Linguistic Development of Marathi. Marathi grammatical structures, which resemble Dravidian, did not result from simple borrowing, but from conversion. Both pidgin and creole are trade languages. Such a linguistic development would not have been possible without trade interaction between the two language groups, Maharashtrians (Aryans) and Dravidians.

A group of Aryans settled in Maharashtra as colonists or traders in the midst of a very much larger native population of Dravidians. Instead of becoming assimilated linguistically, the Aryans were able, because of commercial, cultural or military-political advantages, to impose their language as a lingua franca usually in a simplified and corrupted form. The development of Marathi as a quasi creole, or the language of trade, between Aryans and Dravidians indicates its complex character, which stands between North and South linguistically as well as culturally. There is no doubt that the influence of Dravidian, particularly of Telugu on Marathi grammar is significant. Generally, due to contact, languages borrow at the levels of phonology, morphology, and lexicon. Marathi seems to have gone further into the level of syntax (Junghare, 2009).

5.2 Diversity of Marathi Dialects and Cultures. In all cultures—even those that outwardly appear to be very homogeneous-there can be tremendous diversity. Marathi language and culture are not exceptions. There are four major dialects of Marathi: (1) Standard spoken around Pune, (2) Vaidarbhi spoken around the city of Nagpur, (3) Varhadi, spoken around the city of Akola, and (4) the variant spoken in Marathwada, in and around the district of Parbhani.

Not only these dialects differ from each other, but their representative cultures also differ in traits, foods, customs, world-views and value systems. This diversity of dialects and cultures enhances groupism. People of Pune naturally form the standard Marathi speaking community, called 'puneri' after the 'puneri' dialect.

6. COMMUNICATION CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN CULTURE

Forms of language reflect not only social position and circumstance but also views of the way society is organized and positions within the social network. Sociolinguists who study intercultural communication classify cultures into three categories: (1) individualistic vs. collective, (2) direct messages vs. indirect messages, and (3) hierarchical vs. egalitarian (Myers-Scotton, 2006:178-179). We live in a relative world. Therefore all categorizations are bound to be relative. So, Indian culture must be understood in relative terms. In other words, these cultures will have both collective and individualistic traits, but one of these traits is likely to be dominant over the other.

6.1 Collectivism. Marathi, Hindi, Urdu and other languages of India are representative of traditional cultures which favor collectivism. Contacts with the West, English education, and economic independence have promoted individualism for the past twenty-five years. Yet, the majority of speakers remain relatively collective. Collectivism is reflected in linguistic, semantic and pragmatic structures. Consider the following Marathi examples: Use of Pronouns: Marathi has pronouns for both singular and plural. In addition, Marathi uses the inclusive pronoun 'āpaṇ,' which includes both the speaker and the addressee: You + I (or We). The pronoun 'āpaṇ' also means you (plural-polite).

6.2 Indirectness. Marathi, like other Indian languages, seems to use more indirect messages, which is reflected in (i) Topic- Prominent Construction, (ii) Agential/Passive construction, (iii) use of indirect pronouns, and (iv) written discourse.

(i) Topic Prominence: Western Indo-European Languages use Subject-Predicate structure, while Marathi uses Topic-Comment structure (Junghare, 1985).

English: *Flowers* are in the garden. (Subject-Predicate)
Marathi: bāget phula āhet (Topic-Comment)
'*in the garden* flowers are.'

(ii) Passive/Agential Construction:

Marathi: rāmna te kām kela
'by Ram that work done.'
Ram did that work/ the work is done by Ram.

(iii) The Use of Indirect Pronouns (or Dative case)

Marathi: malā te pustak āvaḍla
to me that book liked
'I liked that book.'

(iv) Written Discourse. Indirectness of message also occurs in writing, especially, when a speaker sends a message to the addressee. For example, in a letter, a request is made not at the beginning or at the end but in the middle of the letter, surrounded by various messages before and after.

6.3 India: Hierarchical Cultures. India is known for hierarchical caste and class systems. Marathi culture is no exception. Although class-classification is not so explicit in linguistic forms, caste is. Caste does not change; it is a given constant in the social order. Someone is born into a caste, and there is no caste mobility. However, socio-economic positions can change, including profession, financial status, political appointment, etc.

6.4 Linguistic suffixes as reflective of social factors. In addition to titles and specific terms of address, there also exist some socio-linguistic suffixes in Indo-Aryan languages which an addressor attaches to an addressee's name in certain situations to indicate attitude towards the addressee or the social relationship between the speakers (Junghare, 2009). For example, in Marathi, *rāv* and *panta* are honorific suffixes attached to men's names. The suffix *rāv*, derived from the Sanskrit word *rājā* "king," is generally attached to names of men belonging to the Kshatriya (ruler's) caste; *panta* is attached to names of Brahmins.

Caste does play a role in determining the honorific form chosen by the speaker.

The laboring (Shudra) caste has lower honorific forms associated with their members, while the highest Brahmin caste has the highest honorific forms associated with their members. The laboring (Shudra) caste contains the only addressees with the informal *tu* form, the fewest *tumhī* forms, and no *āpaṇ* forms. See the following table (from Junghare, 2007).

408

Table 1. Caste

Caste	Intimate/ Informal *tu*	Familiar *tumhī*	Formal/ Polite *āpaṇ*
Brahmin	0	6	4
Ksatriya	0	5	6
Vaisya	0	7	5
Shudra	3	6	3

6.4 Gender Marking in South Asian Languages. Gender has been considered to be one of many sources of linguistic variation. Sociolinguists Labov, 1972; Hymes, 1964; and Ervin-Tripp, 1972 have shown that communication systems are heterogeneous and multi-layered (from Junghare, 2003). Social class, region, ethnicity, age, occupation, and gender all affect speech; speakers may also shift speech styles depending on situation, topic, and roles.

Women's language has been studied using two approaches: the dominance approach and the difference approach. Researchers using the dominance approach emphasize how male dominance is enacted through linguistic practice (West and Zimmerman, 1983). The difference approach emphasizes different gendered subcultures. The difference in men's and women's language is interpreted as reflecting and maintaining gender-specific cultures (Humm, 1989).

Marking of gender or sex is prominent in Marathi. Sex-exclusive differences are found at the morphological level. A few sex-preferential differences occur at the phonetic, phonological and syntactic levels, but most occur at the communicative level or in conversations (Junghare, 2003).

The words *baghū* and *jarā* are markers of gentle persuasive requests, often used by women.

Marathi: kitī veḷ jhālā uṭhā *baghū* (Marathi woman speaking)
'How much time passed please get up please see'
Much time has passed, let us see if you can get up.
Marathi: *jarā* bhājī pāhūn yā *baghū* (Marathi woman speaking)
'a little vegetable having checked out please come let us see
Let us see if you can check out the vegetable, just a little please.

Urban Marathi women's speech is distinctive from men's speech in that women use more particles, formal standard language or changed forms. Trudgill's (1972:179-195) explanation for this distinction is that women are more status conscious and want to compensate for their

subordination by signaling status linguistically, and this linguistic signaling will be particularly true of women who are not working and who lack social status. Women who have little status in society seek to acquire status through use of language.

7. LANGUAGE AND MESSAGE

The above section focused on the individuality of the speaker in relation to the addressee. This section deals with the message or the text of conversation.

7.1 Indian and South Asian Cultures: High Context. How do bilinguals carry on conversations? Edward Hall (1959/1976) differentiates cultures according to the type of messages sent. A high-context message is one in which most of the information being conveyed rests in the context of the interaction, i.e., the setting, topic and other situational factors. "Very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message (Hall, 1976:70)." The listener has to rely heavily on working out speaker's intentions.

In contrast, in a low-context message, words and phrases constitute the main message. If the listener can understand these words and phrases in combination, he or she can arrive at the main part of what the speaker intends to communicate. Almost always part of understanding an utterance requires the listener's power of interpretation in order to arrive at the speaker's intentions. Mutual assumptions provided by the context always matter to some extent. Marathi culture, being collective, stands at the high-context end of the continuum and pays more attention to the speaker's gender, class, caste and ethnicity rather than to the literal words of the message.

7.2 South Asia and the Western World: High-Low Contexts. Misunderstandings occur when high- and low- context individuals interact. Listeners from high-context cultures tend to interpret what others say as an expression of context; that is they find meaning in factors external to the speaker. Listeners from low-context cultures not only pay attention to the literal message but also base any interpretations of the speaker's "real" meaning of his/her personality.

There is a relationship between high- and low-context communication and individualistic and collective cultures. High-context cultures make a greater distinction between insiders and outsiders and perceive people as group members rather than individuals. No culture exists at either end of the high- and low-context continuum. Most individualistic cultures prefer low-on text messages, and most collectivist cultures prefer high-context messages.

Relatively speaking, South Asian languages and their reflective cultures are more collective, indirect, and high context oriented as opposed to the Western cultures which are more individualistic, direct, and low-context oriented. In light of this analysis, it is easy to understand English expressions, such as, "What is in it for me?" "My father was not there for me," as opposed to South Asian expressions: "If I do this, I will be spoiling my family's name," and "I have to take care of him, he is my husband." Again, it is important to note that these expressions are simply relative to the context and should not serve as generalizations since all societies evolve over time and space.

8. DECONSTRUCTION OF LOW- AND HIGH-CONTEXT CULTURES

How do we understand or interpret the message? Interpretations of messages are based on three sets of constructs (Samovar and Porter, 1991): (1) belief/value/attitude systems, (2) world view, and (3) social organization.

8.1 Language and Religion in India. Religion includes beliefs, ideologies, values and attitudes. Religion has been linked to language since ancient times. In the Vedas as well as in the Bible, God is said to have first created speech. Each religion has its linguistic expressions and specific language for religious literature, collections of verses, parables, or mythical stories. Almost all religious literature speaks of love, truth, compassion, kindness and non-violence. Wars and conflicts over religion come from ignorance and fear of the 'other.' The 'other' means different from normative religion. Every religion is as valuable as another and provides an anchor for belonging to a specific culture and tradition.

There is an interplay of religion and language and the surrounding culture. Both language and religion serve as markers of group identity and spread across regions through contacts. Certain sacred languages acquire higher status. The Most obvious examples include Hebrew for Judaism, Arabic for Islam, Latin for Christianity, and Sanskrit for both Hinduism and Buddhism. The religious exclusivity of a certain language creates what George Steiner (1992, p. 300) called "enclosure and willed opaqueness" in certain sacred texts. An atmosphere of inclusiveness for

those practicing the religion in a given language engenders prestige for that religion. Also, any potential worshippers of that religion must learn the sacred language. It is pragmatic for one religion to adhere to a single language.

Every language presents a different viewpoint about the world. Therefore if religion is going to describe ethics, creation, existence, religious language has to be easily understood. On the contrary, there are plenty of debates on the original meaning and intent of passages in the Bible and even the Constitution. If we already have trouble understanding the text in one language, one can only imagine the complications that arise from translation. Every language group wants to claim that their language is the one that God speaks. These arguments are not only of historical interest but also represent language-religion identity discourse. The real conflicts do not depend on the nature of God and which language divinity speaks, but are embedded in competition and the desire for dominance.

8.2 Beliefs, Worldview, and Social Organization: Markers of Ethnicity. Beliefs are what is accepted as sources of knowledge (Bible, the Qu'ran, etc). People have certain beliefs about God, life on earth, after-life, ethics, and morality. Marathi and Hindi are marked by beliefs that are embedded in Hindu tradition. Core Hindu tradition has been maintained in the form of metaphors. Though new texts and pamphlets are created and though new poetry has emerged, the essence of the Hindu tradition has been maintained. History serves as the foundation. That is why Hinduism has been referred to in Sanskrit a *sanātana dharma* "the ideals which have continued from the past."

Unfortunately, Hinduism has been greatly misunderstood. The word "Hindu" is a mispronunciation of the name of the river "Sindhu" that is now in Pakistan. Originally, it meant "the way of life of the people living on the banks of the Sindhu river." In reality then, Hinduism is not a faith system, but rather a socio-cultural and philosophical system. It is complex and diverse in its philosophies of life, God/gods and practices. It is inclusive of pluralism, henotheism, monotheism and monism. Its philosophies include materialism, realism, conceptualism, nominalism, and naturalism. The concept of *Brahman* is comparable to the concept of *Allah*, the Absolute Reality, indefinable, incomprehensible, all-knowing, limitless, omnipresent and omnipotent. Similarly, Christ is comparable to Vishnu or Krishna. Hinduism is so broad that it excludes nothing. In other words, one can be Hindu by believing in any god or no god. The Sanskrit word 'pujā' means 'honoring' which has been ignorantly interpreted as 'worshipping.' Hence the rituals of honoring sacred life in diverse forms have been understood as 'idol worship.' Outsiders have created diverse misperceptions of the Hindu tradition. One such example would be the caste system. Caste was brought to India by Greeks as a system of societal organization, which was founded on division of labor, comparable to professional guilds. It is true that the system has been abused over time and by people in power. Even then the broad and all-inclusive philosophy of Hinduism has made the majority of Indians tolerant. The conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India is not over religious ideology, or the concept of God or whether one goes to heaven after death or gets reborn. Conflict is primarily over territories, natural resources and dominance.

8.3 Marathi in the context of Hindu Culture. Marathi has adopted normative values for making choices and reducing or eliminating conflicts. The concepts of *karma*, *dharma,* "duties and obligations," and moral laws form the core of Marathi culture. Marathi is reflective of polytheism, monotheism, and syncretic monism. Marathi speakers hold the view that the world is constituted of humans, animals, plants and microbes, and is part of 'one' divine principle. Hence, every existence is divine. In other words, creation is sacred, and every existence must be honored. Hence every house has a shrine for worshipping an individual form of deity.

Marathi social organization is based on the division of labor. Different professionals occupy different quarters. Human life is organized into four stages: pupil, householder, forest dweller (retiree) and ascetic. The goals of life include duty, livelihood, pleasure and liberation. Hinduism, being a system of ethics, provides various guiding paths for virtuous living: action, knowledge, devotion, and renunciation. The two important ethical rules are: nonviolence and the *Law of Karma*, which is translated into English, "As you sow, so you reap."

The world's coming into existence and going out of existence constitutes one day of the creation, which is divided into various units of time called 'yugas.' The circular concept of time has provided the foundation for the theory of 'reincarnation. Over all, Marathi is a much more open society with focus on action rather than on dogma. Such a society has been referred to as "orthoprax" as

opposed to "orthodox." Because of the concept of time and the societal emphasis on action, Marathi, Hindi and other languages of India do not have markers for "present perfect," or "past perfect," like English for example:

> Marathi: mī khup kām kela
> 'I much work did.'
> ' I worked a lot.'

The verb form *kela* simply expresses the fact that the work is finished, without paying any attention to when the work was done.

> Marathi: mi kām karat āhe. (Present Progressive)
> "I work doing am"
> " I am doing the work."

It also means "I have been doing the work." The meaning becomes clear only in context. Besides diversity of sociolinguistic structures, various other elements constitute part of social interaction.

8.4 Elements for Social interaction: (1) Silence; (2) Appropriateness; (3) Politeness; (4) Requests; (5) Power differentials. Marathi speakers and speakers of other Indian languages generally like to converse. They compete to speak as a way of asserting themselves. There are no norms against interrupting others. Appropriate initial interactions include greetings: 'namaskār' and/or paying respect by bowing down, or placing the head on the feet. Formal words for 'thanks' and 'apology' are rarely used. However, Maharashtrians and Indians in general do recognize obligations. Maharashtrians show little interest in others. Maharashtrian society is an open society with cultural values of frankness. Compared to American society, Maharashtrians ask questions, make requests, and reveal personal information.

Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to politeness as meeting a person's "face needs" for self respect. The concept of 'positive face' means meeting the need to have self-worth recognized. This calls for remembering the person's name and the use of compliments to build solidarity. On the other hand, negative face includes the need not to be imposed on. Marathi is basically a positive politeness culture. There can be tensions maintaining the proper balance between positive and negative face. Paying positive attention can be seen as imposing, and attempts to avoid imposing can be viewed as ignoring. Speakers of Hebrew, Canadian French, Australian English and German make indirect requests (Blum-Kulka and House,

1989:123-54), but Marathi speakers make direct requests. Power differential is related to inequality. To what extent do Marathi speakers tolerate inequality? As in other Asian societies, Maharashtrians tolerate inequality in the family and at the work place.

9. MODERNITY, SELF PERCEPTION AND SELF DEFINITION

The twenty first century is a period of industrialization and globalization. People have been traveling across the world and/or migrating to different countries and creating new and mixed or hybrid identities. People perceive themselves as individuals--independent thinkers, and know how to survive in another culture independently. In the process of acculturation, they know how to negotiate and create individualistic cultures, which discard some traits of native tradition and adopt some new features of 'other' cultures.

Indians are no exceptions to the identity-creating process, as shown in following examples:

> I am a walking contradiction. I am American and Indian. I am a Muslim with doubt as to whether God exists or not. The only thing about me that is not contradictory is that I am a woman and very proud to be one. My identity is very important to me because it is the tool I use to show the world who I am and what I believe in. (Person A)

> My identity is a composite of many different parts: my religion, my cultural heritage, my language, my role in society that I play. My identity also changes depending on the focus. In the narrow sense, I am a sister. In the larger perspective, I am a human being on Earth. (Person B)

> Identity matters to me even though it is a very fleeting concept since you will not be defined by the same qualities in different settings. For me, it is my personality which makes me *who I am*, more than labels like Indian, woman or teacher-student. To attain respect, I treat others with respect and attention and am polite and careful. (Person C)

The individualism of defining oneself can create various problems in communication due to differences between one's self perception and 'other' people's perceptions of that individual.

10. PREVENTIVE STEPS FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF COMMUNICATION CONFLICT

Conflicts usually arise from cultural differences, especially when the speaker and

addressee do not speak the same native language. Some of the steps mentioned by Myers-Scotton (2006, pp. 204-206) for the avoidance of potential conflicts in cross-cultural communication are:

(1) Speak in order to clarify the problem.

(2) Speaker and addressee need to cooperate and not compete.

(3) There has to be common definition of the problem; try to understand the other person's position.

(4) Both parties have to make it clear that they are interested in finding a solution.

(5) To show the other person that he/she is valued, pay attention to the other person's positive face.

(6) Both need to focus on similarities rather than differences.

(7) People need to be aware of how the culture with whom they are in conflict differs from their own.

(8) Individualists need to remember that collectivists see positive face (sense of self-respect and self-worth) as an extension of the group's status.

10.1 Do's and Don'ts for Collectivist and Individualist. Collectivists see actions as reflecting on the group. Individualists need to help collectivists maintain face. Individuals should try to deal with conflicts when they are small because collectivists view conflict as placing the group's image on the line. Individualists may want to use a third party to mediate the conflict. Individualists need to pay special attention to how collectivists use non-verbal communication and indirect messages. Avoidance is a favorite strategy of collectivists. If collectivists do not seem to want to deal with the problem, individualists may find that simply letting go of the conflict is the only reasonable course of action (Myers-Scotton, 2006:205).

Individualists tend to separate the person from the problem. Collectivists must focus on the issue. Collectivists must be more direct and assertive than they usually are (Myers-Scotton, 2006:205). The idea behind this indirectness is the avoidance of subject, object or agent due to the emphasis upon humility and non-assertion of 'ego,' evident in their Topic-Comment language structure (Junghare, 1985).

11. SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The paper defined the nature of language in terms of structure, meaning, relationship to culture, communicative and symbolic functions and differences from language to language. Problems of communication are due to subjectivity or attachment to mother tongue and culture and unawareness of other people's customs, ways, worldviews, and values. Though no one language or dialect is superior to another, everyone seems to think his language or dialect and culture are superior to others.

The paper examined the historical development of the Marathi language in order to explain the evolutionary process of the formation of hybrid identity—pidginization through language contact between the Aryan invaders and the native Dravidians. The paper analyzed Marathi speakers' culture and by extension Indian tradition in terms of its organizational structure, world-view, and socio-linguistic variants—gender, class, caste and religion. Analysis of Indian languages and cultures clearly indicated that problems of communication leading to conflicts are embedded in diverse cultural traits, including collectivism, indirectness of the message, high-context nature of the conversation (emphasis on extra-linguistic biological and social factors), world-view, and gender roles. Finally, the paper suggested some strategies for successful cross-cultural communication, which will lead to the elimination of potential conflicts.

Most conflicts which are perceived to be related to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, class, caste, and religion can be reduced or minimized by becoming aware of other people's ways of living and using that knowledge in communicating. Understanding the following socio-linguistic guidelines may lead to conflict free conversations. The guidelines may not make better individuals but they will make better communicators.

(1) All languages are equal. No language is superior to other.

(2) No culture is better or superior to another.

(3) No culture is perfect. All cultures develop according to need in the context

of time and space.

(4) Race, gender, ethnicity, class, caste, religion and nationality are socio-linguistic constructs. People have the ability to transcend or deconstruct these constructs.

(5) Value of life and dignity of humanity is what matters.

(6) People are most concerned with how they are treated.

(7) Peaceful co-existence lies in recognition of and respect for individuals.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Blum-Kulka, S., & House, J. (1989). Cross-cultural and situational variation in requesting behavior. In Shoshana Blum-Kula, Juliane House and Gabrielle Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics, Requests and Apologies* (pp. 123-54). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
2. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Edwards, J. (2009). *Language and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. Hall, Edward T. [1959] (1976). *The Silent Language*. New York: Anchor Books.
5. Humm, M. (1989). *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
6. Junghare, I. (2009). Syntactic convergence: Marathi and Dravidian. In Anju Saxena and Ake Viberg (Eds.), *Multilingualism* (pp. 191-199). Uppsala: Uppsala University.
7. Junghare, I., & Batteen, C. (2007). Markers of status in Indo-Aryan languages. In Adele Scott (Ed.), *Conference Proceedings of CLESOL*. Napier, New Zealand.
8. Junghare, I. (2003). Gender marking in Hindi and Marathi. In Drinka and Salmons (Eds.), *Essays in Indo-European Language and Culture in Historical Perspective*. Vol. III. Special issue of General Linguistics 39. Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press.
9. Junghare, I. (1985). Topic prominence: An areal linguistic feature. In Nancy Stenson (Ed.), *Papers from the Tenth Minnesota Regional Conference on Language and Linguistics* 10: 80-90.
10. Morris, C. (1946). *Signs, Language and Behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
11. Myers-Scotton, C. (2006). *Multiple Voices* (. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. 178-179.
12. O'Sullivan, K. (1994). *Understanding Ways: Communicating Between Cultures*. Alexandria, NSW: Hale and Iremonger Pty Limited.
13. Samovar, Larry A., & Porter, R. E. (Eds.). (1991). *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
14. Sapir, E. (1921). *Language*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
15. Steiner, G. (1992). *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
16. Trudgill, P. (2000). *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. London Penguin Books.
17. West, C. & Zimmerman, D. (1983). Small insults: a study of interruptions in cross-sex conversations between unacquainted persons. In Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae, and Nancy Henley (Eds.), *Language Gender and Society*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House Publishers..