

The Interplay between Social Contexts of Power and Aggravation Strategies: Identity-specific Perspectives in Fictional Discourse

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Abstract

This paper attempts a pragmatic analysis of the interplay between social contexts of power and sociolinguistic device of aggravation strategies concerning dialogic discourses in Vikram Seth's novel *A Suitable Boy (ASB)* (1993). The paper attempts to validate that aggravation strategies have been an integral part of human discourse. It demonstrates how people use aggravation strategies to exercise power over others in different communicative contexts. It also exemplifies how power is vested in specific identities, and their role relationships in different power structures existing in the society based on their caste, age, sex, social standing, political or official identity, and how the power is exerted in the context of their social identities. The paper defines various aspects of aggravation, explains the dominant participatory identities, namely master identities, situated identities, and discourse identities and analyses how these social identities exercise power through aggravation strategies in the dialogic discourses in *ASB*.

Keywords: aggravation strategies, discourse identities, impoliteness, master identities, situated identities, social contexts of power

Cite as: Kumar, V. V., Thakur, V.S., & James, J. (2019). The Interplay between Social Contexts of Power and Aggravation Strategies: Identity-specific Perspectives in Fictional Discourse. *Arab World English Journal*, 10 (3), 401-412. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no3.28>

1. Introduction

Language has been the primary tool of human communication down the ages. “Human language is not just a means to pass useful content from one person to another; it is also a means to shape relationships and thus to negotiate interpersonal meaning and relationships. When we use language, we reveal something about ourselves and establish our relationships with others” (Locher, 2013). People use language “to encourage, discourage, enhance good communication or even cause conflict between interlocutors because we need to use polite [or impolite] language for fruitful communication” (Omar & Wahid, 2010, n.p.). The mainstream sociolinguists who studied the pragmatics of politeness have studied impoliteness as a related part of politeness. The scholars who consider impoliteness also as an essential part of human communication are Brown and Levinson (1987), Leech (2007), Lachenicht (1980) and Culpeper (2005). They define impoliteness or aggravation in language use as a ‘violation of the constraints of politeness’ or ‘the opposite of politeness.’ Another aspect of impoliteness or aggravation in communication is the exercise of power over others using impolite or aggressive language. Using aggravation to exercise power is an age-old practice in human societies. The degree of power exercised through aggravation depends on the social status of the interlocutors, and their ability to use it to establish dominance over others. It is quite interesting to study various aspects of impoliteness or aggravation as a sociolinguistic strategy and apply it to literary texts to understand how it plays and interplays in real-life situations. Moreover, it is also quite interesting to understand how people use aggravation or impoliteness to establish their discursive power over others. This paper attempts to demonstrate the role and functions of aggravation/impoliteness strategies in human interactions and how people use this sociolinguistic device to their advantage in the Indian social contexts. Three dialogic discourses from *ASB* are analysed to illustrate the interplay of power and aggravation strategies.

2. Aggravation or Impoliteness

The use of abusive or bawdy language is by no means a modern phenomenon. Verbal abuse is as old as language itself. In aggravating language, all characteristics of polite language such as social padding, wrapping, and circumlocution are discarded. Hence, impolite language tends to become full of tabooed expressions related to sex, death, and bodily functions like excretion. According to Thakur (2008), “aggravation is noticed in situations of social breakdown, affront, quarrel, or institutions requiring extreme urgency and efficiency and it is deployed for a variety of purposes, such as to express contempt, to be aggressive or provocative, to mock authority, to simply draw attention to oneself, to release tension, and rarely for verbal seduction” (p.139).

The same factors of politeness, namely “power, distance, and rank, are operative in impolite language as well. Politeness and impoliteness are the two sides of the same coin” (Ellen, 2001, p.45). Hence, we can say that aggravating language is also rule-governed like polite language. People swear and curse according to rules. In other words, aggravating language is not irrational, or a symptom of an uncivilized and backward society and human rationality is operative in the selection of both polite and impolite devices of language.

2.1. The socio-pragmatic strategy of aggravation/impoliteness

Lachenicht (1980) argues that the purpose of using ‘aggravating language’ is to hurt or damage the hearer’s public self-image or face (p. 607). His social face is torn, and real personality is exposed. According to Thakur (2008), “aggravation manifests in direct complaints, open criticism, and coercion and the victim of aggravation is denied freedom of action and freedom from imposition. The social personality and self-image of the recipient is disapproved and sometimes even shattered” (p. 139). Aggravation attempts to expose the negative aspects of addressee’s personality, and there is no space for any civility for the hearer. The ultimate aim of the speaker is to ignore the positive side of the addressee’s personality and to embarrass and humiliate him by actively attempting to underestimate, criticize, and condemn him in terms of exposure and exaggeration of real and imaginary feelings, negligence, and vices.

Impoliteness strategies also carry culture-specific force and significance. Culpeper (2003) remarks that ‘impoliteness is the use of utterances or actions that attack one’s hearer’s face and cause social conflict and disharmony or disturbance rather than promoting harmony’ (p. 1550). The basic structure and function of aggravating language are universal though the linguistic realization and manifestation differ from society to society and culture to culture. Most of the time, the aggravating language, to use Thakur’s (2008) argument, “is extravagant and false in its semantic content, is often absurd and bizarre, and as a general rule, the hearers who are inferior in age, status, interpersonal distance, power, and ranking to the person who uses aggravating language do not use a similar language in return” (p. 139). Verbal aggravation is a source of considerable power. For example, invective command or insulting is associated with power. The use of abusive terms among relatives, as against non-relatives, is not taken to be so serious and obnoxious. Generally, the abusive language displays the pattern of *abuse + rebuttal + counter-rebuttal*.

Like politeness strategies, aggravating strategies are also positive and negative. Thakur (2008) claims that “positive aggravation techniques consist of the expression of disapproval, criticism, ridicule, complaint, contempt, accusations, reprimand, insult, and disliking of personal traits, characteristics, beliefs, values, and possessions. Negative aggravation strategies comprise interferences, impositions, warnings, disagreements, contradictions, and even threats and violence. Positive aggravation is generally quiet, indirect, credible, and full of pointers of underlying perils or risks. On the other hand, negative aggravation is usually loud, angry, and bombastic” (140). According to Lachenicht (1980), ‘there are specific strategies in using aggravation in conversation. There are positive as well as negative aggravation strategies in play in any impolite conversation’ (p. 634).

2.2. Positive aggravation

In positive aggravation, the speaker may explicitly or implicitly express his opinion or view that he does not share any ideological, group, or emotional commonality with the addressee. He may also convey that the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is asymmetric and that he does not intend to cooperate with the addressee for the satisfaction of the latter’s face wants (Thakur, 2008, p. 140). According to Lachenicht (1980, p. 634), there are twelve positive aggravation strategies. The twelve positive aggravation strategies are: (1) expression of dislike for the addressee, (2) denial of in-group status, (3) use of non-valid imperatives, (4) offending the

addressee's sensibilities and beliefs, (5) expression of ill-will for the addressee, (6) use of sarcasm, (7) use of negative politeness, (8) disclaiming common opinions, (9) ignoring and interrupting, (10) showing disinterest in addressee's projects, (11) failure to offer or ask for reasons and (12) refusals.

2.3. Negative aggravations

The speaker's aim to cause insult, embarrassment, humiliation, shock, and fear can be achieved by using negative aggravation strategies. As suggested by Lachenicht (1980, p. 658), negative aggravation strategies can be realized by the use of indirectness. The negative aggravation strategies are: (1) use of indirectness, (2) use of the speech of powerful persons, (3) references to the speaker's power, (4) questions, (5) insistence on the addressee being humble, (6) teasing and baiting, (7) use of positive politeness, (8) attempt to indebt the addressee, (10) deflation, (11) indirect and explicit challenges, (12) references to rights and obligations, (13) disagreements and contradictions, (14) increase in imposition, and (15) use of threats and violence.

3. Social Identities of Power

After defining the various aspects of impoliteness or aggravating language, it is now time to look at how impoliteness or aggravating language is put to use in the three types of participant identities operational in our society at various levels. The three types of participant identities selected for analysis are Master Identities, Situated Identities, and Discourse identities, as defined by Weber (2006, p.114).

3.1. Master Identities

Master Identities are permanent identities, and they can crosscut all occasions of discourse. These identities are constructed and performed based on age, sex, social class. Some of the examples for master identities are, father-son, mother-daughter, father-daughter, mother-son, elder brother-younger brother, master-servant, upper caste-lower caste, and so on. Thakur (2008) argues that the participants in the ongoing discourse of master identities usually use their power based on their network of distance, power, and ranking between them (p. 247).

3.2. Situated Identities

Situated Identities are less permanent identities, which inhabit particular social settings such as teacher and student(s), superior officer and inferior officer(s), politicians and officials, police officers and ordinary people. In situated identities, one identity has socially legitimate power over the other who is expected to adhere to precise specifications. In situated identities, the powerful person exercises his power using impolite or aggressive language to establish his power over the less powerful opponent. In most situations where the powerful interlocutor uses impolite or aggressive language, the less powerful hearer generally tends to become a mute spectator or in case of responding to the aggressive behaviour, talks in a very mild tone, i.e. a tone of submission or total surrender. This mild tone or submission is to avoid the situation from becoming hostile or antagonistic and end up in more complications between the interlocutors involved in the dialogue. Furthermore, submission or surrender can be a part of an attempt to mitigate the situation and to avoid inviting future trouble(s) from the influential person.

3.3. Discourse Identities

Discourse Identities are ephemeral identities (lasting for a short time or existing only in a specific situation) which constantly shift among discourse participants. These identities are created by the incidental verbal interactions among the participants in a particular situation or set of situations. In discourse identities, the use of aggressive, abusive language stems from the need to establish power over the other with more powerful language. Most of the times, the discourse borders on verbal violence that is used in order to dominate the situation emerging out of some dire need to protect one's self or the people around.

4. Analysis

The explanation of the types of identities leads the discussion to examine how characters from *ASB* establish their power over others using impolite or aggravating language. The dialogues are selected for analysis represent the three types of social identities, namely Master Identities, Situated Identities, and Discourse identities.

4.1. The interplay of power in the context of Master Identity

Exercising power through impoliteness or aggravating language is a common phenomenon in relationships that are controlled by master identities who exercise power over the people who are at a lower level in the social hierarchy. In the following dialogue, extracted from *ASB*, the mother who holds a master identity exercises power over her daughter, who relatively holds a weaker familial position in power. In Indian society, as the position of a mother is more dominant than that of a daughter. In this extract, we see Mrs. Rupa Mehra (the mother) abusing Lata (the daughter) using aggressive and impolite language against Lata's love affair with a Muslim boy.

Dialogue 1

Turn 1: Mrs. Rupa: 'Be quiet! Don't answer me back! I'll give you two tight slaps.

Roaming shamelessly near the dhobi-ghat and having a gala time...What's his name?

Turn 2: Lata: Kabir...

Turn 3: Mrs. Rupa: 'A Muslim!'...What did I do in my past life that I have brought this upon my beloved daughter? ... Do you want to marry him? (in a fury)

Turn 4: Lata: Yes. (getting angrier)

Turn 5: Mrs. Rupa: He'll marry you—and next year he'll say "Talaq talaq talaq" and you'll be out on the streets. You obstinate, stupid girl! You should drown yourself in a handful of water for sheer shame.

Turn 6: Lata: I *will* marry him. (unilaterally)

Turn 7: Mrs. Rupa: I'll lock you up. Like when you said you wanted to become a nun...

Turn 8: Lata: I wish I had become a nun. I remember Daddy used to tell us we should follow our own hearts.

Turn 9: Mrs. Rupa: Still answering back? (infuriated) I'll give you two tight slaps. (Slapped her daughter hard, twice, and instantly burst into tears) (*ASB*, pp.181-182)

When we look at the conversation carefully, we find the reason for Mrs. Rupa Mehra's aggressiveness and impoliteness. They are a reaction to her daughter's love affair with Kabir Durrani, a Muslim boy. Mrs. Rupa Mehra considers her daughter's relationship with a man as a betrayal of her trust on her daughter. She comes to know about her daughter's affair from Mrs.

Tandon. She told her that someone had seen Lata walking hand in hand with a boy on the banks of Ganga near the dhobi ghat. Mrs. Rupa Mehra's aggression is caused by the socio-cultural situation that requires extreme urgency and efficiency. She uses abusive language to express her contempt over her daughter's affair with a boy who follows another religion. She releases her tension through her reprimanding language. She mocks her daughter's choice of a Muslim to have an intimate relationship, which is against the social norms that prohibit a Hindu girl from marrying a Muslim boy. It makes the mother more annoyed, and she threatens to lock her up as she had done earlier when Lata wanted to become a nun at an earlier occasion. She also expresses her extreme contempt of the affair by warning Lata that within a year of marriage Kabir will divorce her saying, "Talaq, talaq, talaq" (Turn 5) and she would end up on the streets. On her part, Lata resists her mother's taunting by saying, "I *will* marry him" (Turn 6) with extra stress on "will." The mother calls her obstinate and stupid and goes to the extent of asking her daughter to 'drown herself in a handful of water for sheer shame' (Turn 5), which is an extreme way of suggesting that Lata has no right to live for the shame she has brought to her mother. This is an extremely aggressive conversation a mother can have with her daughter. Finally, Lata's attempt to justify her deed, "I remember Daddy used to tell us we should follow our own hearts" (Turn 8) meets with a more violent reaction from her mother. The mother says, "Still answering back? (Infuriated) I'll give you two tight slaps" (Turn 9) and then slaps her daughter to establish her total dominance over her daughter.

In this dialogue, Mrs. Rupa Mehra's impoliteness is provoked by what she terms as her daughter's irresponsible, stupid behavior of having an affair with a Muslim boy, which is unacceptable in the society as well as in the Hindu community. It is a sense of shame that Mrs. Rupa Mehra felt by her daughter's action that provoked her to use impolite, aggressive and abusive language and it finally ends up in physical violence of Mrs. Rupa Mehra slapping Lata. Lata, in the given situation, is mostly a silent victim, and her attempt to defend herself from her mother's abusive outbursts and the physical violence fails because of her situation as a less powerful participant against her mother who is more powerful due to the power vested in the hands of parents by established social norms. Thus, Mrs. Rupa Mehra, holding a socially-dominant role as a mother to map out the personal life of the children, uses aggressive and impolite language to establish more control over her daughter's actions. Lata, confronted by her mother, has no power to counter-argue or establish her individuality through her argumentative replies. It is an outcome of the power structure established and practiced in Indian society.

4.2. The interplay of power in the context of Situated Identities

This section focuses on examining the use of impolite or aggressive language in the context of situated identity. This conversational extract takes place between Sandeep Lahiri, a Sub-Divisional Officer of the State Government and Mr. Jha, the Chairman of the Legislative Council and a friend of the Chief Minister. This conversation is a typical example of the impolite and aggressive exchanges that often happen between powerful politicians and government officers. In India, even though the government officials are conferred with so many constitutional powers, they are at the receiving end when dealing with politicians. The officers cannot retaliate to their aggression for fear of future troubles. It is habitual for the politicians to interfere and supersede the decisions of the officers and to use impolite or aggressive language with them. In this conversation, we find Sandeep Lahiri on a courtesy visit to Jha as he is his senior by age, and to discuss fund collection to celebrate Independence Day. The topic is opened for discussion by Jha,

and Sandeep Lahiri requests Jha to help him in fundraising using his influence with the people. He explains to Jha that the fund is to put up a “good show, distribute sweets, feed the poor, and so on” (ASB, pp. 962). Then, the conversation moves on to the Congress Party celebrating the Independence Day, and Jha suggests (Turn 5) that Sandeep Lahiri gives half of the money collected to the party so that it can also put up a good show on that day. Sandeep refuses saying he is collecting the fund in the capacity of a government official and that he is obliged to use it only for the specific purpose (Turn 6) and that his hands are tied to use it as he liked. He adds that there are many other political parties like the Congress Party, and in case the money is shared, it should be divided equally among all the parties (Turn 12). This denial and counter-suggestion irritate Jha, and he becomes very aggressive and abusive and attacks Sandeep Lahiri with a direct threat. Let us now read the dialogue between Jha and Sandeep Lahiri:

Dialogue 2

Turn 1: Jha: About the fund-raising for Independence Day.

Turn 2: Sandeep Lahiri: Ah yes, ... In fact, Sir, I am counting on your help.

Turn 3: Jha: And I am counting on your help. That is why I have called you.

Turn 4: Sandeep Lahiri: My help? (smiling helplessly and warily)

Turn 5: Jha: Yes, yes. You see, Congress also has plans for Independence Day and we will take half the funds you collect, and use them for a separate display...

Turn 6: Sandeep Lahiri: You see sir, (moving his hands around freely in curves of helplessness) my hands are tied.

Turn 7: Jha: (...continued to stare, then exploded) What do you mean? (he almost shouted) No hands are tied. Congress will untie your hands...

Turn 8: Sandeep Lahiri: Sir it is like this- (began Sandeep Lahiri)

Turn 9: Jha: (But Jha did not let him continue) You are a servant of the government, (said Jha fiercely) and the Congress Party runs the government. You will do as we tell you. ... How much do you think you will collect?

Turn 10: Sandeep Lahiri: I don't know, Sir, I haven't done this sort of collecting before.

Turn 11: Jha: Let us say, five hundred rupees. So we will get two hundred and fifty, you will get two hundred and fifty-and everyone will be satisfied...

Turn 12: Sandeep Lahiri: To be fair, Sir, we would have to give an equal amount to all these parties- to the communist party, to the Bhartiya Jan Sang, to the Ram Rajya Parishad, to the Hindu Mahasabha, to the Revolutionary Socialist Party-

Turn 13: Jha: What! (bursting out) What? (swallowing) What? You are comparing us to the Socialist party? ...

Turn 14: Sandeep Lahiri: Certainly, Sir, Why not? The Congress is just one of many parties. In this respect, they are all same...

Turn 15: Jha: You equate us with the other parties? (trembling with anger)... In that case, I will show you. I will show you what the Congress means. I will make sure that you are not able to raise any funds. Not one paisa will you be able to get. You will see, you will see.

Turn 16: Sandeep Lahiri: Well, yes, Sir, we will see, (said Sandeep getting up. Jha did not get up from his chair. Turning at the door Sandeep aimed his weak smile at the furious Congressmen in a final attempt at goodwill. The Congressman did not smile back) (ASB, pp. 962-964)

When the conversation is analyzed, we can see how Jha is using aggressive and impolite language to establish his power over the SDO Sandeep. He exercises his power that is assumed by being a politician of the ruling party. In democratic India, political leaders are elected by people, and they are much more potent than the officials who implement the constitutional rules. The government officials are always expected to be subservient to the political leaders, to their line of thinking and execute their orders; however, illogical they may be. When an official refuses to carry out any orders, a clash of interests arises, and the first thing to follow is the use of abusive and aggressive language. It is exhibited in this conversation, in the rudeness of Jha when he directly challenges Sandeep saying, (in Turn 15) “I will show you. I will show you what the Congress means. I will make sure that you are not able to raise any funds. Not one paisa will you be able to get. You will see, you will see” (ASB, pp. 964).

The conversation between them starts very smoothly (Turn 1 - 6), but it takes an aggressive turn (Turn 6) when Sandeep tells Jha, “My hands are tied.” In (Turn 7) we see, Jha directly challenging him, raising his voice, and shouting at Sandeep. However, Sandeep is not able to counter the threats of the politician because countering and challenging a politician means risking the future of his career and his peace of mind. Fearing future troubles from Jha, he meekly surrenders saying (Turn 16) “Well, yes, Sir, we will see,” and leaves the place thereby giving the politician the benefit of his impolite, aggressive talk. Thus, Jha wins by using aggressive, impolite, and threatening language to his advantage. He achieves power over the official by the mere use of impolite, aggressive language.

In this dialogue, Jha expresses his utmost contempt and displeasure in a very loud voice. Whereas, Sandeep becomes a meek recipient of Jha’s aggressive and rude language and swallows insult afraid of further aggravation from the situation and to protect himself from future troubles from the politician. Sandeep’s meek response and submission are the results of his present situation where he is at a definite disadvantage. This dialogue is a clear example of how people try to establish their power over others by using aggravating or impolite language in the context of situated identities.

4.3. The interplay of power in the context of Discourse Identities

In the Indian social context, establishing a discourse identity by using verbally aggressive language is a part of daily life. India is a country with different social structures, consisting of different religious class and caste identities. In such a context, discourse identities play a vital role in establishing one’s identity-driven by power over the other. The need for establishing power using aggressive and abusive language is displayed in ASB in many situations. What follows next is an analysis of dialogue from ASB in which the speaker in the capacity of a discourse identity uses very aggressive and abusive language to protect his friend from a violent mob driven by a rioting frenzy.

In this extract, Maan, and Firoz, who are friends, are walking together on a dark lane when they hear the beating of drums and frenzied shouting of a mob moving towards them. Maan smells danger, turns Firoz around by his shoulders, and asks him to run for his life, as the crowd is a Hindu crowd on a rampage. Mann is sure Firoz is in great danger as he is a Muslim, and the approaching violent crowd will surely harm Firoz. However, Firoz refuses to move, saying he will

not leave Maan alone, but Maan insists that he runs and saves his life as the crowd will not harm him as he is a Hindu. Meanwhile, the crowd of twenty to thirty men armed with spears and knives and flaming torches reaches them. The duo is confronted by the mob. Maan claims that they are not Muslims and one young man from the crowd insists that they recite Gayatri Mantra and Maan recites it. Meanwhile, one among the crowd recognizes Firoz and prompts others that he is a Muslim and insists that Firoz takes off his clothes so that they can check whether he is circumcised to make sure he is a Muslim or not. Then, Firoz is hit on the stomach using a blood-stained lathi, and he loses his balance. Maan has no other option but to use all his powers to protect his friend. As Maan and Firoz are without any weapons, the only weapon he has in his possession is his ability to speak and put up a brave verbal aggressive and abusive fight to protect Firoz from the madly violent crowd. Maan recognizes one person in the crowd, Nand Kishor, a teacher by profession, and he picks up an aggressive conversation with him challenging his sensibilities to buy more time to protect his friend. As he talks to Nand Kishor, Maan picks up courage, uses language very aggressively, establishes power, and dominates them by his aggressive and abusive language. Now, let us look at the dialogue:

Dialogue 3

Turn 1: A man from the crowd: The other's a Muslim. Why would he be dressed like that?...

Turn 2: Another man from the crowd: Kill the cruel, cow-murdering haramzada – cut the sister-fuckers throat...

Turn 3: A Young Man from the crowd: What are you? (said the young man, prodding Firoz in the stomach with his bloodstained lathi) Quick—speak—speak, before I use this on your head—...

Turn 4: Maan: Nand Kishor! (shouting) What are you doing here in this gang? Aren't you ashamed of yourself? You're supposed to be a teacher.

Turn 5: A Young Man from the crowd: Shut up— Just because of you like circumcised cocks do you think we'll let the Mussalman go? (again prodding Firoz with the bloodstained lathi)

Turn 6: Maan: You teach my nephew.....We're doing no one any harm. Let us go on our way. Come! (he said to Firoz, grabbing him by the shoulder) Come. (He tried to shoulder his way past the mob).

Turn 6: A Young man from the crowd: Not so fast. You can go, you sister-fucking traitor—but you can't.

Turn 7: Maan : (Maan turned on him, ignoring his lathi, caught him by the throat in sudden fury). You mother-fucker! (He said to him in a low growl that nevertheless carried to every man in the mob). Do you know what day this is? This man is my brother, more than my brother, and today in our neighborhood we were celebrating Bharat Milaap. If you harm one hair of my brother's head—if even one hair of his head is harmed—Lord Rama will seize your filthy soul and send it flaming into hell—and you'll be born in your next life as the filthy krait you are. Go home lick up your own blood, you sister-fucker, before I break your neck. He wrenched the young man's lathi from his grasp and pushed him into the crowd. (ASB, pp.1060-61)

In the preceding dialogue, we understand that the crowd that stopped Maan and Firoz is very violent and on a killing spree and they would not listen to any reason. The mob uses filthy abusive language threatening to kill Firoz (Turn 2). Maan uses his tact and counters their aggressiveness (Turn 7) by using a more aggressive language. He threatens them with counter-violence by invoking the name of Lord Rama and threatens them of dire punishment from Lord Rama. First, Maan picks up one man from the crowd and establishes his familiarity with him so that the crowd's aggressiveness is neutralized a bit and he could buy some time to deal with the situation by challenging his sensibilities as a teacher. He counters their physical violence with very aggressive abusive verbal violence to bail them out of the situation. Maan's persuasive speech invoking Lord Rama, with a language, which is more aggressive than that of the young man from the crowd, gives them a chance to escape the attack of the crowd. Maan starts his conversation, "You mother-fucker!" (Turn 7). To counter the aggressiveness of the young man who calls Firoz a "sister-fucker" (Turn 6). This kind of forceful aggressive retaliation in speech counters the threat of physical violence by the young man. He tells the crowd that Firoz is his brother and even if one of his hair is harmed, Lord Rama will put him into hell with flaming fire. He uses his aggressive language with tact, creating both moral and physical fear among the opponents (Turn 7). He also points to the fact that they will be punished according to the Hindu religion and they will be born as a Krait, a deadly poisonous snake, in their next birth. It again is a threat that their actions will not go unpunished by God. He also extends his verbal violence asking the young man to go home and lick his blood to quench his thirst for blood (Turn 7). He also supports his violent language with the physical action of wrenching the bloodstained lathi from the young man who repeatedly hits Firoz. In the end, Maan succeeds in controlling the crowd and escapes protecting his friend, Firoz.

The use of aggressive and abusive language by Maan in the above conversation is an example of how one uses it to protect one's self and others with them from any bodily harm. Here, we also see how tactfully Maan uses his aggressive language strategically to manipulate the crowd's beliefs, and turns the adverse situation to his favor and protects his friend from the violent and angry mob. It is also evident from the situation that, using impolite, aggressive language helps people establish dominance over others in a difficult situation to safeguard their safety interests. In order to protect his friend, Maan uses powerful impolite, aggressive language and dominates the crowd by appealing to their religious beliefs as well as threatening them with expressions related to sex, bodily functions and punishment from God. It works, and the crowd becomes powerless on the face of Maan's aggressive, impolite outbursts, which are directly aimed at them. Maan's words become more powerful than the weapons the crowd carried with them. Maan could counter the threat of physical violence and danger to their life and dominate the crowd with his persuasive abusive speech.

Moreover, here we find a social breakdown bordering deadly violence that is a big threat to the dialogue participant who is in an extremely urgent situation. There is a threat of physical violence, padded with verbal abuse that is very aggressive and life-threatening. Also, the situation demands immediate counteraction on the part of the people at the receiving end as the situation may turn aggressive, violent, and tragic if it is not controlled immediately. In this dire need to protect one's life, language and rhetoric give tremendous power even over the violent crowd. The dialogic power Maan establishes by negating and countering aggressive and abusive language,

which is used as a prelude to justifying their violent action proves to be successful and helps him accomplish his goal of saving his friend. This dialogue demonstrates that the use of impolite, aggressive, or abusive language stems from the need to establish power over the others. It shows how a discourse charged with verbal violence is used to dominate the situation emerging out of a dire need to protect one's self and the friend from the physical violence of the angry mob.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of impoliteness or aggravating language is as old as the language itself. As we see in the dialogues analysed in this paper, the use of social padding, wrapping, and circumlocution of the polite language is discarded. Moreover, most of the impoliteness is pointed directly at the addressee and in some cases; it is used by a participant to counter the threat posed by the situation as a strategy to counter the aggressive behavior directed towards the self. It is evident from the way Maan uses aggressive language involving derogatory, abusive language to counter the immediate threat he and his friend Firoz encounter on the streets from the frenzied mob. Another characteristic of impoliteness or aggravating language use is that it is often full of tabooed expressions related to sex, death, bodily functions. It is very much present in the dialogue between Maan and the members of the violent crowd. Finally, through these analyses, we understand that the use of impoliteness or aggravation is an obvious part of our speech with its function and purpose. The use of aggravation and abusive language is also governed by norms like polite language, and it has all the rationality like that of polite language. Moreover, we can see that the use of such language is not a symptom of an uncivilized and backward society, but it is a part of any society, and the use of such language springs from the rationality that is operative in humans. Thus, it is established that, (a) aggressive and impolite language can be used to maintain power over others to establish a smooth flow of day-to-day mutual social transactions and living, (Mrs. Rupa and Lata: the case of Master Identity) (b) as a weapon to protect one's own self or the other(s) around, (Mann, Firoz against the violent crowd: the case of Discourse Identity) or (c) to release the frustrations that emanate from the clash of powered identities (Jha and Sandeep Lahiri: the Situated Identity). Furthermore, the use of aggressive language and behavior also helps to mitigate situations that pose a direct potential threat or danger to people, and also to protect the norms that govern individual roles in a societal framework. It also helps to balance the power each one needs to establish for a decent and respectful living. Thus, the impolite or aggravating language has its place and importance in contextualized sociolinguistic communication, which helps create and maintain social order and balance in society.

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Acknowledgment: We wish to acknowledge that this paper drew heavily on the materials and facilities available at the English Language Center, Nizwa College of Technology. We offer my sincere thanks to Mr. Sultan Al-Dighaishi, HoD, ELC, NCT for his constant encouragement and support. This note of thanksgiving will be insincere if we fail to appreciate the great help that we received from Mrs. Lalitha Justin, Lecturer, ELC, NCT.

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