Research article

A Critical Analysis of Honorification in Human Relations

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Abstract

This paper discusses the concept of honorification with a focus on the essential correlation between human relations and society. While the structural aspect of honorification, in the form of honorifics, has been discussed extensively the functional aspect of honorification as a research question requires equal consideration. It has often been claimed that obligation is one of the primary motivations behind honorification owing to its ubiquitous influence on social interactions due to differences in status, social distance, and power. However, a closer look will reveal how such social factors are a reflection of not the obligation but the underlying acknowledgement of this obligation leading to the social recognition of honorification and, thus, shifting the perspective from necessity to choice. In other words, this paper explores honorification as a synthesis of society, culture, and human nature.

Keywords: Honorification, Deference, Prohibition, Volition, Respect.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT G❂ALS   **Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**

1. Introduction

The beginning of the twentieth century marked a very important time in the discussion of honorifics. Although, it is true that the term 'honorifics' was not in vogue up until 1960s but concepts of social position and politeness began to crystallize into independent topics of inquiry. While studies related to polite pronoun usages gained momentum in the field of linguistics (Johnston, 1904; Müller, 1914; Fay, 1920; Jespersen, 1954), issues that dealt with the notion of race and its associated superiority-inferiority dichotomy (Boas, 1911/1938), respect and social position (Durkheim, 1912/1915; Boas, 1940) attracted the attention of anthropologists and sociologists. Especially during the period from 1941 to 1960 the social structure moved to the center stage of both anthropological as well as sociological research. Unlike the earlier period where interpersonal relationships could be found in small traces as titbits of discussions about the grandeur and diversity of human civilizations, this stage strived to define the universal nature of human relationships, analyze its essential components by consideration of kinship relations (Lévi-Strauss, 1949) and everyday social encounters (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952) and comprehend one of the factors

that guided these relationships, namely power using formal settings (French & Raven, 1959). The latter half of the twentieth century beginning from 1960 witnessed a significant shift in the study of honorifics. Unlike the preceding period where honorifics developed as an offshoot of the more serious discussions about interpersonal relationships, this period undertook defining honorifics as a legitimate question in its own right by careful consideration of speech as a medium of social action instead of assuming its worth only till the manifestation of society (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Geertz, 1960; Irvine, 1985; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Agha, 1994; Terkourafi, 1999). In other words, the focus of these works gradually shifted to analyzing honorifics as a linguistic aspect which provided evidence to further discussions not on the independent and exclusive nature of status, class, rank, role, deference, politeness but about the bigger conglomeration of these elements in which interactants continuously adjusted themselves and modified their relations to others.

2. Characteristic Features of Honor as a Concept

In order to delve deeper into the concept of honorification, it is important to consider the evolutionary, psychological, and sociocultural aspects of honor as perceived in different cultures for it functions as a mirror to analyze aspects essentially attributed to honorification. According to Linquist (2016), there are two components of honor- an individual's psychological phenotype and a group's cultural phenotype. While the former component emphasizes on an individual's "disposition to respond to certain events (e.g., an insult or threat) with a distinctive cognitive, emotional or behavioral response" (Linquist, 2016, p. 215), the latter component focuses on the "socially transmitted information" (p. 215) shared among the group members. With these components in consideration, there are two types of perspectives to analyze honor as reflected among communities. From the perspective of "developmental thesis" (Linquist, 2016, p. 214) wherein it is argued that there is a causal link from the cultural phenotype to the psychological phenotype, communities which consider honor to be equivalent to social standing as a result of which any impact on honor in the form of an insult is countered with violent aggression which Linquist (2016) referred to as "'reactive' psychological phenotype" (p. 216). In contrast, communities which do not emphasize on this correlation between honor and social standing exhibit "no strong fight or flight response, no proneness to anger, and they will typically shrug off an insult with humor" (p. 216) which Linquist (2016) referred to as "'passive' psychological phenotype" (p. 216). A closer look to this distinction in terms of developmental thesis would unravel the fact that there is a further underlying distinction motivating this perspective: an "evolutionary component" (p. 216). It proposes a causal link from the socioecological environment to the cultural phenotype. An interesting contrast of examples was provided by Linquist (2016) where he attributed features of reactive psychological phenotype to pastoral communities and of passive psychological phenotype to horticultural communities. This is because in pastoral communities "an individual's economic standing is largely bound up in livestock – a portable form of capital particular vulnerable to theft" (p. 216) whereas in horticultural communities "individuals are bound to sedentary existence. They also rely on one another for defense, harvesting, and other highly cooperative endeavors" (p. 216) which require passive reaction to insults to ensure communal harmony.

Since an important aspect of this paper involves social construal of honorification, it is noteworthy to consider the features typically reflected in cultures wherein honor is equivalent to social standing, namely honor cultures. According to Nowak, Gelfand, Borkowski, Cohen, and Hernandez (2016), "around the globe, people fight for their honor, even if it means sacrificing their lives. Honor cultures vary in their specific codes, but they share one fundamental characteristic: the willingness to retaliate against other people to defend one's reputation, even if doing so is very risky or costly." (p. 12) While Shackelford (2005) argued that this trait is visibly more prominent in men in general, the experiment conducted by Cohen et al. in 1996 (as cited in Shackelford, 2005) suggested that violence erupted more in public insults as compared to private insults when the insult observers were acquaintances, family members, rivals, or potential mates. However, it is noteworthy that the groups exhibiting these features are primarily concentrated in the regions of Latin America, Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia as compared to the dignity cultures concentrated in the regions of North America and West Europe and face cultures concentrated in the region of East Asia (Uskul & Cross, 2020). This "manifestation of the behavioral characteristics of a culture of honor" (Shackelford, 2005, p. 389) is triggered by the psychological mechanism which, in turn, owes its origin to a problem experienced by ancestral men, namely "theft of a reproductively valuable wife" (p. 390) for it signified not only a physical theft but also "theft of her reproductive capacity." (p. 390) In other words, this aggression and retaliation as characteristic features of honor evolved as an adaptation owing to the fact that the theft of a wife either by courting her for an "extra-pair of copulation or raping her" (p. 390) implied the incapability of a male to retain a mate.

3. Honor and Respect

The concepts of honor and respect are intricately related to each other. This becomes an important consideration while discussing honorification primarily because while "respect is due to everyone" (Woodruff, 2011, p. 170) belonging to a particular community "honor is not for everyone." (Woodruff, 2011, p. 172) According to Darwall, there are two types of respect, namely recognition respect and appraisal respect. Recognition respect is described as "something we realize in our treatment of others by regulating our conduct towards them by giving adequate weight to the fact that they are persons." (Darwall, 2013, p. 14) Appraisal respect, on the other hand, is defined as the evaluation of the person's character or conduct, i.e. "moral esteem: approbation for her as a moral agent." (Darwall, 2013, p. 19) One of the forms of recognition respect, namely honor respect is described as recognizing someone and "allowing him to play the role he is attempting to play by playing along with him or by bestowing on him a higher status or role, that is, an honor." (Darwall, 2013, p. 17) Another form of recognition respect is identified as second-personal respect which, according to Darwall (2013), involves making persons mutually accountable to each other such that "their having a shared standing to make claims and demands of each other and hold each other answerable, as equal" requires recognition of each other as persons at the first place and then provision of authority to both the individuals, i.e. looking others "in the eye in return and recognize our common dignity reciprocally." (Darwall, 2013, p. 21) Apparently, this second-personal respect not only promotes putting oneself in other's shoes to uphold morality but also maintaining moral code within a particular community. However, this paper argues that often individuals exhibit moral code through their actions without even

considering mutual accountability but simply by virtue of knowledge of the moral code and an intention to maintain social harmony within the community. And, it is this intention to uphold morality that is proposed here to be *moral honor*.

This can be explained with a linguistic example. Haviland's (1979) study of *brother-in-law* (or BIL) register of Guugu Yimidhirr spoken in New Queensland relevant emphasizes on the fact that this register which was used by a male speaker in presence of his father-in-law or brother-in-law, was described by the speakers as "'a bit deep', 'higher'" (Haviland, 1979, p. 369) or something that the "chiefs would use." (Haviland, 1979, p. 369) The register involved forbidden words used to describe tabooed sites like graves or kin members whom one should avoid. Haviland further commented on how a speaker though generally avoided interaction with his mother-in-law, if a situation arose he might speak using BIL register "at the same time turning his back and, deliberately, departing." (Haviland, 1979, p. 370) Similarly, his interaction with father-in-law or brother-in-law using BIL register involved speech style which was soft and slow and speaking "'sideways', or 'crosswise'" (Haviland, 1979, p. 369) implying that neither he faced his interlocutor nor addressing him directly, if possible with the help of an intermediary. It is important to mention here that a speaker would be around his parents-in-law only in the presence of his wife. While this avoidance for mother-in-law arose from the sensitive relationship that the speaker and she shared owing to their potential sexual compatibility, for father-in-law and brother-in-law it arose out of avoiding conflict owing to "severe restrictions on sharing of food and possessions" (Haviland, 1979, p. 376). This use of BIL register is considered to be the honorific register wherein the honor that one focuses arises neither from one's achievements (honor respect) nor from holding each other accountable through mutual authority and acting accordingly (second-personal respect) but simply through an intention to maintain the moral code. And, this is where *moral honor* essentially differs from second-personal respect. As opposed to this, when honor is construed as manifestation of rank or asymmetrical social status it can be defined as *status honor*, something that Darwall (2013) considered to be honor respect.

This paper, therefore, proposes for a reassessment of honor which, according to Darwall (2013), is one of the categories (as honor respect) of recognition respect along with second-personal respect. As opposed to Woodruff's (2011) description of honor as recognition of the other person's achievements, this paper proposes that honor is an external recognition (i.e. admission) of the other as a person which is often conveyed through action as opposed to second-personal respect wherein accordance of authority to the other person, though ensures mutual accountability, is essentially an internal recognition of existence of the other person. Further, honor is divided into *acknowledgement honor* and *avoidance honor*. *Acknowledgement honor* involves either only acknowledgement of the other's existence (for example, in honor killing it is this acknowledgement of the other's existence which is removed) or action to acknowledge the other's existence (for example, to honor the dead). It is this *avoidance honor* which is proposed to be further divided into *moral honor* and *status honor* wherein the former manifests an action of avoidance based on the intention of upholding the moral code (i.e. customary laws as prevalent in a community for kin members) and the latter refers to an avoidance, without or without using action, based on the other person's achievements, i.e. status. In other words, while *moral honor* always employs action to convey honor *status honor* can be conveyed without action (for example,

in use of honorifics) or even by use of action (for example, maintaining a restrained posture in front of a superordinate). All these distinctions are illustrated with the help of following schema:
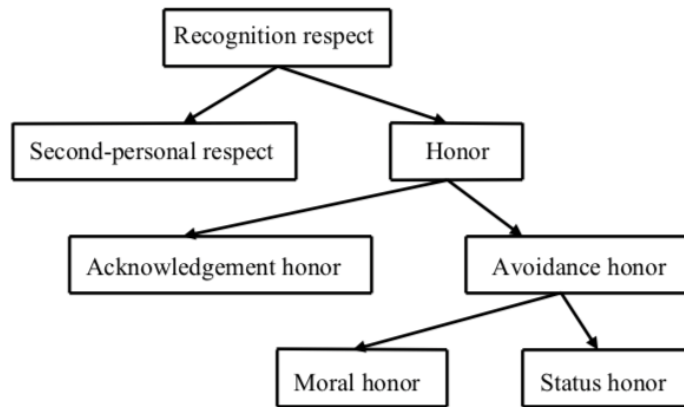

Figure 1: Recognition of Honor

4. Social Connotations of Honorification

It is obvious that discussions about honorification would remain incomplete without the context of politeness as the relation between honorification and politeness is an essential one – almost to the point of being an inherent one, which Agha (1994) considered to be "a second type of approach to honorific behavior" (p. 282). Politeness as an independent linguistic phenomenon has captured the attention of linguists from 1970s onwards as evident in different scholarly works (Grice, 1975; Lyons, 1977; Leech, 1983) that have revolutionized the field of pragmatics. However, unfortunately the scope of politeness in understanding sociocultural differences was widely underestimated and ignored till Brown and Levinson (1987) emphasized on the inherent relationship in their work which has remained inarguably the most prominent and exhaustive work on linguistic politeness even to this day. Central to their theory of politeness strategy were: 1) the notion of 'face' which roughly corresponded to "specific kinds of desires" (p. 13) in terms of positive face (i.e. the desire to be approved of) and negative face (i.e. the desire to be unimpeded by others), though subject to cultural differentiation, and 2) three crucial sociological factors of relative power (or P) of the addressee over the speaker, social distance (or D) between speaker and addressee, and finally ranking of imposition (or R) involved in face-threatening act (or FTA), the latter term (FTA) being described as an action that resulted in violation or disappointment of the desires of the addressee. However, what makes this work relevant to the present discussion is Brown and Levinson's claim that the most salient feature of honorifics was their motivation by a strategy of deference which unequivocally branded it as a manifestation of negative politeness. Apart from the fact that the term 'deference' itself requires more elaboration in terms of social relevance, this theory of politeness strategies has been under the scrutiny on internal grounds (with the theory in general) and empirical grounds as well as for difficulty in conceptual and psychological framing of the term 'strategy' as used in the work (Agha 1994). Another major drawback appears to be with terminological inconsistencies and their actual dealings in the concerned work. While the authors claimed factors of power and distance to be "sociological" (p. 15) ones, they later clarified that their theory considered these factors only to the extent of "mutual

knowledge" (p. 74) between interlocutors and was "not intended as sociologists' ratings of actual power, distance, etc." (p. 74) Furthermore, Brown and Levinson asserted that their theory explored interaction in "some more sophisticated way than the use of gross labels like 'respect' and 'familiarity'" (p. 242) but at the same time contended that the factors of P, D and R "subsume" (p. 80) all other factors of status, authority, occupation, ethnic identity, friendship, situational factors which were themselves more intricately patterned than the authors claimed to be. Finally, though the work attempted to link social structure with interactional details by proposing use of a "possible social candidate" (p. 56) the method specified use of a "Model person (MP)" (p. 58).

As Agha (1994) pointed out, it is important to understand that though the concepts of honorification and politeness cut across each other they are conceptually different for the repertoire of honorific elements is limited and indicate deference for not only speaker and addressee but for referent as well as bystander as compared to the wide range of politeness strategies employed by the speaker only for the addressee. Furthermore, another important distinction to be noted here is the fact that honorification is a social phenomenon whereas politeness is a socio-pragmatic phenomenon implying that while the former is motivated by social context the latter is motivated by situational context. Given their different qualities, it then becomes interesting to comprehend how these two different concepts merge at a single point so as to create confusion and debate among scholars on their manifestation in different languages. This section, therefore, brings forward a supposedly basic yet often ignored question of whether the role of deference is appropriately assigned to both these concepts.

In his discussion about social interaction and interpersonal relationships, Goffman advocated a strong indexing of social status through deference and demeanor when he argued that deference inculcated an image which pertained to the "wider society outside the interaction, to the place the individual has achieved in the hierarchy of this society" (Goffman, 1956, p. 492) whereas demeanor was a demonstration of the qualities that the social position accorded to the individual. On a similar note Agha (1994), therefore, suggested that status, deference and demeanor were three separate yet equally significant factors for understanding honorification though he agreed that often interlocutors violate this sociocultural norm in order to convey interactional information other than status, for example the speaker's mood, or social setting, or attitude of the speaker towards the addressee, or discussion of certain topics, or engagement of a different gender in the conversation. On the other hand, Keating citing example from her study of Pohnpeian society, where the chief used an exaltive form in oratory to address people from lower status not to exhibit deference or his demeanor but to raise the status of the addressee group, suggested that the primary function of honorifics was social indexing "but this use is expanded by speakers in multiply indexical ways" (Keating, 1998, p. 40). However, as observed from different scholarly works discussing honorific usages there is a strong suggestion of the factors of status, social distance and deference as three most common motivations behind these usages for which this section attempts to untangle these factors in a systematic manner.

4.1 Status and Honorification

According to Ravlin and Thomas (2005), although status refers to social position occupied by the individuals rather than to individuals themselves, the positions are organized on a scale of value with high and low degrees and, thus, conferring high or low status to an individual. It is important

to note here that stratification is not an inherent feature of status because the same individual can move across the scale of value whereas in stratification, as Blau had argued, the structures are patterned in the form of a pyramid reflecting inequality of opportunities and, thus, restricting association of individuals from the lower stratum with the higher stratum though a vice-versa association is quite possible (as cited in Ravlin & Thomas, 2005). As a result, it is quite evident that the status which is claimed to be the motivation behind honorific usages in the existing literature actually refers to the "ascribed status" (Ravlin & Thomas, 2005, p. 967) where social position of an individual is ranked on the basis of privileges artificially imposed on the individual. Although, it is true that this positioning of the individuals is based partly on their past achievements or skills, i.e. "achieved status" (Ravlin & Thomas, 2005, p. 967), it is argued that that it is the prestige accorded to individuals rather than the authority commanded by individuals themselves that influences honorific usages. This ascription of status is explained better with examples from Kyrgyz society which is a manifestation of a relatively egalitarian social structure. In this society (i.e. the Turkic nomadic tribe of Kyrgyzstan) the clan is traditionally headed by a *bai* (or *manap*), a chief who is not elected but generally earns his position by being the oldest in the council of *aksakals* (i.e. an aged and wise village elder representing the village) as well as his decision-making skills. Although, customarily this position is hereditary meaning that the son of *bai* is next considered for this position but on account of inefficiency the position might be taken by another individual. The fact that the position of *bai* (chief) depends on his decision-making skills indicates choice on part of the members of the society. On the other hand as far as address terms are concerned, a younger speaker addresses a male elder stranger using *baike* (elder brother) and a female elder stranger using *eje* (elder sister) whereas an elder speaker uses *ini* (younger brother) for a younger male stranger and *singdi* (younger sister, used by a female speaker) or *karyndash* (younger sister, used by a male speaker) (Abazov, 2004). This use of elder kinship terms to address strangers indicates the choice made on the part of speakers to accord the power to the strangers equivalent to the elders of the society. The fact that among kin members, Kyrgyz speakers suffix the syllable /ŭ/ or -*(e)ke* (elder, father) to kinship terms to address older relatives indicating honour and respect or that the suffix -*(e)ke* is also attached to the first syllable of a name as an honorific address term indicates that apparently power is the most salient feature of any society re-emphasizing Hendricks' suggestion that there is hardly any society which is devoid of any kind of domination, be it the factor of age, or gender, or kinship, or even some institutionalized form of domination (as cited in Flanagan, 1989). In other words, it evokes a sense of obligation in general on the part of the speaker to use honorifics for an addressee.

But to emphasize on the point that even this obligation is actually an approval by the members of a society to adhere to the orderliness existing in a society this section considers Woodburn's (1982) claim that while a number of societies are in some sense egalitarian, it is in those societies that depend on hunting and gathering for subsistence that minimum inequalities can be found. These hunter-gatherer societies are essentially nomadic in nature and these communities (!Kung Bushmen of Botswana and Namibia, and Hadza of Tanzania) set up small camp units associated with particular areas (territories) that allow flexibility and mobility of the members. Although, in some cases people living in a particular camp assert rights over natural resources associated with that particular region, generally groups never monopolize the resources as members can move freely from one camp to another. In these societies, neither kinship status

nor age function as qualifications for hunting and gathering skills which are learnt through participation and emulation rather than formal and informal instruction. Another remarkable feature is the fact that these societies either do not have leaders (for example, Hadza camps wherein the name of an elderly male is used simply as a label and is neither the leader or a representative of the camp) or the leaders are constrained from exercising their influence towards accumulation of power or wealth (for example, !Kung camps wherein individuals portraying an ambition to amass wealth or power are consciously excluded from possibility of leadership and instead individuals who reflect modesty, generosity are particularly preferred to uphold the tradition of egalitarianism).

Therefore, a careful introspection redirects our attention to the fact that achieved status and ascribed status have their separate but interconnected contributions to the general construal of honorification. In fact, it is this treatment of these two types under the umbrella term of 'status' that creates confusion and difference while studying different linguistic groups for analysis of honorific usages. While ascribed status is generally associated with honorification, it is important to remember that this ascription of status stems originally from materialistic achievements through display of skills, i.e. from achieved status. Evidently, it is assumed that honorific usages are basically the result of the addressee's power over the speaker, whatever be the source of power and thus obligation emerges as the general norm for bestowing honor over an individual. However, a closer look will confirm that any instance of status is ultimately the manifestation of the speaker's acknowledgement of the addressee's past skill (or achievement) and present privileges. In other words, it is this worth of the speaker's power as an important motivation for honorific usages that the literature seems to have overlooked in discussions pertaining to honorification.

4.2 Social Distance and Honorification

Discussion about status inevitably brings into context the topic of social distance which Poole considered to be a group phenomenon for it "concerns the milieu" (Poole, 1927, p. 102) disregarding the individual in particular. Not only did he distinguish within social distance itself but also separated personal distance from social distance. He divided personal distance, which existed "only for the individuals concerned" (Poole, 1927, p. 102), into subjective and objective personal distance of which the former involved the individual's own judgment of his relationship with the other irrespective of the original nature of the relationship as it existed whereas the latter, based on presence or absence of certain traits, concerned the actual physical distance. In contrast, social distance essentially involved the distinction as conceived between in-group and out-group members which was divided similar to personal distance into subjective and objective social distance. This subjective social distance which formed the basis of group interaction separated in-group members from out-group members and were more often imaginations than truth based on "history, legend, myth, propaganda, literature, and travelers' tales." (Poole, 1927, p. 103) On the other hand, objective social distance was grounded on real cultural differences. This discussion made a striking revelation of how social distance was an overt manifestation of the group membership. Instead of placing individuals on a hierarchical scale based on status, the function of social distance is to categorize individuals into in-group and out-group. This function of social

distance is re-emphasized by Boalt and Janson (1957) in their study where they illustrated that the degree of interpersonal relationships was greatest for the smallest geographical distance which slowly reduced to almost zero or, in fact, zero with increase in this distance. As a result, immediate activities of the individual as well as his perceptions are mostly confined by the geographical proximity for which his interest and dependence grows for occurrences within his immediate vicinity which, in turn, leads to "direct personal contacts of a lasting and intensive nature" (Boalt and Janson, 1957, p. 83) among the individuals occupying smallest geographical separation. This emotional intimacy gives way to formation of a group from which individuals distant, in terms of geographical space, are consciously separated and eliminated that ultimately leads to formation of social distance labelling individuals as in-group or out-group members.

A noteworthy example to explain the concept of social distance is presented in their study by Beshers, Mizruchi and Perrucci (1963) wherein they emphasized that in a patrilineal society since a daughter's status was dependent upon marriage after her family of orientation, the family ensured prospective association higher up than lower down in the social structure through shrewd socialization complemented with more active control of the daughter's exposure to eligible males. Although, at one glance it is tricky to understand how this indirect influence confirmed the function of social distance as categorizing individuals into in-group and out-group, a closer look will confirm the fact that as families of a particular category always attempted to minimize the distance with families higher up in order to access the "public and private symbols" (Beshers, Mizruchi & Perrucci, 1963, p. 321) of the latter, one of the most feasible ways, unarguably, was creating the impression of group membership with the latter group. In other words, these strategies of mate-selection were in a way methods of distinguishing potential in-group members (eligible males) from actual out-group members (ineligible males). Similar to the marriage system, in a formal organization the subordinate attempts to reduce the social distance between himself and the superordinate (i.e. potential in-group member) by gaining access to the public and private symbols of the superordinate. However, in this process similar to Poole's argument about the concerned family and marriage, the subordinate poses a potential "power threat" (Poole, 1927, p. 321) and "status threat" (Poole 1927, p. 321) to the superordinate owing to access to the latter's public and private symbols respectively. As a result, the superordinate strategically aims at maintaining his status and power "by a manipulation of the public and private knowledge concerning himself and his position." (Poole 1927, p. 321) In other words, since prudence is always maintained by an individual in the form of "reserve and restraint" (Murphy, 1964, p. 1257) there is an indirect prohibition imposed by the superordinate on the contact between himself and his subordinate leading to an increasing status gap between them.

Laumann in his study brought a fascinating context to the concept of social distance where he examined two hypotheses in relation to subjective social distance, namely (1) establishment of social relations among people of similar occupation which he termed as "like-me hypothesis" (Laumann, 1965, p. 26), and (2) establishment of social relations by persons with lower social status with those of higher social status which he termed as "prestige hypothesis" (Laumann, 1965, p. 26). He stated that the prevailing notion indicated prestige hypothesis implying that "the higher the status of the occupation, as an attitude object, the less the social distance expressed toward it by the respondent, regardless of his occupational status." (Laumann, 1965, p. 28) However, in real-life situations, as he argued, this was often not the case especially with respondents of lower-

status occupations in terms of display of social distance towards persons of higher-status occupations. He, therefore, attempted to provide a possible resolution to this seemingly contradictory expression of social distance by suggesting that while persons conformed to prestige hypothesis for preferred or desired interactions, the same respondents expressed like-me hypothesis in "actual interaction choices." (Laumann, 1965, p. 28) It is true that both these hypotheses do reinstate the function of social distance as categorizing individuals into members of in-group and out-group. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that both these hypotheses require equally nuanced analysis for chalking out the core elements of this categorization. In fact, it is important to mention here that both of these are interrelated. If only the like-me hypothesis was prevalent in interactional choices, there would have been a simple connotation of a pervasive sense of avoidance in all forms of interaction. In other words, the lower status would have maintained avoidance with the higher status and vice-versa. However, the potentiality of prestige hypothesis in interactional choices presents a dire threat of subordinate to both the achieved as well as ascribed status of the superordinate for which restraint is an urgent requirement and, thus, bringing into the context a sense of prohibition as well.

Although the existing literature does mention social distance as an important factor, there is often a tendency towards oversimplification of social distance as an implied factor in comparison to social status, the apparently more evident factor. However, on analyzing from close quarters it would be revealed that social status and social distance have different points of reference. Although, both social status and social distance requires consideration of a scale the former is associated with a scale of value viewed from a vertical dimension the latter is associated with a scale of proximity viewed from a horizontal dimension. Further, it is noteworthy that avoidance and prohibition are essentially two sides of the same coin (social distance). What distinguishes avoidance from prohibition is the sense of volition, fundamentally an intrinsic element, that resonates with avoidance whereas prohibition has a sense of compulsion, an external factor in essence, bringing into context the concept of power as is naturally conceived with higher status (whether achieved or ascribed).

4.3 Deference and Honorification

As Agha stated, the general norm is "the higher the status, the greater the degree of deference" (Agha, 1994, p. 294), it is least surprising to consider deference as one of the core elements of honorification that has remained fundamentally constant in discussions about honorific usages. Goffman (1956) defined deference as the "component of activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed to a recipient, of this recipient, or of something of which this recipient is taken as a symbol, extension, or agent." (Goffman, 1956, p. 477) He further described two forms of deference, i.e. forms of deference that necessitated the actor to maintain a distance with the recipient lest his personal space was encroached upon (avoidance rituals) like proscription, interdiction, taboo and forms of deference that signaled the recipient of the actor's evaluation of him and his treatment towards him accordingly (presentation rituals) like salutation, invitation, compliment and minor service. This work, therefore, made a valid point about how deference was an external component which was granted by other participants to the concerned individual in the form of appreciation that essentially possessed a sentiment of regard as well as a kind of promise of being considerate and perceptive. Pocock brought another concept of volition in description of deference when he emphasized on the fact that display of deference implied the speaker's voluntary acceptance of the addressee's superiority and his own status in the hierarchical structure for which deference was "spontaneously exhibited rather than enforced." (Pocock, 1976, p. 516) This willingness was reinstated by Spring when he stated that deference was an informed decision taken by the respondents as they were "capable of throwing off deference" (Spring, 1976, p. 530) if the person was deemed incapable and inefficient of leadership. However, if deference is voluntary an important question that emerges is what makes deference a pervasive phenomenon almost to the point of obligation.

In this context, Scheff (1988) identified a crucial point that any interaction held adding a new perspective to understanding deference better. Following Goffman's treatment of interaction ritual, he commented that through interaction the recipient (of deference) presented himself before the other exposing himself to a grave risk of rejection. When this rejection hit hard, there was an inevitable emotion of shame. On the other hand, acceptance from the other led to the "pleasant emotions of pride and fellow feeling." (Scheff, 1988, p. 396) According to Scheff, deference and emotions together formed a compelling conglomeration of which the former is equated with "mutual conformity and respect" (Scheff, 1988, p. 397) leading to the reward of positive emotions. As a result, these emotions of pride and shame associated with reward and punishment created an arena of social expectations in the recipient's thoughts which, in turn, became the impetus for social control by him over the respondent by compelling both the interactants to adhere to the rigid conformity. And it is at this very point that deference strikes the chord by turning from volition to obligation in the general sense. This can be explained with an example. The acquaintances A and B have chanced upon each other while travelling of whom the former is younger than the latter. Owing to higher age, B naturally expects deference from A. If in this situation A refuses to show deference to B this would create an impression of punishment towards B imbuing a sense of shame. However, this shame itself, as Scheff observed, which arises in "social monitoring of the self" (Scheff, 1988, p. 400) for B becomes further source of shame, in this case, for A as a result of which the latter is obligated to adhere to rigid conformity of expressing deference towards B. This sense of obligation resonates even in Clark's description of deference as something "owed to the more experienced or better established or better-connected

members of the crafts or clans or classes." (Clark, 2005, p. 249) However, it is true that even this apparent obligation depends on whether the respondent chooses to be affected by shame asserting the fact that deference is, in fact, voluntary.

All these discussions about the nature of deference have been best summed up by Horwitz in his brilliant study. Following Schapiro, he defined deference as something that "involves a decision maker following a determination made by some other individual or institution that it might not otherwise have reached had it decided the same question independently." (Horwitz, 2008, p. 1072) This definition can be better explained with an example. The employee A and his supervisor B, to whom the labels of decision makers D1 and D2 are accorded respectively, have decided to purchase suits for a particular official engagement. Inside the store when D1 is looking at a blue suit for himself, D2 suddenly comments that if it were for himself he would have bought the grey suit which he subsequently does. In the meantime, D1 also picks up a grey suit for himself. And this is where the concept of deference applies for D1 (or the employee) brushes aside his own judgment and follows the judgment of D2 as favorable, though had both of them went to the store separately probably D1 would have picked the blue suit for himself. Although, apparently the concept evokes a sense of obligation Horowitz was quick enough to point out that this was where deference essentially differed from obedience because the decision maker chose to set aside his or her own judgment unlike in obedience where the decision maker had to set aside his or her own judgment and adopt that of the other. Thus, in the example mentioned above if D1 wanted he could have rejected the judgment of D2 to make his own decision which would not have been the case if D1 was, for example, asked by D2 to pick up a grey suit for himself befitting the occasion. Thus, one of the most important aspects that Horwitz identified about deference was the fact that display of deference implied subtle power of the decision maker itself because this choice of selecting the other's judgment was an exercise of discretion for "only its independent judgment is displaced, not its actual authority." (Horwitz, 2008, p. 1077)

It is this aspect of deference, namely volition, that requires reconsideration in discussions of honorification. It is important to note that Ide treated honorification as a matter of discernment rather than volition implying that honorification does fall within the purview of politeness as "in the Discernment aspect of politeness, "the speaker can be considered to submit passively to the requirement of the system. That is, once certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and/or appropriate behavior is essentially automatic" (as cited in Okamoto, 1999, p. 51). However, it is important to note here that discernment only refers to "the almost automatic observation of socially-agreed-upon rules" (Okamoto, 1999, p. 51) which is not the case with honorification because honorification requires both acknowledgement of achievements of the addressee and exercise of the speaker's will accordingly and, therefore, honorification does provide a choice to the speaker similar to politeness. In contrast to the concept of politeness which involves strategy, honorification does not involve any tact or strategy. And, this is why the nature of volition which apparently seems to be same for honorification and politeness is essentially different, primarily because the ulterior motive behind volition as employed in politeness is to gain success (implying achievement of objective) from the immediate conversation with the interlocutor whereas volition (in deference) as observed in honorification is simply a manifestation of whether to acknowledge or reject other's achievements. In other words, this justifies why honorification requires to be treated separately from politeness and not as a sub-

category of the same. In fact, the focus has generally been on the connection suggesting obligation and this is where the confusion arises resulting in interchange of the terms deference and reverence often in the existing literature. In this context, it is noteworthy that reverence, according to O'Connor, "seems to contain both fear and love." (O'Connor, 1949, p. 459) The utmost reverence that one feels towards God is conceptualized as a "duty of Reverence" (p. 460). Thus, the sense of obligation that is subtly attached to reverence is unassumingly transferred to deference for both these terms are tied together by the central meaning of respect, though the motivations for both are different. In reverence, there is a fear associated with sacredness while deference is simply a result of choice.

5. Honorification as a Function

It is true that the term 'honorification' inevitably suggests an impression of a hierarchical order. Hierarchy is a multidimensional concept that encompasses political power, social honor, economic wealth, cultural knowledge, and even skin color (Zhang, 2011) that are patterned into different forms like order hierarchy, inclusion hierarchy, control hierarchy, level hierarchy (Lane, 2006). The term 'hierarchy' emerged in a religious context from Middle English *ierarchie* 'rank or order of holy beings' which was further derived from Greek *hierarches* meaning ruling body of priests who were organized into ranks and, therefore, its connotations were often human-centered (Wu, 2013; Marume & Chikasa, 2016). The most salient factor motivating such rank-based system is the power which results in dominance as the core feature of hierarchy. When power is understood as controlling of other's behavior and imposing of one's own will, the concept clearly inclines towards the functioning of power among animal communities and primates including human beings. In humans, though the power is grounded on biological basis but due to the development of societies in the form of more formalized social institutions with specialized distribution of work this power took a different direction by getting conditioned by culture. It is this power that resonates with French and Raven's (1959) category of legitimate power referring to the power that "stems from internalized values in P which dictate that O (the agent) has a legitimate right to influence P (the recipient) and that P has an obligation to accept this influence." (French & Raven, 1959, p. 153) These values though induce force fields to which P adhere to, are not always a reflection of a role relation but can be a manifestation of an accepted code by P that empowers O to assert his power. Cultural values which constitute the most common basis of legitimate power include, according to Weber, factors of age, intelligence, caste and physical characteristics (as cited in French & Raven, 1959). Apart from acceptance of the social structure and the hierarchy of authority by P, designation of power to O by a legitimizing agent also functions as important basis of legitimate power. Further, French and Raven (1959) commented that the source of forces induced by O was a mixture of both P's values and O himself although gradually this stimulation channelized the values to fit perfectly with the system influenced by O's power and later on removed the mediation of O and this induction became an internalized value for P. This internalized value echoes with Agha's description of demeanor as consisting of "culture-internal measures of positional identity." (Agha, 1994, p. 295) According to Goffman, demeanor is defined as the "element of the individual's ceremonial behavior typically conveyed through deportment, dress, and bearing, which serves to express to those in his immediate presence that he is a person of certain desirable or undesirable qualities." (Goffman, 1956, p. 489) In other words, though

demeanor is an internal attribute it holds credence only after confirmatory interpretation of the self-delineated image by other participants. In this context it is noteworthy that this demeanor, in fact, depends upon the speaker's will to portray his qualities. And, this is where the whole discussion about honorification advocates for the essential shift towards analysis of the speaker's subtle power to exercise his will for acknowledgement of the addressee's status based on the latter's achievements. Owing to this recognition, the speaker adheres to the prohibitions meticulously drawn by the addressee by consciously avoiding them which, in turn, implies his choice to replace his own judgements by that of the addressee. Therefore, on the basis of these discussions honorification is re-defined as an external recognition of the other person's existence achieved through acknowledgement or avoidance based on one's own willingness. It is this concept of willingness which plays a significant role here as was suggested by Speier as well: "A man's honor neither springs from his personality nor clings to his deeds. It depends upon other men who have the power to bestow honor on him and a will to pay it." (Speier, 1935, p. 74)

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