KEYNOTES

(1) Catrin Norrby (University of Stockholm)

Politeness in interaction – what happens when languages, cultures and nations meet?

The notion of politeness is central to any investigation of how we express social relationships through linguistic means (Clyne et al. 2009). In Goffman's work on face management (1967), polite behaviour is the result of participants' attention to the social face of self and others in interaction. Such a view is compatible with the analytical approach of Conversation Analysis (CA) where politeness is co-constructed by participants in the local sequential context of interaction. However, individuals also enter into any interaction with at least some shared assumptions about appropriate situational behaviour, based on a (partly) shared sociocultural background context (e.g. Linell 1998). From this follows that the analysis of politeness needs to take into account how contextual resources at different levels (micro-macro) are made relevant in interaction.

To examine politeness in interaction, and how it is related to language, culture and nation, I will draw on empirical results of the research programme Interaction and Variation in Pluricentric Languages. Communicative Patterns in Sweden Swedish and Finland Swedish (Norrby et al. 2021). Swedish is a pluricentric language with two national varieties, Sweden Swedish and Finland Swedish. Of particular interest is Finland Swedish, a national language spoken by a numerical minority of five per cent of the population of Finland. It enjoys the same legal rights as the other national language, Finnish, spoken by the vast majority. The languages are unrelated and structurally very different, but due to language contact, Finnish has left its mark on Finland Swedish, particularly on its phonology, but also its lexicon (fennicisms). The relationship between Finnish and Swedish is asymmetrical in that most Finland Swedes are bilingual and use Finnish in day-to-day life whereas this is not the case for the Finnish majority speakers.

I will explore the extent to which linguistic politeness is language specific (Finnish or Swedish), variety specific (the national varieties of Swedish) or community specific, i.e. shared by members of the same socio-cultural community. I will exemplify how politeness is constructed in interaction through the pragmatic routines of address practice, greetings and request formulations in Finland Swedish service encounters, and compare their use to equivalent service data from Sweden Swedish as well as Finnish.

(2) Henning Radke (University of Amsterdam), **Horst Simon** (Freie Universität Berlin), **Janel Zoske** (Freie Universität Berlin)

We are family? Kinship address in multilingual non-kin contexts

Kinship address in non-kin contexts is a well-documented phenomenon in many languages. For instance, in the Nuer languages of South Sudan and western Ethiopia, unrelated young men frequently address elders as 'father' (Wu 1990: 61). A similar practice of kinship extension (KE) can be found in Chinese, though the term for 'father' is restricted to male family members (idem). KE thus involves extending familial solidarity to non-relatives, influenced by a complex network of social factors (idem; for a detailed study of Jordanian Arabic cf. Braun 1988). To date, research on KE has largely been limited to monolingual contexts (but see Larina & Suryanarayan 2013), yet much of the world's population lives in multilingual environments where politeness conventions overlap and conflict. In such settings, speakers must negotiate potential conflicts and position themselves accordingly.

In multilingual contexts, address form selection becomes particularly revealing of the (perceived) relationships between speakers. This complexity increases when individuals from both KE and non-KE language backgrounds interact regularly. How is KE applied, negotiated, transferred and perceived among these speakers? What ideological stances toward KE do they maintain? Moreover, how are these perceptions shaped by sociodemographic variables?

This study proposes a model integrating both linguistic and speaker-based perspectives to tackle these questions. Address is conceptualized as a structured framework of conventionalized

expressions, while individual competence and willingness determine how speakers manage the transfer between KE and non-KE languages, navigating through or confronting potential conflicts.

Data were collected in a pilot project involving 30 semi-structured interviews conducted in focus groups with around 80 participants. These interviews examined perceptions of kinship vocatives and associated ideologies. Namibia was chosen as study site due to its linguistic diversity, hosting both KE-based languages (e.g., Afrikaans, Oshiwambo) and non-KE-based languages (e.g., German, English), where almost all individuals are competent in at least three languages.

(3) Jieun Kiaer (University of Oxford)
Multilingual Politeness: Insights from Korean-English Family Talk
In this talk, I explore how multilingual families negotiate politeness through verbal, non-verbal, and translanguaging practices, drawing on insights from my recent book, Multimodal Communication in Young Multilingual Children (2023, Multilingual Matters). Using Korean-English family interactions as a focal point, I examine how politeness emerges as a dynamic and multimodal phenomenon shaped by cultural expectations, family relationships, and the fluid interplay of languages.

Through examples from everyday family talk—between parents and children, grandparents, siblings, and wider caregivers—I investigate how pragmatic strategies such as honorifics, indirectness, and politeness markers are adapted in multilingual contexts. These linguistic strategies are further enriched by non-verbal communication, including gestures, gaze, and tone, which often work in tandem with verbal elements to convey politeness and foster social harmony.

This discussion is framed within a broader exploration of attitudes, emotions, and learning experiences in multilingual families. Central to this is the concept of translanguaging, which highlights how speakers creatively and fluidly use their entire linguistic and semiotic repertoire to navigate complex cultural and interpersonal dynamics. I also discuss the notion of translanguaging competence, emphasizing the ability of multilingual speakers to adapt their language practices strategically and sensitively across diverse contexts.

This talk offers a holistic perspective on the relationship between multilingualism and politeness by examining politeness in everyday family interactions. It aims to inspire new discussions about how multilingual speakers balance linguistic and cultural expectations in diverse contexts, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and society.

TALKS: SESSION 1

(1) Anke Lensch (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn)
Fictive Kinship and Belonging. Nominal Address in the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora
40 years have passed since the outbreak of the Sri Lankan civil war, which led many Sri Lankan Tamils to seek refuge in Western countries, such as Canada, the UK, Switzerland and Germany. Since the 1980s, an entire generation has come of age outside of the home country of their parents. Several studies (cf. Somalingam 2017: 206; Fernandez & Clyne 2007; Canagarajah 2008, 2019) have found that in the Sri Lankan Tamil community, language shift from the heritage language Tamil to the dominant language of the country of residence only takes one generation. This paper demonstrates that nevertheless, some Tamil politeness conventions are passed on to the next generation. Based on the analysis of a series of interviews which is combined with the analysis of a tailor- made corpus containing prose fiction and internet language, this study offers insights to how Tamil conventions feature in the address term use by members of the second generation of the English-speaking and German-speaking Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. In Tamil, the age of the speaker in relation to the addressee and whether or not the speaker and the addressee belong to the same generation determine which address term to use. Anyone more senior should be addressed by their name. Instead, elders are addressed by using a kinship term, regardless of whether or not they are relatives, e.g. Sí _ u akka – 'elder sister' (cf. Suseendirarajah 1970: 244; Schiffmann 1999: 51). The data analysis highlights that is reflected in English and German interactions by diaspora members of the

second generation, who use Tamil address terms as well as their translations displaying different degrees of code-mixing. Thus, nominal address terms continue to serve as honorifics when addressing other community members, including those who are not relatives. The data furthermore indicates that the correct use of address terms is attributed emotional value, regardless of whether an individual is based in a predominantly English-speaking or German- speaking environment.

(2) Pawel Sickinger (University of Bielefeld) & **Anne Schröder** (University of Bielefeld)
Disentangling Multilingual and Multicultural Politeness Norms in Namibian English
In our talk, we will present findings from a research project which explicitly set out to investigate pragmatics in the multilingual and multicultural ecology of Namibia, a post-colonial African country where numerous ethnic and linguistic groups interact via the nation's sole official language English. Given that English is a non-primary colonial language in Namibia and has almost no L1 speakers, pragmatic variation in English between speakers of different L1s and pragmatic transfer from these languages into Namibian English (NamE) were focal points of the project.

However, results from the quantitative analysis of Discourse Completion Task data for four different speech acts showed that at the level of speech act realisation, speakers' L1 background hardly plays a role, suggesting the existence of a fairly homogenous set of pragmatic norms for communicating in NamE. L1 interaction with pragmatic decision making could be demonstrated only for specific cases (e.g. the two dominant strategies for RESPONSES TO THANKS) but turned out to be an insignificant factor in most other cases. The analysis of qualitative interviews with members of the same community of practice, however, showed evidence for diverging cultural models and politeness norms in L1 cultures and corresponding communicative settings. Although NamE users are evidently aware of these differences, they do not surface at the production level in NamE, but speakers do adjust their expectations of interlocutors' communicative behaviour and preferences.

Hence, the multilingual ecology of Namibia apparently has a strong influence on individual's concepts of politeness, but at the same time NamE opens up a shared linguistic space that allows for successful and virtually frictionless communication between linguistically and culturally distinct groups. In our presentation, we will delineate these two levels based on findings from quantitative speech act analysis and qualitative interview data.

(3) Sonya Yampolskaya (Freie Universität Berlin & University College London)
Linguistic Politeness beyond Language Borders: Case Study of Multilingual Haredi Communities
Haredi (strictly Orthodox) Jews are a constellation of religious sects with distinct and often conflicting ideological views while sharing fundamental religious and social practices. Haredi Jews are broadly represented by two major groups: Litvishe and Hasidim. All Haredi communities are characterized by diglossia, with Ashkenazic Hebrew – an older variety of the language distinct from modern Israeli Hebrew – serving as their H (high) language. Ashkenazic Hebrew is acquired through formal education and is used productively in writing. The L (low) language differs in the communities. Thus, Hasidic communities (except for Chabad and Gur) primarily use Yiddish as their vernacular. In contrast, Litvishe communities use the local majority as their vernacular (e.g. English in the UK and USA, or modern Israeli Hebrew in Israel). At the same time, most Hasidim have some proficiency in local majority languages, while many Litvishe have some knowledge of Yiddish.

The object of my research is not a particular named language, but rather a set of language varieties steadily used in a multilingual community, which I regard as a single entity. This approach allows to pose the following questions: Does each language in a multilingual speech community have its own pragmatic rules for address, or are there overarching socio-cultural conventions that govern polite address across multiple languages, provided such

usage aligns with the grammar of a given language? In other words, how does a system of address function within the multilingual linguistic repertoire of speakers?

In this talk, I will present my recent findings from two consecutive field works on forms of address in Haredi multilingual communities, focusing on their use of Yiddish, English, and Hebrew. I will show how the grammatical rules of linguistic politeness, which embody social values, can be superposed to a new language when it becomes a primary vernacular of a community. In addition, I will demonstrate how the seemingly narrow topic of address forms can serve as an Ariadne's thread for our understanding of complex social systems where hierarchies play a significant role.

TALKS: SESSION 2

(4) Elona Rira (Nehemiah Gateway University Albania) & **Brikena Kadzadej** (University of Tirana)

Politeness in University Discourse: A Comparative Analysis of Albanian and German Linguistic Forms

Politeness is important not only in the society of a certain country, but also in the cross- cultural aspect.

This study explores the contrastive analysis of politeness forms in Albanian and German within the university context. It aims to identify and describe the linguistic tools for expressing politeness in both languages and assess their impact on effective and culturally appropriate communication in academic settings.

Variations in politeness forms between Albanian and German influence how speakers interpret and apply politeness in academic situations. These differences are significant for intercultural communication and may challenge language learners.

Politeness, defined by Grimm as "the refinement and courteousness of character, insofar as it is displayed in one's manner and conversation with others" (Grimm, 1854, p. 1690), is crucial both within specific societies and cross-culturally. What is polite in one culture may be considered impolite in another, reflecting cultural norms and conventions. (Grimm, Jacob und Wilhelm (1854): Deutsches Wörterbuch. Leipzig: Hirzel)

Effective communication in language teaching requires both linguistic and communicative competence. This study clarifies the concept of politeness in Albanian and German, focusing on grammatical forms (pronominal and nominal) and their evolution since the 1990s in the university sphere.

Nowik (2005) notes that sociocultural constraints generate expectations about social behavior, with politeness being a matter of social adequacy dependent on fulfilling these expectations (Nowik, 2005, p. 159).)1

Based on university experience and literature from linguistics and communication studies, this research will provide insights into politeness forms and their implications for intercultural communication in academia.

(5) Maria den Hartog (Radboud University Nijmegen) & **Helen de Hoop** (Radboud University Nijmegen) & **Martijn Sibbel** (Radboud University Nijmegen)

The Use of Formal and Informal Pronouns of Address by Learners of Dutch as a Second Language

We present a written production task focusing on 16-20 year old L2 learners' use of formal and informal pronouns of address across different situations with different addressees in Netherlandic Dutch. Some of the addressees in the pictures in the task were expected to be addressed with the formal pronoun u by first speakers of Dutch, e.g., the King and Queen of the Netherlands, while others were expected to be addressed with the informal pronoun jij or je, e.g., your neighbor's child. The

results were compared with the pronoun use of a control group of age-matched first speakers of Dutch.

Overall, we found that the L2 group more often used informal pronouns of address than the first speakers of Dutch. This was largely due to the overuse of informal pronouns by male L2 learners. Indeed, female L2 learners performed in a more Dutch-like way than their male peers. This result confirms van der Slik et al.'s (2015) findings from a large-scale study that female L2 Dutch learners substantially outperform male learners in language production tests. The L2 learners in our experiment had different language backgrounds with various second-person pronoun systems, which we predicted to affect their second-person pronoun use in Dutch. However, the predictive power of these first languages turned out to be limited.

Our findings highlight the importance of explicitly teaching pragmatics to second language learners. Currently, it is often assumed that these learners will implicitly acquire the appropriate use of pragmatic features such as pronouns of address from the language environment. For male learners in particular, this system may fall short with negative consequences, since the use of informal pronouns of address in contexts where a formal pronoun is expected can negatively affect the addressee's attitude towards the speaker (den Hartog et al. 2024).

(6) Aldina Marques (University of Minho), **Isabel Margarida Duarte** (University of Porto)
Pronominal Forms of Address, Linguistic Courtesy, and Teaching Portuguese as a Non-native Language
In Portuguese, forms of address (FA) are divided into nominal, verbal, and pronominal, as Cintra (1972) has shown. We will focus on pronominal FA, specifically você / vocês, and tu, whose values we will briefly describe for European Portuguese. As a context of use, we will consider the use of these forms in the Assembly of the Republic (AR). Over the last 50 years, which coincide with Portuguese democracy, the use of these FA has changed in the AR (Marques & Duarte, 2024). In this context, these forms are marked and often constitute clear linguistic discourtesy, as we will show by the pragmatic analysis of some specific examples. The significant differences in using FA in European Portuguese and Brazilian Portuguese make learning the topic complex for students of Portuguese as a non-native language. As this is a sensitive topic in this teaching context, we will try to understand the perception of different international students living and studying in Portugal about the degree of courtesy/discourtesy implied by using the pronominal FA mentioned. To do this, we will apply a perception test, which will be analyzed. The predictable results call for explicit teaching and training of this pragmatic content, rather than mere grammar, given the complexity of the use and values of the FA and the negative consequences of their inappropriate use for foreign speakers' communication with natives.

TALKS: SESSION 3

(7) Juliana Neves-Müller (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf) & **Rolf Kailuweit** (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf)
Transcultural Communicative Space and Spracherleben: Perceptions of Politeness Accommodation by European Spanish Immigrants in Germany
This article aims to analyze the perception of linguistic adaptation of Spanish immigrants in Germany regarding politeness accommodation (Giles & Orgay 2007; Giles et al 2024). It is a contrastive study with the contribution of informants from areas stigmatized as having low (Andalusia) and high (Madrid) linguistic prestige in Spain (e.g. Hernández Campoy & Villena Ponsoda 2009; Narbona Jiménez et al 2013; Lacorte 2015; Muñoz-Basols et al 2017).

Based on the concept of transcultural communicative space (adapted from García 1998) and Spracherleben (Gumperz 1964; Busch 2017) this quantitative study applies the language portrait technique (Neumann 1991; Krumm & Jenkins 2001; Busch 2012, 2016, 2017) and semi-directed interview method. Immigration affects the cities in several dimensions, including language, by triggering contact between different speech communities and language varieties (e.g. Molina Martos

2010; Barrancos 2008; Días Campos 2011). Latin American Spanish native speakers living in Spain have reported that European Spanish speakers are perceived as less polite regarding verbal politeness (e.g. Matos 2008, 2010). But what is the European Spanish native speaker immigrants' perception of attitudes and strategies of verbal politeness accommodation? In Germany do the European Spanish speakers tend to accommodate to other Spanish varieties? This analysis is part of a larger doctoral project that investigates the accommodation of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking immigrants in Germany.

(8) Renate Pajusalu (University of Tartu) & **Miina Norvik** (University of Tartu)
Opinions of Estonians on Politeness in Multilingual Settings: Evidence from Linguistic Life Stories

With respect to the discursive approach to (im)politeness (e.g., Culpeper 2011; Kádár 2017; Watts 2003), the focus of research on politeness-related phenomena has shifted from principles (like Brown and Levinson 1987) to social practices and the ways (im)polite behaviour is perceived and talked about by laypeople. Many studies on culture-specific features of politeness show that politeness is always changing, negotiable, and variable (Locher and Larina 2019: 876). One language does not equal one culture (see Culpeper 2012 for more on this topic); cultural differences and stereotypes, however, exist and are reported in interviews with laypeople.

We analyse self-reflexive opinions of 33 speakers of Estonian about politeness in different cultures, including address, small talk, and some other politeness-related phenomena. Our data are based on semi-structured oral interviews on linguistic life stories carried out in 2020 to 2022. One of our questions was What kind of differences in communication with people speaking other languages have you experienced during your lifetime? Our respondents report mostly on their experiences with English, Russian, and Finnish, which are the most frequent contact and second languages in Estonia today.

Our research questions are: 1) what politeness-related phenomena do Estonians mention when considering communication with representatives of other cultures; 2) how do people feel in multilingual settings; 3) what differences do Estonians see between their own and other cultures in addressing other people and in small talk practices.

Our results reveal that people mention different aspects of politeness depending on the nature of a particular multilingual setting. Estonians have experienced, for example, different address practices with Russians, with whom they have had contacts at work, and different small talk practices with their English-speaking friends. Surprisingly, our respondents did not report differences with Finnish interactional practices.

(9) Wai Yan Min Oo (Eötvös Loránd University Budapest)
Evaluation of (Im)politeness in Intercultural Requests in Myanmar (Speaker's Perspective): A Pilot Study

The present paper explores how native and non-native speakers evaluate (im)politeness in intercultural requests in the Myanmar language from the perspective of the speaker. It is aimed to investigate how (im)politeness is processed in making requests in intercultural communications between native and non-native speakers of Myanmar language, not only from the point of speakers in the conversations but also from the point of native and non- native speakers of Myanmar language. Since this study focuses on the intercultural communication, the target participants are native and non-native speakers of Myanmar language. Two different groups of participants responded to the questionnaire including eight intercultural requests from the speaker's perspective. Using the data obtained from 40 participants (20 from each group), the data analysis was conducted using Descriptive statistics and Inferential statistics. For being a pilot study, the validity and reliability scores of the questionnaire were also explored. A group of experts from Myanmar acted as the panel for testing content validity and approved the validity of the questionnaire. For the reliability, 0.806 Cronback's alpha score was obtained. As for the main finding, native and non-native speakers' different

perceptions of (im)politeness can be seen obviously towards every intercultural request, highlighting the role of culture in (im)politeness procession. Moreover, perceptions of (im)politeness are not similar pattern even in the same group of informants (native speakers or non-native speakers). The most striking fact is that (im)politeness evaluation is not related to the contextual factors in intercultural communication.

TALKS: SESSION 4

(10) Tugba Elif Toprak Yildiz (University of Saarland) **& Yasemin Aksoyalp** (Turkish-German University) & **Orkun Yildiz** (Izmir Democracy University)
(Im)politeness Strategies in Multilingual Computer-mediated Environments
The rise of computer-mediated communication has affected and shaped human interaction considerably by building new platforms, leading to various modes of communication other than traditional face-to-face exchanges, fostering multilingual and multicultural interactions, and enabling individuals to negotiate meaning across diverse linguistic contexts. The increasing popularity of online environments, most notably social media, has resulted in a growing interest in the examination of linguistic phenomena on digital platforms. Over the last decade, investigating pragmatics in online environments has particularly attracted scholarly attention, while many researchers have examined how individuals convey meaning, perform speech acts, manage politeness and negotiate face in online settings. Consequently, a growing body of research which scrutinises pragmatic encounters on social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, has emerged. Nevertheless, research targeting pragmatic phenomena which occur particularly in online business service platforms has remained relatively underexplored. Examining the pragmatic performances of both service providers and individuals who make use of these services would be quite essential since the linguistic strategies employed by both parties on online platforms may exert an impact on the face and reputation of businesses. To contribute to an understanding of pragmatic phenomena occurring particularly on commercial digital platforms that enable multilingual interactions, this preliminary study aims to investigate the (im)politeness strategies employed by customers who have different linguistic backgrounds (i.e., English, Italian, and German) and share their comments on Tripadvisor, which is a leading travel site used worldwide. Impoliteness strategies realised in English, Italian, and German are scrutinised by using the taxonomy of impoliteness proposed by Culpeper (1996) to gather insights into (im)politeness in multilingual interactions and communicative situations. The findings are interpreted in the light of relevant (im)politeness literature.

(11) Karolin Moser (Université de Bourgogne)
Politeness and Impoliteness in the Courtroom: Simultaneous Interpreting German-Spanish/Spanish-German (Criminal Law)
Given the very complex and extremely hierarchical communication situation in the courtroom, which can also be highly emotional, there are various aspects that can be analysed in the present context. For example, the simultaneous interpretation of rudeness and politeness on the part of hierarchically higher persons (judges, lawyers, etc.) towards hierarchically lower persons (witnesses, etc.) or vice versa. From a more concrete intercultural German-Hispanic perspective, which involves different politeness conventions (negative politeness versus positive politeness), we could point to the 'speaking out loud' customary in Latin American or Spanish culture, which in these cultures is still in the area of political behaviour (model: Watts 2003: 260); a behaviour that cannot simply be adopted and imitated by the interpreter. There are also turn-taking strategies that are regulated differently in Spanish than in German: a strategy that can considerably disrupt the course of a court hearing (e.g. Moser 2011 for Argentinean-Spanish in everyday conversation). As Hale (1997, 2002) and Hale/ Martschuk/ Ozolins/ & Stern (2017) show the importance of accurate interpretation of style in register variation when testifying, we will look at the GermanSpanish/Spanish-German interpretation of informal and formal 2nd person address. German has a binary system of address (du/Sie in the singular

and ihr/Sie in the plural), while Spanish - depending on the European or Latin American variant - even has a three-part system in the singular (tú, vos, usted, e.g. Costa Rica or other Central American variants: Moser 2013, 2015) and singlemember systems in the plural (informal + formal: ustedes: all Latin American varieties of Spanish (Moser 2021, 2015). The aim will therefore be to analyse which strategies the interpreter has to apply in order to interpret impoliteness and politeness truthfully in address situations (judge-witness-accused interaction, lawyer-accused interaction, etc.) and which problems the interpreter may encounter and how he/she can or cannot solve them in simultaneous interpreting, which requires reactions in a matter of seconds.

(12) Giuliana Salvato (University of Windsor)
Immediate Nonverbal Behavior as an Expression of Politeness in Multilingual University Classes

This paper focuses on nonverbal behaviour and its impact on the relationship between professors and students during class. Specifically, three groups of undergraduate students (i.e., from Canada, Italy, and international on an exchange in Italy) expressed their level of appreciation of different types of professors' nonverbal behaviour. This study is inspired by the literature on the concept of "immediacy," which defines the behaviours that can help decrease physical and psychological distance between interlocutors. Within educational settings, immediacy has been found to promote learning and motivate students to participate. This paper argues that professors' immediate nonverbal behaviour can be interpreted as an expression of politeness when it meets the students' expectations within a certain cultural group.

In multilingual settings, where students are speakers of different languages, it is relevant to investigate variation of opinions about professors' nonverbal behaviour to explore those traits that are more and less expected, and consequently viewed as polite or not, by different students. This study investigated three sets of four traits, each delineating a professor's immediate nonverbal behaviour: concerning the individual professor's behaviour (e.g., a professor who smiles often); concerning the interaction between professor and students (e.g., a professor who is approachable); and concerning the space where teaching takes place (e.g., a professor who walks around the classroom).

This presentation examines the variation of opinions on those sets to identify the traits that may travel more or less successfully across cultures because they are more or less expected and accepted interculturally. By comparing views among students of different cultural and academic backgrounds, this paper aims at contributing some insights into the question of which would be polite professor's nonverbal behaviour within a particular language, and which, instead, would be polite professor's nonverbal behaviour transcending linguistic boundaries.