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**CROSS-CULTURAL COMPONENT  
OF THE LINGUISTIC PERSONALITY  
IN UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIO-CULTURAL REALITY**

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**LINGUISTIC ASPECT OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION  
IN A CHANGING WORLD  
(A CASE STUDY OF HINDI SHORT STORY  
“TO HELL WITH YOU, MITRO!” BY KRISHNA SOBTI)**

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**Abstract:** On the material of the story “To hell with you, Mitro!” by Krishna Sobti the authors draw the outlines of the pronominal and verbal systems of politeness in Hindi, including typical cases of subordination shift, and examine how such linguistic deviations reflect social processes.

**Keywords:** Hindi 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, category of subordination, politeness shift, women’s writing, communication theories, extended family, Indian traditional family

### **1. Introduction**

This work presents an attempt to analyze the communication in the Indian family, changing from traditional to the modern type, through the process of the shift in politeness degree in the story “To hell with you, Mitro!” (*Mitro Marjānī*) by Krishna Sobti. Discussing the politeness requirements in Hindi a researcher always has to limit the scope of his or her studies by a certain period, part of the Hindi speaking region, society layer etc., as there is no fixed universal norm and the rules may considerably differ. The chosen text is particularly advantageous for such studies. Firstly, it abounds in dialogues (where the category of politeness usually manifests itself most clearly); secondly, it depicts rela-

tions between numerous characters somehow connected with one traditional extended family. It means that the scope of studies is wide enough (not less than 15 different types of interacting pairs) and, at the same time, has some natural limitations. Moreover, as there are two smaller “branch” families, a researcher receives an opportunity to check the result of the analysis on the basis of different material.

Indian etiquette contains certain guidelines regulating the pronominal and verbal forms of politeness to be used by members of a traditional extended family when addressing each other under ‘normal’ conditions. These prescriptions are well-known and are usually followed by Hindi authors and Krishna Sobti herself, e.g. in her short stories like *Dādī ammā*, longer pieces of work like *Ḍār se bichuṛī* or even epic *Zindagīnāmā*. Serial deviation from these rules, which a reader may find in *Mitro marjānī*, indicates to the fact that here the author is using the shift in the forms of politeness as an artistic device, and it may be interesting to analyze this text not merely as the source of examples meant to support socio-linguistic observations, but also as a tool using which the author demonstrates the process of building up a new functional hierarchy within a traditional Indian family.

This paper will briefly describe the plot of the story and draw the outlines of the pronominal and verbal system of politeness in Hindi, including the most typical cases of the shift in forms once chosen by interlocutors. Then we will proceed to the examination of the role played by such deviations in the everyday communication within an Indian family and how these linguistic features reflect social processes in the modern Indian society.

## 2. Objectives

Krishna Sobti and her story “To hell with you, Mitro!” are the object of the study. Krishna Sobti (born 1925), a classic of women’s writing (Mukherjee M., 1985: 89), has always drawn an accurate portrait of a contemporary woman, reflecting changes in the perception of women in the society and women's self-

realization throughout her work. The main character of Krishna Sobti's novels is a new woman, determined to find her place in the modern life, and to fight in order to achieve her aims.

The story "To hell with you, Mitro!", which made Sobti popular in 1966, presents a striking and provocative image of a married woman trying to understand what she needs in life against the background of a traditional Indian extended family (*sam̐yukt parivār*).

An elderly couple, Dhanvanti and Gurudas, and their three sons with their wives lead a life of a traditional extended family. The story begins as their middle son beats his wife Mitro, accusing her of shameful promiscuity. In the presence of the whole family Mitro declares that she is suffering from dissatisfaction of her physical demands.

In the meanwhile it turns out that the family's grain trade business doesn't give any profit because the younger son, Gulzarilal, has appropriated most of the money, hoping to buy his wife Phulavanti some jewelry, as her marriage portion, according to the tradition, was given to the wife of his elder brother. Mitro is outraged by the behavior of Phulavanti and sells her jewelry to support the family business.

After Phulavanti's brothers take their sister away to the parental home, she spreads false rumors that she was plagued by her husband's family, and Mitro fights against the slander.

Mitro and her husband are going to visit Balo, Mitro's mother. Having learned that her daughter is unhappy with her husband, Balo pushes Mitro to unfaithfulness and arranges a date with one of her young adorers. However, at the last moment Mitro realizes that the values upheld by her mother are unacceptable for her, and wants to get back to her husband's home.

The plot of the story follows the ways of life of a young woman, reflects her search for her role in the family, the collapse and acquisition of targets in the woman's life. At least two episodes of the novel can be considered the climax: the episode

when Phulavanti and her husband leave home and the conversation between Mitro and her mother about the result of her life.

The characters belong to two opposing camps – supporters of traditional values of life and traditional outlook at the role of women in the world (Gurudas and Dhanvanti, their elder son and his wife Suhagvanti, Mitro's husband and his sister Junko) and those who try to find new values in the changing world (Mitro and her mother Balo, the youngest son and his wife, Phulavanti).

Dhanvanti is a traditional loyal Indian wife, *pativrata*, the family and the husband are the most important things in her life, "her joy and pain". She addresses to her husband only as "my master" or "the father of my children", and never calls him by name in order not to ruin his vitality. She has a clear attitude to the place of the woman in the world, about rules and regulations of family life. Dhanvanti suffers from the fact that Mitro behaves defiantly: "Our house is watched with a hundred of eyes because of the behavior of our middle daughter-in-law" (Sobti, K., 2007: 73).

The figure of Dhanvanti is opposed to the image of Mitro's mother, Balo, who did not work and lived a happy life, "she had only one concern throughout her life – how to make up and dress up, that's why her beauty has not been wiped off" (Sobti, K., 2007: 53). Having married off a daughter to a respected family, she continues indulging her whims: allows her to do nothing about the house and to make scenes to her husband, she spoils her daughter, buying her outfits and jewellery, encourages her to leave her husband's house, and tries to put her new family in a bad light.

Suhagvanti is a kind and gentle woman, she was the first Gurudas and Dhanvanti's daughter-in-law who is going to have a son, that is to perform the highest duty of the Indian woman. She feels great in the role of the wife and mother and does not want another fate, she is afraid to do anything independently. Suhagvanti criticizes Mitro's behavior and tries to calm her down,

she thinks that sometimes a woman "feels a fire burning inside, she cannot find a rest" (Sobti, K., 2007: 85).

Phulavanti is indifferent to her husband and afraid to give birth to children, pretending to be sick. The main thing for her is to pursue her own interests, she doesn't want the jewelry, which was part of her dowry, to be kept in her husband's family, and therefore drives her husband into stealing, and then brings shame on her parents-in-law's house, having escaped to her own parents. Phulavanti and Gulzarilal cannot be called a traditional Indian couple, as a woman is a leader of the family, besides, they do not treat their elders with respect, and this is the result of thoughtless neglecting of traditional foundations.

Mitro, the least traditional and the most provocative character of the novel, is the bouncy, witty beauty whose bold words and actions cause confusion in the life of the family. Mitro is full of energy, which she can't find a proper application, either drawing her attention to her family, rescuing the family business and upholding family honor, or searching love-affairs. She seems to be the embodiment of shakti, female energy, which can become destructive and should be held well in hand by a man.

At the beginning the most conservative woman of the house, Dhanvanti, condemns Mitro, teaches her to behave in the traditional family manner: "Let the men talk, and you should listen and nod", "Cover your face, as here's your father-in-law and elder brother-in-law" (Sobti, K., 2007: 32-33). However, at the very end of the story Dhanvanti sees Mitro's devotion to the family, and begins to treat her with more confidence.

It seems that Mitro's impertinence is a consequence of her internal contradictions; she's not ready to follow the old values blindly like Suhagvanti, she wants to understand, if the old values are still significant in the modern world: "Why the birth of a child from the husband is a symbol of happiness for the woman, and giving birth to a child from the other man is a shame? Despite the fact who their father is, children are happiness for the woman" (Sobti, K., 2007: 65). She does not live for the sake of personal

profit like Phulavanti and wants to be helpful for the family and society, she sacrifices, selling jewelry, performs the work of others, struggles against the bad reputation.

Mitro suffers from the lack of attention of her husband, she is ready to take care of him and to respect him according to the traditions but she wants this care to be mutual. Her husband scares her impulses: "He has got a woman, like a deep river, and he doesn't know what to do with her" (Sobti, K., 2007: 41).

The figure of Mitro stands out from other characters in the novel, it concentrates the whole course of the narrative and manifests her personality through the relations with the other characters. She is extremely extravagant, even outrageous for the preceding literary tradition of the female characters: a young wife, who is anxious for the quality of her sexual life and tells her husband about that, who neglects her house duties, does not take care about her husband but is ready to help him in the business. Mitro does not pay attention to the opinion of the society.

Each of the characters has an inherent prominent feature, and tends to be the collective image, a symbol, some kind of the allegory. Suhagvanti is a positive character, a goodness itself, Phulabanti is lazy and moody, Gulzarilal is a coward, Banwarilal, the elder son, is strong and fair. However, all these characters, except Mitro, cannot be called personalities, they are not true to life, they have their allegorical role of the perfect mother, the perfect wife, the perfect husband or the bad son, etc.

At the climax of the novel Mitro overcomes her contradictions: instead of the advice of her mother to betray her husband, she comes back to him. Mitro understands that she will never be able to change traditional notions about women's role in the society. However, she realizes that her mother's free way of life will not help her to find moral harmony: Balo "could cheat any man into giving her all his money, bewitch any man, but now has got nothing for her pains: no husband, no happiness" (Sobti K., 2007: 97). Mitro does not resign herself to the imperfections and injustices of the traditional life, but she makes a fundamental choice in

favor of traditional family values. Mitro is a woman who has escaped from the traditional framework of consciousness, but has not found new principles of life to replace old ones.

### **3. Methodology**

Communication theory and its practical realization. The large Indian family depicted in the story by Krishna Sobti can be analyzed in accordance with the three modern communicative theories which are currently considered to be the major ones: the Role theory, the Family Systems theory and the Rules theory (Beth, A.L.P, 2006: 56).

According to the Role Theory, the roles we hold in a family dictate us a particular type of behavior formed mostly by the others' expectations (Beth, A.L.P, 2006: 57). In the Sobti's story we see that, as it was mentioned above, some characters (Gurudas and Dhanvanti, their elder son and Suhagvanti, Mitro's husband and Junko) are ready to play the family roles prescribed by the tradition but the others (Mitro, Balo, Phulavanti and her husband) find the traditional system non-functional, they struggle to build up a new modernized family and take a new, non-traditional place in it. For each of them exists an individual-level explanation why they behave the way they do – they all are trying to build up a new, functional hierarchy.

The Family Systems Theory presents family as a universal system, for which wholeness, interdependence and homeostasis are the mile-stones (Beth, A.L.P, 2006: 71). In “To hell with you, Mitro!” we find a typical extended hierarchical family, based on age and position, where people usually face privacy and compatibility issues.

The Rules Theory emphasizes rules of both verbal and non-verbal communication between family members and whether they are followed or not by some particular people in some particular situations (Beth, A.L.P, 2006: 79). This theory covers different levels of family relations, mostly functional and emotional, and shows how existing inner conflicts are being reflected in the

communication. The uses of the forms of address and second person pronouns among family members under different circumstances and within different contexts can show us the real values and attitudes within the family.

By the linguistic analysis of such forms we'll try to demonstrate how Krishna Sobti follows the main idea of the story – inevitable and hard modernization of a traditional Indian extended family – even on the linguistic level.

## **4. Result/Findings**

### ***4.1. Category of politeness (subordination) in Hindi***

The social deixis is one of the clue characteristics of the human speech as it determines “the use of forms which reflect the status of a speaker in relation either to an addressee or to someone else referred to” (Matthews, P. H., 2007: 370). The aggregation of forms varying from the most polite (honorific) to the familiar or impolite constitutes the pronominal and verbal categories of politeness, or subordination. Both the terms used for this category are far from being perfect and do not reflect in full all the factors influencing on the choice of a particular form in a particular language, as they may differ from the true social subordination and learnt politeness to the proximity between the interlocutors or their situational attitude.

In Hindi this category is relevant for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns and verbs. The scope of this paper will be limited to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person only, as the manifestation of the category in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person is very tightly connected with the category of number and is influenced by some extra-communicative factors (see Kostina, E. A., 2018: 106).

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, the three levels (or degrees) of politeness can be observed in Hindi. Since the modern English language does not have distinct forms for the degrees of politeness, these pronouns will be glossed as “you.FAM”, “you.NEUT” and “you.HON”. Table 1 illustrates the system of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns in Hindi.



**Table 1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns in Hindi**

| Number of addressees                     |  |
|--|--|
| One person                               | A group of people                      |
| <i>tū</i> – familiar (distant, impolite) | <i>tum (log)</i> – familiar or neutral |
| <i>tum</i> – neutral                     |  |
| <i>āp</i> – honorific (distant)          | <i>āp (log)</i> – honorific (distant)  |

The word *log* which means “people” is quite often (but not necessarily) added to the pronouns in order to underline their plural meaning. K. Sobti does not put this indicator after *tum* in *Mitro Marjāni* and uses the pronoun as is to denote both a person (1a) and a group of people (1b).

(1a) banvārī lāl, bahan **tumhārī** sab=se choṭī hai, par...  
 Banvarilal sister **your.NEUT** all=from little is but  
 “Banvarilal, your sister is the youngest of all, but...” (Sobti, K., 2017: 1004).

(1b) mere bhāiyo! **tumhārī** abhāgī bahan... dukhī hai  
 my brothers **your.NEUT** miserable sister... sad is  
 “My brothers! Your miserable sister is sad” (Sobti, K., 2017: 1059).

Since both the intimate and the neutral attitude to a group of people result in usage of *tum*, this research will be limited to the cases of one-on-one conversations.

The three 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns correspond with particular verbal forms, which are distinguishable in most tenses and moods, except for the purely participial or impersonal forms, such as *tum/āp āe (the)* “You came”, *tum/āp āte (the)* “You would come (in the past)”. Native speakers of Hindi usually follow the rules of correspondence between the pronoun and the verb and do not mix them in normal speech; however, both literary texts and observation of the everyday speech habits of Indians demonstrate the existence of a hybrid combination of the polite pronoun with the neutral verbal form, e.g. *āp āte ho* “You.HON come.NEUT”. Such combinations have been analyzed by Dhanesh K. Jain (Jain,

Dh.K., 1969: 91) and indicate to the emergence of a new, neutral-honorific grammeme, brought to life by the changing social circumstances.

In the Imperative mood, which is the main field of manifestation of the verbal category of politeness, the three-fold system is further extended by the infinitive ending in *-nā*, used with both *tū* and *tum*, and the extremely polite form in *-i(y)egā*, corresponding with *āp*. These forms are often referred to as the “Future Imperative”, since they tend to be used to denote the so called “pending order” (Hindi *dūr ājñā*). However, this is not always the case, as they may also substitute the imperatives for the reasons of style, chosen speech pattern, or a speaker’s personal attitude and perception of the situation (see Kostina, E.A., 2018: 262). Table 2 demonstrates the forms of Imperative in Hindi.

**Table 2. Hindi Imperative Forms**

| Degree of politeness | Present Imperative | “Future” Imperative |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <i>tū</i>            | <i>ā-Ø</i>         | <i>ā-nā</i>         |
| <i>tum</i>           | <i>ā-o</i>         |                     |
| <i>āp</i>            | <i>ā-i(y)e</i>     | <i>ā-i(y)e-g-ā</i>  |

The form in *-i(y)egā* does not occur in *Mitro Marjānī*; the imperative infinitives can be seen quite often, but as the infinitive is used with both *tū* and *tum*, the shift from the “normal” imperative to the infinitive imperative will not be examined here.

The terms “familiar”, “neutral” and “polite”, used above to describe the meanings of the pronominal and verbal forms, are quite conventional. There are no fixed rules prescribing the usage of one or another degree, since the choice may be determined by multiple factors, such as the age and the social and educational background of the speakers, their place of origin, mutual relationships and presence of other people, their character and speech habits, as well as their mood at the time of conversation (see Jain, Dh. K., 1969: 89-96, Misra, K.S., 1977).

However, it is usually possible to draw the general outlines valid for particular communicational situation. In general, for a traditional extended family of people with a moderate to low level of education as the one we encounter with in *Mitro Marjānī*, the typical subordination will be as follows:

**Within one generation:**

- *tū-tū* between relatives and in-laws of one sex;
- *tum-tum* between relatives and in-laws of different sexes.

The subordination system applied to dialogues between a husband and a wife can differ from a family to a family. This can be *tū-āp*, *tū-tum*, *tum-tum* or *tū-tū* depending on the context.

**Between generations:**

Older people will usually address their younger interlocutors using *tū* and will receive *tum*.

The pronoun *āp* rarely occurs in texts depicting life in villages and small towns; its usage would be restricted to the strangers, officials, teachers, more educated people etc.

Even though personal attitude and certain circumstances may influence upon this scheme, it is followed by many writers beginning from Munshi Premchand (see Misra, K. S., 1977). The shift in the degree of politeness is not a rare case for Hindi, and is quite often used in fiction as a means of linguistic characteristics of a person or relations between people. The preliminary classification of the most common cases of subordination shift can be developed as follows.

1. A single long-time shift, marking a considerable change in relations between the communicants. It takes place when children grow up, people get to know each other better, make friends (or enemies) etc. The shift can be spontaneous or well-considered, mutual or one-sided. A person may even insist on the change of the politeness degree, if he or she feels that the new features of their relations require such a shift. Since a constant shift is made, it usually implies changing of both the pronoun (in all the forms) and the verb.

2. A single temporary shift or a series of deliberated temporary shifts triggered by the circumstances. It occurs when speakers switch to a more distant form in the presence of strangers or in an etiquette situation (e.g. a husband and wife at home / at work). The communicants usually return to their common degree of politeness when the extraordinary situation finishes.

3. A short-time deliberated shift resulting from the change in the speaker's attitude. It may be ironical (e.g. usage of *āp* for children), indicate the speaker's intention to flatter or, on the contrary, to play a joke on the other party or insult him or her.

4. Regular spontaneous shifts. This type of shift results from the instability or uncertainty in relations between the communicants. It is unstable and often inconsistent; sometimes only verbal forms change while the more "conservative" pronoun remains unchanged. Example of such "partial" shift can be found in abundance in another work by Krishna Sobti – the story "Listen, girl" (*Ai larḳī*), see Example (2):

(2) yah to **batā**, **tum** bhī yahā=se kyō na **hilī**  
 this but **tell.FAM** **you.NEUT** also here=from why not **move.FAM**  
 "But tell me, why haven't you also moved from here?" (Sobti, K., 2008: 29).

Partial shift should be distinguished from the regular manifestation of the neutral-honorific degree of politeness "*āp ho*" mentioned above. In "To hell with you, Mitro!" Gulzari Lal addresses his mother-in-law in this form (3):

(3)  
 mujhe bhūkh nahī, bhābo jī, **āp** caukā-culhā **samēṭ=lo**  
 me hunger no Bhabo HON **you.HON** kitchen **wind up.IPV.NEUT**  
 "I am not hungry, Bhabo ji; you can wind up the kitchen" (Sobti, K., 2017: 1490)

#### 4.2. *Politeness shift in “To hell with you, Mitro!”*

Keeping in mind that the main theme of *Mitro marjānī* is the modernization of a traditional Indian family, one can notice that from the outside, the family is absolutely stable and normal; however, inside it demonstrates contradictions on different levels: functional, emotional and communicative. Building of a new functional hierarchy in the family becomes inevitable as some characters of the story, led by the female protagonist Mitro, attempt to serve their own interests and handle private problems, leaving the common interests of the family aside. This catalyzes changes in traditional roles of family members, and, eventually, leads to the subordination shifts.

In a number of cases the shift results from the contradiction between an etiquette situation and the day-to day communication. Etiquette situations (situations when social roles are taken into consideration by both communicants) always stay in sharp contrast with ordinary ones. Quite often people at the beginning of an episode realize their traditional roles and follow traditional rules but then move to the ordinary communication model and make a linguistic shift from a more polite or distant form required by the etiquette to the familiar or intimate *tū* form.

This can be best of all illustrated by the dialogues between Dhanvanti and Gurudas. The wife here never shifts from the conventional *tum* whatever the situation and her attitude are (4a). She does not use *tū* to address her husband; instead, she uses *āp* in an ironical meaning (as if admitting how much her husband has done for her) (4b).

(4a)

is umr kam-se-kam **tum** to merā sāth **diyā=karo**  
this age at least **you.NEUT** TOP my support **give.IPV.NEUT**  
“In this age you should at least support me” (Sobti, K., 2017: 1315).

(4b) **āpkā** diyā-kiyā bahut=kuch is jholī=mē...  
**your.HON** given-done much this bag=in  
 “There is much given by you in this bag...” (Sobti, K., 2017: 123).

Gurudas, in his turn, is uncertain of the form he should use addressing his wife. He often begins the dialogue with the neutral *tum* which reflects her status as an elderly lady and the ruler of the feminine part of the house, but then, on becoming emotional, he switches to *tū*.

(5a)  
 bahū-beṭḥō=mē **tum** aisī ḍubī **ho...**  
 daughter-in-law-sons=in **you.NEUT** so.F drowned **be.PRES.2.NEUT**  
 “You are so drowned in the problems of your in-laws and sons...”  
 (Sobti, K., 2017: 687)

(5b)  
 bāt=ko baṛī banākar kahne=kī **terī** purānī ādat hai  
 matter=ACC big having made speaking=GEN **your.FAM** old habit is  
 “It is your old habit to exaggerate everything” (Sobti, K., 2017: 697).

(5c)  
 sīkh na **de**, bhalīmānas, larke=ko āvāz **de**  
 Lesson not **give.IPV.FAM** good willed son=ACC voice **give.IPV.FAM**  
 “Don’t teach me lessons, the good willed one, call up your son” (Sobti, K., 2017: 707)

Analyzing the use of subordination shift one can find that some family roles are more flexible than the others. E.g., there is almost no shift in the communication between father and sons. This fact indicates that the functional aspect of traditional family roles in this case is stable.

On the contrary, it is even hard to identify from the text which form of address should be considered to be a norm in the case of communication between the daughters-in-law. They have unstable social relations with each other and in every new episode

are trying to build-up a new individual hierarchical system, struggle to obtain a role they would like to play in a particular situation.

In conversations between Suhagvanti and Mitro one can find all the four possible combinations. When they merely exchange minor insults, they will use *tū* – *tū* (6a), (6b), but when Mitro marks the border between her and Suhagvanti, she switches to a more distant *tum*, and so does Suhagvanti (6c), (6d).

(6a)

mitro=ne āvāz dī ṭuk ākhē **khol**, idhar to **nirakh**  
 Mitro=ERGvoice gave a biteyes **open.IPV.FAM**here TOP **look.IPV.FAM**  
 “Mitro has given voice, ‘Open your eyes a bit, look here’” (Sobtī K., 2017: 281).

(6b)

devrānī, **terī** kismat burī thī jo **tū** āj in  
 Devrani **your.FAM** fate bad was as **you.FAM**today these  
 bhāiyō=ke hāthō bac=niklī  
 brothers’ hands escaped  
 “Oh younger sister-in-law, your fate was bad today as you escaped from the hands of these two brothers” (Sobtī K., 2017: 281).

(6c)

ab **tumhī** **batāo**, jīṭhānī, **tum-jaisā** sat-bal  
 now **you.NEUT.EMPH** **tell.IPV.2.NEUT** jithani **you.NEUT-alike** saint-power  
 kahā=se pāũ-lāũ?  
 where=from should I obtain  
 “Now you tell me, Jithani, where from should I obtain a saint-power like that of yours?” (Sobtī K., 2017: 318)

(6d)

devrānī,in bhale lokō=ko bhūlāvā de **tumhārī**  
 devrani these good people=DAT misguidance having done **your.NEUT**  
 mā=ne acchā nahī kiyā  
 mother=ERG well not done  
 “Devrani, your mother didn’t do well having misguided these good people” (Sobtī K., 2017: 318).

In another conversation Suhagvanti teaches Mitro how to behave in the presence of the older male relatives and the relations between them are now asymmetrical. Mitro addresses her Jithani with *tum* (7b), Suhag shifts from the initial *tum* (7a) to the patronizing *tū* (7c):

(7a)  
mitro            bahan,        (...) **tumhē**                    bāpū=ne        bulāyā hai!  
Mitro            sister        (...) **you.NEUT.ACC**    father=ERG    has called  
“Sister Mitro, father has called you” (Sobti K., 2017: 562).

(7b)  
               yah        to        **kaho,**                    jiṭhānī...  
               this      TOP    **tell.IPV.NEUT**        Jithani  
“Oh Jithani, tell me this...” (Sobti K., 2017: 572)

(7c)  
bahanā, **tere**            jēṭh-sasur                    jabar        gusse=mē hāi  
sister    **your.FAM**    brother-in-law    father-in-law    strong    anger=in    are  
“Oh sister, your elder brother-in-law and father-in-law are very angry”  
(Sobti, K., 2017: 572)

Sometimes Mitro (8a) and Suhag (8b) are so uncertain of their positions that they shift between the verbal forms corresponding with *tū* and *tum* within one sentence. Here the shift may be catalyzed not by the situation itself, but by the emotional state of the interlocutors.

(8a)  
arī,            **khā-pī,**                    mauj                    **karo!**  
hey            **eat-drink.IPV.FAM**        entertainment        **do.IPV.NEUT**  
“Hey, eat and drink, entertain yourself!” (Sobti K., 2017: 1547).

(8b)  
bahū=ko    apne            ulṭe            sabak    na        **do (...)**  
Bahu=acc    own            reverse        lesson    not        **do.IPV.NEUT**  
bahanā,    mujhe māfi        **de.**



sister me excuse **give.IPV.FAM**

“Don’t teach your evil lessons to the sister-in-law (...) Excuse me, sister” (Sobti, K., 2017: 1034)

In conversations with the younger sister-in-law, Phulavanti, Mitro prefers using *tū* (9a). However, she may shift to *tum* ironically, when praising her feigningly or pretending that Phula’s words are very serious (9b).

(9a)

phulāvanti, is kaccī umr **tū** kaise-kaise rog lagā baiṭhī  
Phulavanti this young age **you.FAM** what-what illness developed  
“Phulavanti, what illnesses have you developed at this young age?”  
(Sobti, K., 2017: 391)

(9b)

dharkī? kyā kahtī=**ho**, devrānī?  
throb what **say.PRES.2.NEUT.F** Devrani  
“Throb? What are you saying, Devrani?” (Sobti, K., 2017: 391)

Finally, subordination shift in case of communicants with stable social roles can indicate the move from functional communication within traditional family roles to the communication on the personal level.

While usually a daughter will address her mother using *tum*, Mitro suddenly shifts to the impolite form in the conversation with her mother, whom she now perceives not as a mother, but as a competitor (10a). In the last conversation Mitro shifts from *tum* to *tū* several times. First she feels pity for her mother and treats her as a little baby (*tū*), then, concluding the conversation she tries to rebuild the subordination system (*tum*), but finally the daughter sees her mother as a witch who attempts to harm her and switches to *tū* once again (10b):

(10a)

**tumhāre** jamāī=se acchā-burā bātne=kā merā to ṭhekā hī  
**your.NEUT** Jamai=with good-bad shar- my TOP right EMPH  
ing=gen

ṭhaharā bībo, par āj **tū** hī khuṣī **kar=le!**  
remained bibo but today **you.FAM** EMPH happiness **do.IPV.FAM**

“You know, it is my right to share good and bad times with your son-in-law, but now you can amuse yourself” (Sobti, K., 2017: 1743).

(10b)

**tū** siddh-bhairō=kī celī  
**you.FAM** wicked wizards=GEN disciple

“You, a disciple of wicked wizards” (Sobti, K., 2017: 1893).

## 5. Conclusion

On the basis of the examination of linguistic aspects of communication in the story “To hell with you, Mitro!” the authors arrived at the following conclusions.

1. The main idea of the story, i.e. the painful process of modernization of a traditional family, expresses on the functional, emotional and communicational level.

2. Applying the Rules theory of communication it becomes possible to analyze whether the pronominal and verbal forms applied in the story correspond with the existing etiquette prescriptions as well as why and how these rules may be violated.

3. Although the examined story winds around a visibly traditional hierarchy, the text abounds in pronominal and verbal shifts, i.e. replacement of one degree of politeness by another. These shifts cannot be considered coincidental or resulting from the author’s ignorance since in other works on similar topics Krishna Sobti follows the rules of politeness quite strictly.

5. Analysis of the text examples demonstrate that the majority of the shifts in politeness degree serve the purpose of developing the main theme of the story, i.e. demonstration of the gradual corruption of the hierarchic family structure under the strokes of the new powers. The shifts mark contradictions between etiquette

situations and the day-to day communication, indicate to flexibility of some family roles or to the move from functional communication within traditional family roles to the communication on the personal level.

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