

The Use of Italian and Dialect as a Politeness Strategy

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Abstract

The strategies speakers use to express politeness vary from culture to culture. Bilingual speakers have additional options available to them to convey politeness because they have two languages to choose from. To test if language choice may be effectively used as a politeness strategy, I chose to focus on the linguistic situation in Italy, a society in which many distinct languages co-exist. Standard Italian is considered to be the language of prestige while the “dialects” are considered to be inferior in status. Many Italians are bilingual in standard Italian and at least one dialect. As a result, it is possible for Italians to use language choice as a strategy to convey politeness. To test this, I devised a questionnaire which was completed by 21 bilingual speakers of Italian and an Italian dialect. The goal of this questionnaire was to draw on the respondents’ intuitions to determine which language bilingual speakers would choose in a particular context and how language choice may be interpreted by the hearer. The results will be analyzed based on Brown & Levinson’s (1987) and Watts’ (2003) politeness models to show that language choice in the bilingual Italian society is an effective strategy in conveying politeness.

1.0 Introduction¹

There are many strategies available to speakers to convey politeness in discourse, and these strategies vary between languages and cultures. Such strategies may include the use of honorifics, compliments, conventional phrases (such as “please” and “thank you”), making indirect requests, and selecting a particular register or code. Bilingual speakers have additional options to convey politeness because they have two languages to choose from. The two languages spoken by members of a bilingual speech community do not necessarily enjoy the same status or prestige, which implies that both languages may not be appropriate in all contexts. As a result, language choice may also be used as a strategy to convey politeness. To investigate the connection between language choice and politeness, I focused on the language situation in Italy, a country of diglossia in which many linguistic codes, referred to as ‘dialects,’ co-exist. The frequency of dialect use varies by region and variables such as speaker age and social status; however most Italians have at least a passing knowledge of a dialect, and many are proficient in

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standard Italian and at least one other dialect. The dialects of Italy are not derived from Italian but are derived from Latin. The linguistic differences between many of these dialects are so great that they may be considered separate languages. Dialects are considered to be subordinate to standard Italian and are considered to be the more intimate variety, while Italian is the standard language and is considered the code of prestige.

Because Italian is the standard language and is considered to be the language of prestige, I hypothesized that Italian could effectively convey politeness in both formal and informal situations between interlocutors of varying social distance. I also hypothesized that dialects, which are considered to be inferior to Italian, could be used to convey politeness only in informal situations between interlocutors who have little social distance. Because observing and recording naturally occurring conversation between bilinguals in Italian and an Italian dialect is difficult in the US, I obtained data by distributing a questionnaire to bilingual speakers. The results support my hypothesis that Italian can convey both deference and solidarity, while dialects can convey only solidarity.

This paper is organized as follows: in Section 2, I will give a brief overview of the evolution of Italian and the Italian dialects as well as a discussion of the linguistic situation of Italy in terms of diglossia and dilalia as proposed by Ferguson (1959), Berruto (1989), and SgROI (1994). In Section 3, I will present the politeness models proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) and Watts (2003) as well as other linguists' critiques of these models. In this section, I will also briefly discuss Gumperz's (1982) proposal of code-switching as a discourse strategy to convey meaning. In Section 4, I will explain the methodology of my experiment, and I will present the results of this experiment in Section 5. A copy of the questionnaire used in this experiment is

found in the Appendix. In Section 6, I will analyze these results using the models proposed by Brown & Levinson and Watts.

2.0 Background Information

In order to have a better understanding of how Italians use Italian and dialect, it is important to consider the linguistic context of Italy, in which the languages do not share the same status. In this section, I will give an overview of the evolution of Italian and its ‘dialects’ to show how the dialects are not derived from Italian but are separate languages derived from Latin. I will then discuss the linguistic situation in Italy with respect to the notions of diglossia proposed by Ferguson (1959) and Sgroi (1994) and the notion of dilalia proposed by Berruto (1989). The work of these linguists shows how the social status of both a language and its speakers are dependent on one another which influences the language use of the members of a given society.

2.1 History of Italian and its Dialects

The modern Romance languages, including Italian and its dialects, are derived from Latin. Latin developed in Lazio, a region in central Italy, between approximately the 8th century B.C. and the 9th A.D. and was widely spoken during the reign of the Roman Empire. The empire’s additional conquests of land led to contact between other cultures and languages. Latin in the newly conquered areas was strongly influenced by the languages of these other groups. This influence strengthened the use of colloquial forms of Latin, called vulgar varieties. As time progressed, these vulgar varieties developed into distinct languages. However, from the time of the Roman Empire through the Middle Ages, Latin was superior to the vulgar varieties and was the language chosen for writing literature (Balboni & Cardona 2004: 8-10).

Despite the superior status of Latin, the vulgar varieties began to be used in writing (for purposes such as conducting business) during the 9th and 10th centuries, though Latin was still the predominant language for writing (Bonomi et al. 2003: 200-12). Beginning in the 13th century, vulgar varieties began to be used in poetry. With the 14th century came three Florentine writers who would become among the most well-known writers in the history of the Italian peninsula: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Dante was one of the first people to entertain the idea of establishing a single, unified language to be used in writing literature on the Italian peninsula. Dante was known for his writing style, which was unique because of his language choice. Instead of writing in the standard Latin, Dante chose to write one of his major works, *The Divine Comedy*, using a mix of terms from Florentine, Tuscan, and other vulgar varieties in addition to creating new terms from Latin, French, and Provençal (Balboni & Cardona 2004: 26). Soon after, between 1336 and 1338, Petrarch, the second of these Florentine writers, began writing *The Canzoniere*. He wrote this work in a refined Florentine, avoiding any common terms and enriching its lexicon by drawing from past poetic styles. Then, in approximately 1349, Boccaccio, the third of these Florentine writers, began to write *The Decameron*. Like Dante and Petrarch, Boccaccio also chose to write in Florentine and experimented by enriching the language with terms from other vulgar varieties (Bonomi et al. 2003: 215-7). The diffusion of the works of these three authors throughout the Italian peninsula led to a greater recognition of the Florentine variety and raised its level of prestige.

During this time, the Italian peninsula was politically and geographically fragmented. Cities were isolated from one another, and there was little contact between them. In addition, a majority of the population was illiterate (Balboni & Cardona 2004: 12). Although the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio were diffused throughout the Italian peninsula, only the few who

were educated had access to such works of literature. As a result, the different languages derived from the vulgar varieties of Latin continued to develop and thrive despite the literary use of Florentine because there was little contact between languages. Because so few of the common people had been exposed to Florentine, the language remained a predominantly literary language outside of Florence and did not have a large influence on the spoken language of other areas on the Italian peninsula during this time.

The problem of which language to choose for writing literature was much debated by writers until the 1800s, during the time when revolutionaries looked to gain independence for the Italian peninsula and unite the land and its people. There was no single language that was spoken by a majority of the population; instead, a different language was spoken in each area. Adopting a single language was seen as a symbol of Italy's unity and independence. Alessandro Manzoni, an influential writer during this time, proposed the adoption of Florentine as a national spoken language (Bonomi et al. 2003: 247). In 1861, Italy became a unified nation, and Florentine was chosen as the official language which is now known as Italian, and the other languages were demoted to the status of dialects (d'Agostino 2007: 23). However, Italian did not take root quickly. A census taken in 1861 reveals that 75% of the population was illiterate, and only 2.5-10% of the population spoke the standard language (Bonomi et al. 2003: 251-3). Over several decades, the implemented education system, as well as a rise in mass media, resulted in the diffusion of Italian. In 1971, 68% of the population spoke Italian (in comparison to 2.5-10% in 1861) and only 5% of the population was illiterate (in comparison to 75% in 1861), and by the 21st century, 93% of the population declared that they spoke Italian actively (d'Agostino 2007: 46-50). This has led to the situation that currently exists in Italy, in which

the Italian is considered the language of prestige and is appropriate in all situations, especially in formal contexts, while the dialects are considered inferior.

Italian dialects each have their own structure and are generally mutually unintelligible (Tosi, 2001, p. 21). Dialects are grouped into northern dialects and central-southern dialects, which can be further broken down into smaller groups (Dardano & Trifone 1997, p. 62). Dialects vary not only between regions, but between towns as well. The following figure compares the sentence “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” from *Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* as it is spoken in Italian followed by a translation into several of Italy’s dialects (Ager 2008).

Fig. 1

Italian: Tutti gli esseri umani nascono liberi ed eguali in dignità e diritti.

Venetian: Tuti (t̃)i eseri umani (i) xe nai (t̃)iberi e compagni par dignità e diriti.

Sicilian: Tutti i cristiani nascinu libbiri cu a stissa dignità i diritti.

Sardinian: Totu sos èsseres umanos naschint liberos e eguales in dinnidade e in deretos.

Piedmontese: Tuij j'esser uman a nasso liber e uguaj an dignità e dirit.

Genoese: Tytti i ommi nàscian libberi e yguâli in dignità e drîti.

Friulian: Ducj i oms a nassin libars e compagns come dignitât e derits.

The differences in the dialects shown in Figure 1 illustrate why Italian was not adopted quickly by the majority of the population. Because most of the dialects were mutually unintelligible and Italy had been politically fragmented for centuries, it was difficult to enforce a new language

which a majority of the population had never been exposed to. While these dialects may be linguistically characterized as distinct languages, once Italian was established as the standard, the dialects came to be considered inferior to Italian. Until recently, dialects were considered to represent backwardness, and speaking a dialect inhibited social and economic success. For this reason, many parents discouraged their children from speaking dialect (Bonomi et al. 2003: 22-3).

Despite these obstacles, dialects are still widely spoken; however they are mainly used in familiar situations. As of 2006, only 5% of the population spoke prevalently or only dialects with strangers, while 45% spoke prevalently Italian or only Italian with strangers. From these statistics it may be concluded that Italian shows greater respect and formality in unfamiliar or formal situations and therefore is more prestigious, while dialects convey a greater familiarity and intimacy. However, there is an overlap between the use of Italian and dialects. For the year 2006, 45.5% of the population spoke prevalently Italian or only Italian with the family, 16% spoke prevalently dialects or only dialects with the family, and 32.5% spoke both Italian and dialects with the family (d'Agostino 2007: 55&59). These statistics show that although a large percentage of the Italian population uses dialect with the family, nearly the same percentage of Italians also use Italian in the same situation. As a result, it may be concluded that Italian may be used in both formal and informal settings, while dialect is generally only appropriate in familiar settings.

2.2 Ferguson's Notion of Diglossia (1959)

The existence of more than one code within a geographic area such as Italy presents bilingual speakers with several choices. Speakers must choose to select a single code or to mix two or more codes depending on their purpose and the context of the exchange. It is usually the case that the codes do not all enjoy the same status and prestige within a community and are used in different situations. Such a situation is termed "diglossia." Ferguson's definition of diglossia is found in (2) below (Ferguson 1959: 75):

- (2) Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation.

According to Ferguson's definition, there is a high variety, which is considered to have prestige, and a low variety of lower status. Each variety may only be used in certain contexts which almost never overlap. Speakers usually view the high variety more positively, both for its communicative abilities as well as for its aesthetic qualities (Ferguson 1959: 68-9). The high variety is usually standardized and is the language chosen for writing literature. As a result, the high variety is generally learned formally in school, while the low variety is acquired naturally at home (Ferguson 1959: 70). According to Ferguson, the high variety is grammatically more complex than the low variety, which should have a simpler morphological and case system;

however corresponding terms for the same items generally exist in both lexicons (Ferguson 1959: 72-3).

Ferguson proposes that the evolution of a diglossic society with these characteristics requires certain conditions. Centuries must pass during which a bilingual society's spoken language must be used in writing literature and only a limited portion of the society's population is literate. Such situations exist and have existed in many communities throughout history. However, this separation of language use may come to be viewed negatively by a society when a greater portion of the population becomes literate, communication across the geographic area increases, and the society's members wish to establish a single standard language. Depending on the strength of each variety, one is usually adopted as the standard, which results in diglossia (Ferguson 1959: 77-8).

2.3 Diglossia and Italy

Ferguson's definition of diglossia accounts for the linguistic situation in Italy in several ways. The Italian peninsula has been a community of many codes since the reign of the Roman Empire when the vulgar varieties began to develop from Latin. Consistent with Ferguson's criteria for the development of diglossia, these spoken varieties began to be used widely in written literature, most notably beginning in the Middle Ages. Political fragmentation during these times, as well as social and economic traditions, prevented a large portion of the population from becoming literate. During the revolutionary period, various communities throughout the entire peninsula came into greater contact as they were united, and the desire for a standard language arose, both to simplify communication, as well as to symbolize the new nation's independence. The prestige given to Florentine was maintained by later influential Italian

writers. Perhaps for this reason, the language came to be considered a type of high variety and became the standard after Italy's unification, and all other languages spoken on the peninsula were demoted to the status of dialects, which conform to Ferguson's description of low varieties. Italian has greater prestige than the dialects and has been standardized. The education systems implemented after Italy's unification, as well as increased communications through mass media, have been responsible for diffusing Italian to native dialect speakers and maintaining its standardized grammar and structure.

Although the situation in Italy conforms to Ferguson's definition for all of the above reasons, there is one significant component of his theory that does not characterize Italy. Ferguson's definition states that the high variety is "used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation" (Ferguson 1959: 75). While Italian is the code nearly always chosen over dialects for literature and formal contexts, it is also commonly used in regular conversation. This violates an essential part of Ferguson's notion of diglossia which again appears in a later definition put forth by Ferguson-Heath in 1981 (528) as seen in (3):

- (3) Diglossia: A language situation in which two very different varieties of a language are functionally complementary, one (H, the 'high' variety) being used for written and formal spoken purposes, the other (L, the 'low' variety) for ordinary conversation

Ferguson's diglossia is centered around the complementary use of the high and low varieties. Because Italian and dialects are not used this way in Italy, Italy cannot be viewed as a nation of diglossia following the above definitions. In order to account for the situation in Italy, either

Italy must be classified under a different category or Ferguson's definition of diglossia must be revised.

2.4 Italy and Dilalia

Because Italy does not fall under Ferguson's definition of diglossia, Italian linguist Gaetano Berruto attempted to create further classifications for societies in which two or more languages coexist. Berruto (1989) labeled communities such as Italy under the classification of 'dilalia.' Berruto states that both diglossia and dilalia share the following characteristics: there is a "coexistence of two *Abstand-* and *Ausbausprachen* (in terms of Kloss 1978)," there is a "large distance between dialects and standard," the codes are used for different functions, and the high variety is considered to be more prestigious than the low variety. However, unlike Ferguson's diglossia, in dilalia both the high and the low variety is used in regular conversation, the domains in which each is used may overlap, the low variety is "socially stratified" but not standardized, and subvarieties exist "between high and low varieties" (Berruto 1989: 14-5).

While creating additional classifications for societies that do not conform to the characteristics proposed by Ferguson is helpful, Berruto's notion of dilalia is an overgeneralization for the speech of all Italians. The use of dialects and Italian differs in various social groups depending on factors such as socio-economic status. While Berruto's characteristics for dilalia are true of the average middle class group, they are not reflective of other groups, such as the working class, which heavily uses dialect in most contexts within the group (Trumper 1989: 37-8). To confirm the existence of this dilemma, another linguist, John Trumper, recorded conversations of both middle and working class Italians in Calabria (in southern Italy) to test the consistency of the use of the high and low varieties across classes. He

found that the middle class used dialects only with family, close friends, and “social inferiors,” while regional Italian was used in nearly all other contexts. By contrast, the working class used dialects in nearly all contexts (Trumper 1989: 45). Similar findings were found in the Veneto region (in northern Italy). Working class members mainly used dialects while the middle class used dialects, Italian, and code-mixing between the two (Trumper 1989: 43-4). Trumper predicts that such a situation is not stable and that Italy is becoming polydialectal (microdiglossic) even though ‘true’ diglossia still exists in certain areas (Trumper 1989: 41). However, this does not completely explain the linguistic situation in Italy. There is still the problem that in many areas the high variety often is used in regular conversation, which should not occur in a microdiglossic society (Berruto 1989: 14). It may be useful instead to re-examine Ferguson’s definition of diglossia by looking at ideas proposed by Fishman and Sgroi’s application of Fishman’s ideas to the situation in Italy.

2.5 Bilingualism and Diglossia in Italy

Instead of considering the separation of the high and low varieties’ functions as the defining criterion of diglossia, Sgroi (1994) focuses on the social roles of the varieties. Sgroi proposes that a society may be considered diglossic when one of the varieties is more prestigious than the other and can be used by speakers for social advancement. He argues that diglossia is not a result of a separation of functions but is dependent on the connection between language and the social mobility of its speakers. If a certain variety is used for the social exclusion of groups or individuals, it will become the high variety, while the variety used for social integration will become the low variety. A speaker’s social prestige both determines and is determined by the variety s/he speaks. The use of a certain variety by upper class members will give that variety

prestige. After that variety acquires social prestige, those that use it will also be given greater prestige by other members of the community (SgROI 1994: 34-5).

This idea that social prestige impacts the use of languages and varieties is found in Fishman's 1972 and 1975 discussion of diglossia (reported in SgROI (1994)). SgROI revises Fishman's model of *Bilingualism vs. Diglossia* and applies it to the situation in Italy (SgROI 1994: 43-4). The existence of unequal social prestige between varieties is considered to be the most important factor in considering a society diglossic, and the existence of two or more varieties that have the same social prestige is the most important factor in considering a society bilingual (SgROI 1994: 45). Fishman's *Diglossia with bilingualism* is redefined by SgROI as *Diglossia for subordinate classes* and *bilingualism for dominating classes*. This situation is generally found in industrial societies and occurs in urban areas of Italy. The upper classes have full command of the high variety as well as competence in the low. By contrast, the lower classes have full command of the low variety but have only partial competence in the high. In this case, the lower class situation is one of diglossia because use of the high variety may be used as a strategy for social advancement, while this is not the case for the higher classes. Because the higher classes cannot advance socially by using the high variety, both varieties are labeled as having equal prestige and therefore the upper class situation may be considered one of bilingualism (SgROI, 1994: 45).

In Fishman's *Bilingualism without diglossia* as reported in SgROI (1994), urbanization causes the weakening of the lower variety as laborers begin to use the high variety which is used in the work place. SgROI redefines this situation as *Bilingualism* for the upper classes and *Diglossia in disintegration* for the lower classes. The upper classes use the high and low in the same manner as stated above. By contrast, the lower classes begin in a diglossic situation using

predominantly the low variety. The high variety is used only for social advancement. However, as the lower classes begin to reject the low variety in order to improve their social standing, diglossia disintegrates. Such a situation exists in areas of Italy where there is a high rate of immigration. Lower class farmers try to lose their inferior status by moving to urban areas and trying to mimic aspects of the upper class culture, including its language, to improve their own socio-economic status (SgROI 1994: 46-7).

SgROI then redefines Fishman's *Diglossia without bilingualism* as *Pre-bilingualism for dominating classes* and *Pre-diglossia for dominated classes*. Both the upper and lower classes are monolingual in two different languages. Forced interaction through business and politics will lead to bilingualism and diglossia, respectively. The upper class situation will be considered one of bilingualism because the high variety cannot be used for social advancement. By contrast, the lower class situation will be considered one of diglossia because the high variety may be used for social advancement. This was the situation that existed after the unification of the Italian peninsula and still exists in some economically depressed areas today (SgROI 1994: 48).

2.6 Implications

The linguistic situation in Italy is quite complex and is not easily defined. Italy's history of political and geographic fragmentation led to the development of varieties with different levels of prestige. By focusing on the connection between the social status and prestige of a language and its speakers rather than on the language's function allows Italy to be defined with reference to diglossia. By using Fishman's model of *Diglossia versus Bilingualism* and revising it to focus on prestige, it is possible to account for the linguistic situation in Italy with respect to all social classes and areas of varying urbanization and wealth. As a result, Italy may be

considered a nation of diglossia as well as a nation of bilingualism because of the close connection between socio-economic status of speakers and their language.

Because Italian and dialects do not enjoy the same level of prestige and language use varies by the social status of its speakers, I was interested in seeing how this affects the speech of speakers bilingual in Italian and an Italian dialect. Since the dialects are considered inferior to Italian, I hypothesized that bilinguals would not use the languages interchangeably in every situation. If this was the case, I further hypothesized that language choice may be an effective way to convey meaning and politeness to other bilingual speakers. In order to determine how and if the situation of diglossia in Italy affects the choices individual bilingual speakers make, I examined the work of linguists in the field of pragmatics, which will be discussed in the following section.

3.0 Literature Review

In this section I present two models of politeness; Brown & Levinson's (1987) model and Watts' (2003) model. Brown & Levinson's model focuses on pragmatic meaning and the speaker's intent while Watts' model focuses on the linguistic realization of politeness.

Following the discussion of each model are two critiques of each of the proposed theories. I will then discuss Gumperz's proposal of the use of code-switching as a discourse strategy to convey meaning.

3.1 Brown & Levinson (1987)

3.1.1 Politeness Model

Brown & Levinson (1987) develop a notion of politeness based on the assumption that face and rationality are possessed by "all competent adult members of a society." Brown & Levinson define face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 66). This notion of face may be divided into negative face and positive face. Brown & Levinson (1987: 66) define negative and positive face as follows:

- (4) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition
- (5) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants

Although the desire to be free from imposition and the desire to be approved of appear to conflict, a person possesses both negative and positive face. Rationality is a person's ability to use

reasoning to achieve a balance between these two aspects of face in the performance of a speech act (the production of a linguistic utterance to achieve an outcome desired by the speaker). The performance of speech acts may threaten the face of both the speaker and hearer. For example, orders, suggestions, offers, and compliments threaten the hearer's negative face because they are an imposition on his/her freedom of action. Acts such as criticism and challenges threaten the hearer's positive face because they do not uphold the hearer's desire to be appreciated. However, the speaker's face also may be threatened by his/her own performance of speech acts. The speaker's commission of acts such as the acceptance of offers and thanking threaten his/her negative face because s/he must lower him/herself, and in doing so, s/he loses his/her freedom. In contrast, the speaker's commission of apologies and confessions threaten his/her positive face because such acts may cause the hearer to disapprove of the speaker.

Politeness results from a person's use of rationality to lessen the impact of a face threatening act. Positive politeness strategies aim to maintain the hearer's positive face while negative politeness strategies aim to maintain the addressee's negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 66-75). However, before a speaker decides whether a positive or negative politeness strategy is necessary in a given situation, the speaker must decide whether to commit the face threatening act (FTA) at all. A speaker may determine whether to commit an FTA by calculating how heavy the imposition is on the hearer. This may be calculated through the consideration of three variables: social distance (D), power (P), and ranking (R) of the imposition (Brown & Levinson 1987: 75). Brown & Levinson (1987) propose the following equation shown in (6) below (76):

$$(6) W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$$

In this equation, social distance, power, and ranking are assigned values by the speaker. These values are not universal but may vary between cultures or individuals. The sum (W_x) of these values determines how heavy the imposition is on the hearer. If the imposition is very great relative to the weight of other FTAs calculated by the speaker, s/he will likely not commit the FTA (Brown & Levinson 1987: 74-76). If the speaker does choose to commit the FTA, s/he may do so on or off-record. In an off-record FTA, the speaker's intent is open to interpretation by the hearer and does not require the hearer to act on the FTA. In contrast, the speaker's intent is clear in an on-record FTA and makes it clear that action on the part of the hearer is desired. If the speaker chooses to go on-record, s/he may do so by committing the FTA without employing any strategies to protect the hearer's face which is labeled by Brown & Levinson as bald on-record. Finally, a speaker may choose to go on-record, but instead of going on-record baldly, s/he may employ positive or negative politeness strategies to save the hearer's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 69).

In proposing the use of positive and negative politeness strategies when committing an on-record FTA, Brown & Levinson assume that the participants have a subconscious awareness of the maxims of conversation proposed by Grice (1975). If followed, these maxims allow the speaker to communicate effectively. Grice's maxims are shown in (7) below as quoted in Brown & Levinson (1978: 94-95).

(7) Maxim of Quality: Be non-spurious (speak the truth, be sincere).

Maxims of Quantity: (a) Don't say less than is required.

(b) Don't say more than is required.

Maxim of Relevance: Be relevant.

Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous; avoid ambiguity and obscurity.

According to Grice, participants wish to be cooperative in communication which leads to the observance of the above maxims. Flouting these maxims serves as a signal to the addressee that the speaker intends to convey more than the literal meaning of the utterance. Many of the politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson involve flouting maxims to preserve the participants' positive and/or negative face (Brown & Levinson 1987: 5, 94-95).

Brown & Levinson propose that there are two type of politeness which correspond to these two aspects of face. Positive politeness is intended by the speaker to maintain the hearer's positive face desires while negative politeness is intended by the speaker to maintain the hearer's negative face desires. Positive politeness is meant to establish a feeling of solidarity between the speaker and the hearer. To convey this feeling of acceptance and solidarity, a speaker can choose from a number of strategies which communicate "in-group membership" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 101-103, 109). These strategies include the following (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 103-129):

(8) Positive Politeness strategies:

- (1) *Notice, attend to H² (his interests, wants, needs, goods)*
- (2) *Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H)*
- (3) *Intensify interest to H*
- (4) *Use in-group identity markers*
- (5) *Seek agreement*
- (6) *Avoid disagreement*
- (7) *Presuppose/raise/assert common ground*
- (8) *Joke*
- (9) *Assert or presuppose S's³ knowledge of and concern for H's wants*
- (10) *Offer, promise*
- (11) *Be optimistic*
- (12) *Include both S and H in the activity*
- (13) *Give (or ask for) reasons*
- (14) *Assume or assert reciprocity*
- (15) *Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)*

Strategies (1-8) preserve the hearer's positive face by causing him/her to feel appreciated by the speaker by showing that they share common ground. In Strategy (1), the speaker indicates that s/he notices or appreciates something that the hearer may want to be noticed. This may be done in the form of complimenting. Also, the speaker should give acknowledgement to the hearer if s/he commits a self FTA to indicate that s/he still approves of and accepts the hearer. In Strategy 2, the speaker uses exaggeration to emphasize his/her feelings toward the hearer which may include interest, approval, or sympathy. This may require the speaker to flout the maxim of quantity by saying more than is necessary to convey his/her interest in the hearer. In Strategy (3)

² Brown & Levinson use *H* to signify 'hearer.'

³ Brown & Levinson use *S* to signify 'speaker.'

the speaker shows his/her interest in the hearer while telling a story through exaggeration or engaging him/her with tag questions which may result in the flouting of one or more maxims. For example, exaggeration may violate the maxim of quality, by not being completely truthful, or quantity, by saying more than necessary. Strategy (4) includes using terms of endearment as well as using an “in-group” code instead of an “out-group” code to make the hearer feel included. In Strategy (5) the speaker should try to agree with the hearer to indicate that they share common ground by discussing common experiences and shared opinions. However, the hearer may need to flout the maxim of quality and feign agreement in order to convey politeness. Strategy (6) requires the speaker to avoid outright disagreement or refusal through the use of hedges or by flouting the maxim of quality. Strategy (7) involves avoiding an immediate expression of the FTA by discussing other matters first, using tag questions when telling a story to include the hearer, and using the inclusive “we.” Strategy (8) uses joking to show solidarity and familiarity. This may involve flouting a number of maxims, which make the hearer laugh because what the speaker says is unexpected (Brown & Levinson, 1978: 102-125).

Strategies (9-15) are meant to communicate the speaker’s desire to work with the hearer and to show that s/he understands the hearer’s desires. Strategy (9) conveys solidarity by expressing the speaker’s knowledge of the hearer and the hearer’s desires. This shows that the speaker approves of the hearer and wants to fulfill his/her wishes. In Strategy (10), the speaker offers to actually help fulfill the hearer’s desires. This may involve flouting the maxim of quality by promising to do something that the speaker has no intention of doing. Strategy (11) is the opposite of Strategy (10) by requiring the speaker to suppose that s/he and the hearer share the same desires and that the hearer wishes to help fulfill them. This usually involves on-record FTAs to reduce the imposition. Strategy (12) involves the use of the inclusive “we” to include

the hearer to show that they share opinions or desires. Strategy (13) requires the speaker to assume that the reasons behind his/her desires are understandable and that the hearer will agree to help the speaker meet his/her desires. This may involve flouting maxims such as manner. For example, the speaker may use questions beginning in “why not...” (“Why not give me a hand?”) that do not necessarily function as a request for information. Strategy (14) requires the speaker to state that s/he will reciprocate a favor for the hearer. Finally, Strategy (15) actually involves doing the hearer a favor to make the hearer feel appreciated (Brown & Levinson 1987: 125-129).

Unlike these positive politeness strategies which convey solidarity, Brown & Levinson’s negative politeness strategies are meant to increase the social distance between the speaker and the hearer by lowering the status of the speaker while raising the status of the hearer and minimizing the imposition of the speech act on him/her. Negative politeness strategies include the following (Brown & Levinson 1987: 132-211).

(9) Negative Politeness Strategies

- (1) *Be conventionally indirect*
- (2) *Question, hedge*
- (3) *Be pessimistic*
- (4) *Minimize the imposition, R_x ⁴*
- (5) *Give deference*
- (6) *Apologize*
- (7) *Impersonalize S and H*
- (8) *State the FTA as a general rule*
- (9) *Nominalize*
- (10) *Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebting H*

⁴ Brown & Levinson use R_x to signify the rating of imposition of a particular speech act on the addressee.

Strategy (1) involves using indirect speech acts to avoid imposing on the hearer. This may require the speaker to flout the maxim of manner by requesting information when the speaker actually intends the question to be a request for action on the part of the hearer. Strategy (2) involves the use of hedges to communicate the speaker's reluctance to impinge on the hearer or to convey that the speaker does not necessarily have the opinion that s/he communicates. This may require flouting maxims such as quality to avoid conflict which would result from directly stating the truth or from lying. In strategy (3) the speaker assumes the hearer will not be willing or able to help and states this assumption to avoid imposing on the hearer. In contrast, strategy (4) is used to make the imposition to seem less costly to the hearer by using techniques such as the use of diminutives which may flout the maxim of quality because the utterance is not necessarily truthful. In strategy (5), the speaker communicates that the hearer has more power than the speaker and is therefore socially superior. This may be accomplished through the use of honorifics, the use of more prestigious or formal varieties of language, or by degrading oneself. In Strategy (6), the speaker indicates that s/he knows that s/he is impinging on the hearer and regrets that s/he must do so. This is a way for the speaker to lower his/her status relative to the hearer to preserve the hearer's freedom of action and to reduce the imposition of the FTA. Strategy (7) flouts manner by using impersonal labels instead of making direct accusations such as "Someone didn't wash the dishes." This may require flouting the maxim of manner in order to be ambiguous and to avoid threatening the hearer's face. Strategy (8) is similar to Strategy (7) and is usually used in public institutions to inform hearers of what is or is not permitted without directly addressing the hearers. By stating that everyone complies with the rules, the speaker avoids singling out the hearer. Strategy (9) also avoids direct address by nominalizing the verb to avoid using a subject to single out the hearer. Finally, in strategy (10) the speaker lowers

him/herself by acknowledging his/her imposition on the hearer and by either promising to reciprocate the favor in the future or by allowing the hearer to refuse (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 132-211).

In addition to choosing one of these negative politeness strategies, a speaker also may choose not to commit the speech act at all or to go off-record. This allows the hearer to interpret the utterance in order to avoid imposing on him/her. This may be done by hinting at what the speaker really means and flouting Grice's maxims. Because the speaker is flouting the maxims, the hearer can assume that the speaker intends to convey additional meaning; however, the hearer is not obligated to comply with the speaker's desire (Brown & Levinson 1987: 211-226).

3.1.2 Criticisms

The politeness theory proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) has been criticized by other linguists. Wierzbicka (1991) emphasizes that while the notion of positive and negative politeness may apply to western English-speaking societies, it does not apply universally. For example, according to Wierzbicka, the Japanese culture focuses not on the speaker, but on the other participants. As a result, participants avoid explicitly communicating their wants, even when asked for this information. It is also considered rude to directly ask what the hearer wants because this would force him/her to communicate his/her desires explicitly. Because of the emphasis on others instead of on the self, Brown & Levinson's face wants and politeness strategies do not reflect language use in Japanese society. Also, in contrast to Japanese speakers, as well as to speakers of "white English," speakers of "black English" consider the explicit expression of one's own feelings and successes in the form of bragging to be a way of sharing the speaker's good feelings with others and is not considered to be face threatening as it would

be in “white English” or in Japanese. As a result, speakers of “black English” may be considered to be more direct than speakers of some other cultures. Because “black English” places a greater emphasis on the self than in “white English” communities, Brown & Levinson’s face wants and politeness strategies do not accurately reflect language use in this speech community (Wierzbicka 1991: 67, 72-85). As a result, the varying levels of emphasis on the self and the group result in different politeness strategies in different cultures, which prevents Brown & Levinson’s theory of politeness from being considered universal.

Watts (2003) also criticizes Brown & Levinson’s model of politeness. Brown & Levinson’s model consists of the choice of a particular communicative strategy by a rational speaker to accomplish a communicative goal, however Watts questions whether a “rational means-goals” model is valid. Such a model is complex and requires the speakers to consider each of the options laid out by the model before deciding on a strategy, and this also assumes that speakers cannot choose more than one strategy per utterance. Another problem is that Brown & Levinson’s theory does not take into account how the hearer may interpret the speaker’s utterance. The hearer may not necessarily interpret the utterance in the way the speaker intended it to be interpreted. Watts also believes that Brown & Levinson’s politeness theory is not actually a politeness theory but a theory of facework. The utterances themselves are not intrinsically polite, but the context of the situation may cause the addressee to interpret the speaker’s utterance as polite or impolite. Many of Brown & Levinson’s strategies are not intrinsically polite and are only considered polite in a particular context. Finally, like Anna Wierzbicka, Watts notes that Brown & Levinson’s notion of politeness is not universal because the described face wants and the strategies used to protect these wants do not accurately reflect

the face wants and strategies used in societies in which the emphasis is on the group instead of the individual (Watts 2003: 85-102).

3.2 Watts (2003)

3.2.1 Politeness Model

In Watts' model of politeness, he distinguishes between politeness₁, the "lay interpretations" of whether an utterance is polite, and politeness₂, the notion of politeness adopted in sociolinguistics. Watts' theory is based on politeness₁ because he believes that politeness₂ does not necessarily reflect the hearer's interpretation of an utterance as polite (Watts 2003: 4, 10). Watts rejects Brown & Levinson's idea that face is the self-image that individuals themselves choose to display to others and returns to the concept of face developed by Goffman. Watts defines face as "the conceptualisation each of us makes of our 'self' through the construals of others in social interaction and particularly in verbal action" (Watts 2003: 124). Face is not a self-construction but is assigned both by the individual and by the participants of the interaction based on this person's actions and utterances. An individual's face is not necessarily constant but is reconstructed during every interaction. According to Watts, maintaining the face of oneself and of others does not necessarily convey politeness. Much of facework consists of what he terms as politic behavior, which he defines as "that behavior, linguistic and non-linguistic, which the participants construct as being appropriate to the ongoing social interaction" (Watts 2003: 124-125, 144). Instead, politeness may be conveyed only by going beyond what is expected in a given situation, and politeness is not always interpreted positively by the hearer.

Watts then develops his own notion of politeness based on the ideas of Werkhöfer (1992). Watts maintains that politeness is a social construction and a symbol of social values, and it is

based on previous interactions and is always changing. Participants learn through past interactions what is acceptable linguistic and non-linguistic behavior (politic behavior), and this knowledge composes an individual's habitus, a term adopted by Watts from Bourdieu. Individuals make decisions within an interaction based on their personal habitus (Watts 2003: 144-149). Watts defines linguistic politeness as "any linguistic behavior which goes beyond the bounds of politic behavior [and] is open to potential classification as 'polite'" (Watts 2003: 161). Determining what is acceptable within an interaction is dependent on every individual's habitus, and politic behavior usually goes unnoticed because it is expected. What is acceptable may change or may depend on the situation. Watts gives the example of the acceptance of confrontational discourse between radio hosts and callers. Brown & Levinson would consider such confrontations to be face threatening, however Watts considers this to be politic behavior because it is expected and accepted for the context (Watts 2003: 248). As a result, Watts proposes that while politeness is "struggled over in every human society," politeness itself is not universal because determining what is polite depends on the individual's habitus which will vary from one society to another and even within one particular society (Watts 2003: 24).

3.2.2 Criticisms

Like Brown & Levinson's theory of politeness, Watts' model of politeness is not completely accepted by other linguists. In his review of Watts (2003), Ladegard (2006) highlights several weaknesses of Watts' model. One problem is that Watts does not provide a clear definition of what politeness is or how it is used. In addition, Watts implies that politeness is not universal, which makes it difficult to determine how speakers use politeness in speech. Also, by emphasizing the effect of every individual's habitus on determining what is considered politic behavior and what is considered polite or impolite, Watts implies that there are not any

socially accepted norms even within a single society, which Ladegard deems as unlikely. Watts also does not show any evidence for his claim that politic behavior is not considered polite by the hearer. Finally, Watts feels that observing conversations is the only legitimate way to obtain accurate data, while Ladegard believes that questionnaire data can provide valuable insights into actual language use (Ladegard 2006: 205-207).

Like Ladegard, Haugh (2004) also believes that Watts' claim that there is no uniform way of interpreting an utterance as polite, even within a single society, is problematic. This prevents the study of politeness across cultures if no patterns can be found even within a single culture. Although Watts critiques other politeness models of being applicable only to western English-speaking societies, he does not include any evidence from other cultures which use different languages, or even of the varieties of English used in other societies. Haugh also argues that Watts does not consider pragmatics in his analysis but only focuses on linguistic forms, unlike Brown & Levinson, who were one of the first to consider pragmatics as politeness strategies. However, Haugh is supportive of Watts' argument that utterances themselves are not polite but that utterances may be considered polite depending on the context (Haugh 2004).

3.3 Gumperz (1982)

Also relevant to the discussion of politeness, the notion of code switching proposed by Gumperz suggests that code choice is effective in conveying meaning, solidarity, and social distance. Gumperz (1982) discusses some of the functions code switching may have in discourse. These functions include contrasting new and old information, expressing social distance versus solidarity, quoting another speaker, and catching the hearer's attention. Gumperz distinguishes between the "we code," the minority language of the speech community, and the "they code," the

majority language of the speech community. The “we code” is generally used in familiar situations or to convey solidarity while the “they code” is generally used in formal contexts and conveys social distance. The context in which these codes are used may overlap, for example the “they code” may be used in familiar situations, however depending on the norms of code use in the speech community, switching codes may convey additional meaning. For example, according to Gumperz, switching from the “they code” to the “we code” when making a request is more likely to be interpreted as an appeal to the hearer, while switching codes in the opposite direction is more likely to be interpreted as a warning or as a demand (Gumperz 1982: 48-92).

3.4 Relevance to the Experiment

Because Italy is a society in which many codes exist, speakers may use code choice as a strategy to convey meaning. Italian, the standard language of Italy, corresponds to Gumperz’s description of the “they code” while the dialects, considered inferior in status and not mutually understood, correspond to his description of the “we code.” Similarly, Brown & Levinson also acknowledge that code choice has a role in conveying politeness. Their fourth positive politeness strategy, *Use in-group identity markers*, includes the use of the in-group language or dialect. Italian dialects fall under Brown & Levinson’s classification of in-group language as a non-standard code that is not intelligible to outsiders. Watts does not consider individual strategies in his model of politeness, however his notion of forming a personal habitus of what is acceptable in a speech community is applicable in showing how discourse participants in non-English speaking communities can devise politeness strategies. A person’s habitus can allow him/her to determine the contexts in which choosing Italian or dialect is acceptable. However, Gumperz, Watts, and Brown & Levinson have not examined code choice as a strategy in itself for conveying politeness. The experiment that follows is meant to determine if it is possible for

code choice in a community of bilingual speakers to convey politeness, and if so, when a particular code may be used and what is conveyed.

4.0 Experiment

This experiment was targeted at speakers bilingual in Italian and an Italian dialect. Because observing and recording naturally occurring conversation between such speakers is difficult in the US, a questionnaire was created with the intention of using the participants' intuitions to determine any possible connections between code choice and politeness. In this section, I will discuss the methodology of the experiment as well as the subjects who participated in the research. A copy of the questionnaire in its original form may be found in the Appendix.

4.1 Methodology

The experiment was conducted through the means of a questionnaire consisting of five sections. In Section 1, the participants were asked to imagine themselves in each of five situations which take place where their dialect is spoken. In each situation, the participants were addressed by a given speaker in either Italian or dialect. The participants were asked to rank how polite they considered this speaker to be based only on his/her code choice. The ranking was based on a scale from one to five with one being very polite, three being neither polite nor rude, and five being rude. The participants were then asked to state whether they considered the speaker's code choice in each situation to be "strange" or "normal." In Situation #1, a well-dressed stranger asks the respondent for directions using dialect. The speaker in Situation #2 is the participant's best friend, and they have always spoken only dialect with each other. For the first time, the participant's friend uses Italian to ask him/her for a favor. In Situation #3, the participant is an employee in a bookstore, and a customer uses Italian to ask him/her for help reaching a book. In

Situation #4, the participant is a waiter in a restaurant, and a well-dressed stranger places his order with the participant using dialect. The participant is again a waiter in Situation #5; however, the speaker in this situation is a friend of the respondent. These participants usually speak dialect with one another, and the friend places his order with the participant in dialect. The intent of this section was to determine whether code choice itself may convey politeness as well as if there are any connections between the participants' politeness ranking of each utterance and whether these participants consider the speaker's code choice to be typical or unexpected.

In Section 2, the participants were asked to imagine themselves in each of three situations in which a speaker addresses them using Italian and/or dialect. In each situation, the participants were asked which code would be more effective in causing the participant to interpret the utterance in a particular way. In Situation #1, the speaker is the participant's colleague, and the two of them normally speak both Italian and dialect with each other. The colleague asks the participant to cover for him at work while he is away. The colleague makes this request using either Italian or dialect. The participant was asked which code choice would cause him/her to feel more put-off by the request. The participant was then asked which code choice would cause him/her to feel more willing to help the colleague. In Situation #2, the participant forgot to do a favor for his/her parent/spouse. This parent/spouse expresses annoyance toward the participant. The participant was asked whether the parent/spouse would seem to be more irritated if s/he expressed his/her annoyance in Italian or in dialect. In Situation #3, the participant's parent/spouse is holding a meeting at home with colleagues and needs to make a good impression. The parent/spouse emphasizes that it would be best if the participant were not at home during the meeting. The participant was asked if this request would seem more urgent if (a)

it was made in Italian and repeated in dialect or (b) if it was made in dialect and repeated in Italian. The purpose of this section was to determine if the speaker's code-choice could convey meaning in addition to what was literally said in a way that is interpretable by the hearer.

In Section 3, the participants were asked to imagine themselves in each of eight situations which take place where their dialect is spoken. Each situation required the speaker to address someone and was followed by a list of five people the participant needs to address. The participants were told to assume that each of the addressees could speak both Italian and the participants' dialect. The participants were asked to circle which code they would choose with each addressee to react to the situation. Possible answers were "dialect," "Italian," and "Mix of Italian & dialect." In Situation #1, the participant is having dinner at someone's house. The participant is cutting a cherry tomato in his/her salad, but the knife slips, the tomato lands in the host's lap, and lettuce with dressing falls on the wood floor. The participants were asked which language they would use to react to the situation if the host were (a) a close friend, (b) a parent, (c) a sibling, (d) his/her manager, and (e) a colleague the participant does not know well. In Situation #2, a person comes in wearing clothes s/he intends to wear to a formal event; however the color does not suit the person and is too bright for the event. The participant is asked which code s/he would use to give his/her opinion if the person were (a) a close friend, (b) a grandparent, (c) a parent, (d) a sibling, and (e) a colleague the participant does not know well. In Situation #3, the participant is walking home, and it is very windy because a storm is coming. There is a person nearby walking toward the participant, and the wind blows something over that looks like it will hit the person. The participants were asked which code s/he would choose if the person were (a) a close friend, (b) a well-dressed stranger, (c) a colleague the participant does not know well, (d) a sibling, and (e) a parent. In Situation #4, the participant is in a room with the

window open, however it is the middle of winter and the room is very cold. The participant wants the person standing near the window to close it and was asked which code s/he would choose if this person were (a) a parent, (b) a sibling, (c) a colleague, (d) a close friend, and (e) the participant's manager. In Situation #5, the participant is at work and someone at the office always brings fish for lunch and heats it in the office microwave. The whole office always smells like fish and the participant cannot tolerate it anymore. The participant was asked which code s/he would choose in order to confront this person if s/he were (a) the participant's manager, (b) the participant's secretary, (c) a colleague that the participant is friends with, (d) a colleague that the participant does not know, and (e) a colleague that the participant does not get along with. In Situation #6, someone gives the participant a beautiful hand-carved shelf that s/he made him/herself. The participant was asked which code s/he would choose to react to the situation if the gift-giver was (a) a friend, (b) a sibling, (c) a colleague, (d) a child family member, and (e) a grandparent. In Situation #7, the participant is working on a project for work/school and someone in the room is playing loud music preventing the participant from concentrating. The participant was asked which code s/he would choose in this situation if the person were (a) a stranger, (b) a sibling, (c) a friend, (d) a colleague, and (e) someone the participant does not get along with. Finally, in Situation #8, the participant needs to buy a train/bus ticket to get home but has forgotten to bring money. The participant was asked which code s/he would choose to borrow money from (a) a close friend, (b) a close friend the participant has already borrowed money from four times in the past two weeks and has not yet repaid, (c) a colleague, (d) someone the participant does not get along with, and (e) a stranger. The purpose of this section was to determine if one language was considered more appropriate depending on the context and/or the participants. Many of the potential addressees were the same in two or more situations in order

to determine if the context and/or the addressee function as a trigger for a particular language choice.

Section 4 consisted of three of the same situations found in Section 3 which take place where the participant's dialect is spoken. Each situation was followed by two of the addressees that were listed for the same situation in Section 3. The participant was asked to write the actual words s/he would say to the addressees in each situation using Italian, dialect, or a mix of Italian and dialect. In Situation #1, the participant is having dinner at someone's house. The participant is cutting a cherry tomato in his/her salad, but the knife slips, the tomato lands in the host's lap, and lettuce with dressing falls on the wood floor. The participant was asked to write what s/he would say to the host if the host were (a) a parent and (b) the participant's manager from work. In Situation #2, the participant is at work and someone at the office always brings fish for lunch and heats it in the office microwave. The whole office always smells like fish and the participant cannot tolerate it anymore. The participant was asked what s/he would say to confront this person if s/he were (a) a colleague of the participant with whom the respondent speaks both Italian and dialect and (b) the participant's manager. In Situation #3, the participant needs to buy a train/bus ticket to get home but has forgotten to bring money. The participant was asked what s/he would say to borrow money from (a) a close friend the participant has already borrowed money from four times in the past two weeks and has not yet repaid and (b) a colleague the participant does not know well. The purpose of this section was to determine if the participants' answers between Section 3 and Section 4 were consistent and if there was any connection between the participants' speech acts and code choice.

Finally, Section 5 gave the participants the opportunity to add any additional comments they had about the use of Italian versus dialect. This section was meant to allow the participants

to discuss anything they felt may be pertinent to the project but was not covered by the questionnaire, as well as to give examples from their own experiences or to explain their use of Italian and dialect.

4.2 Subjects

The subjects for this experiment were found through a variety of means. These participants were my own acquaintances or were contacted through SUNY Stony Brook's Italian department, the Dr. Vincenzo Sellaro Lodge #2319 of the Order of the Sons of Italy in America, and through referrals made by my own acquaintances. Participation in this experiment was voluntary. The subjects who agreed to participate in this study were given the paper questionnaire described above through the mail, through e-mail, or in person. Questionnaires were returned to me in the same way in which they were distributed. Out of the 22 questionnaires that were distributed, 21 were returned.

The participants all consider either Italian or an Italian dialect as their native language; however one participant has only a passive knowledge of his dialect. Out of the 21 participants, five were female and sixteen were male. Fifteen of the 21 participants had a college degree. Seventeen of the participants were employed, two were homemakers, and two were students. Eleven participants stated that dialect was their native language, six participants stated that Italian was their native language, and four participants stated that they spoke both Italian and dialect as their native language. Respondents ranged in age from 26 to 91 years. Six of the participants (28.6%) were under the age of 50, and fifteen (71.4%) of the participants were over the age of 50. Six of the participants (28.6%) were born in the US, fourteen (66.7%) immigrated to the US, and one (4.8%) is an Italian who currently lives in Italy but came to the US for a short

period of time to study. The participants who immigrated to the US came between the ages of four and 31. Seven of the fourteen participants (50%) who immigrated to the US arrived when they were under the age of twenty. These fourteen participants immigrated between 1950 and 2001. Seven of the fourteen immigrants (50%) arrived in the US before 1970. The participants speak a variety of different dialects. Thirteen of the 21 participants (61.9%) speak Sicilian, three participants (14.3%) speak Neapolitan, three participants (14.3%) speak Barese, one participant (4.8%) speaks Calabrese, and one participant (4.8%) speaks Venetian. All of the participants who were born in the US have parents who immigrated to the US from southern Italy. Out of the participants who are immigrants, only one (4.8%) is from northern Italy, while the remaining thirteen (61.9%) are from southern Italy. Thirteen of the participants (61.9%) are Sicilian, three of the participants (14.3%) are Neapolitan, three of the participants (14.3%) are Barese, one of the participants (4.8%) is Calabrese, and one of the participants (4.8%) is Venetian.

5.0 Results

In this section I will present the results of the questionnaire. I will discuss the participants' responses from each individual section as well as their responses to related questions found in different sections. I will present the data from Sections 1-3 of the questionnaire, then I will present the data collected from related questions between sections, and then I will present the data from Sections 4 and 5.

5.1 Results of Section 1

Out of the 21 participants who took part in this study, the answers of eighteen participants are eligible for analysis in Section 1. The answers of three participants will not be considered in the analysis of this section because the participants did not record their responses according to the instructions. Participants were asked to rank both how polite the speaker's language choice was in addition to whether they considered this choice to be strange or normal. Three participants did not complete both parts of each question, and they did not consistently answer the same part of each question. The responses of the remaining eighteen participants have been recorded in Figure 10 below. The number in each cell indicates the number of participants who selected a particular politeness rating in the situation specified in the column to the left. This number is followed by the percentage of the total eighteen participants (rounded to the nearest tenth) who selected each particular ranking.

Fig. 10

Situation Number	Politeness Rating				
	1 (polite)	2	3 (neither)	4	5 (rude)
#1	2 (11.1%)	2 (11.1%)	10 (55.6%)	1 (5.6%)	3 (16.7%)
#2	2 (11.1%)	4 (22.2%)	11 (61.1%)	1 (5.6%)	0 (0%)
#3	12 (66.7%)	1 (5.6%)	5 (27.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
#4	3 (16.7%)	5 (27.8%)	7 (38.9%)	1 (5.6%)	2 (11.1%)
#5	7 (38.9%)	3 (16.7%)	7 (38.9%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.6%)

As seen in Figure 10, the participants did not give each situation an identical politeness ranking. Rankings of “1” or “2” are considered to be polite, a ranking of “3” is considered neither polite nor rude, and rankings of “4” and “5” are considered rude. Four participants (22.2%) considered the speaker in Situation #1 to be polite, six participants (33.3%) considered the speaker in Situation #2 to be polite, thirteen participants (72.2%) considered the speaker in Situation #3 to be polite, eight participants (44.4%) considered the speaker in Situation #4 to be polite, and ten participants (55.6%) considered the speaker in Situation #5 to be polite. In contrast, four participants (22.2%) considered the speaker in Situation #1 to be rude, one participant (5.6%) considered the speaker in Situation #2 to be rude, none of the participants (0%) considered the speaker in Situation #3 to be rude, three participants (16.7%) considered the speaker in Situation #4 to be rude, and one participant (5.6%) considered the speaker in Situation #5 to be rude. A minimum of seven participants (38.9%) ranked the speaker in each situation as either polite or

rude, and more than half of the participants (at least 61.2%) ranked the speaker in Situation #3, #4, and #5 as either polite or rude.

The same participants also did not consider the speaker's language choice to have no effect on politeness in each situation. Between five and ten participants (27.8-55.6%) per situation did not consider language choice to have an effect on politeness. Ten participants (55.6%) considered the speaker in situation #1 to be neither polite nor rude, eleven participants (61.1%) considered the speaker in Situation #2 to be neither polite nor rude, five participants (27.8%) considered the speaker in Situation #3 to be neither polite nor rude, seven participants (38.9%) considered the speaker in Situation #4 to be neither polite nor rude, and seven participants (38.9%) considered the speaker in Situation #5 to be neither polite nor rude.

Few participants considered language choice to convey impoliteness. No more than four participants per situation (22.2%) considered language choice to be rude, while between four and thirteen participants (22.2-72.2%) per situation considered language choice to convey politeness. In Situation #1, the same number of participants who considered the speaker to be polite considered the speaker to be rude (approximately 22%). In Situation #2, five more participants considered the speaker to be polite than rude. In Situation #3, thirteen participants (72.2%) considered the speaker to be polite while none considered the speaker to be rude. More participants considered this speaker to be polite than in any of the other situations. This is the only situation in which none of the participants considered the speaker to be rude. In Situation #4, five more participants considered the speaker to be polite than rude. Finally, in Situation #5, nine more participants considered the speaker's choice to be polite than rude.

In addition to ranking the politeness of the speaker’s code choice, the participants were also asked to state whether the speaker’s language choice was expected in each situation in Section 1 by ranking each speaker’s language choice as either “strange” or “normal.” The number in each cell in Figure 11 below indicates the number of participants who chose “strange” or “normal” for each situation. This number is followed by the percentage of the total number of participants who chose this rating (percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth).

Fig. 11

Situation Number	Expectedness Ranking	
	Strange	Normal
#1	7 (38.9%)	11 (61.1%)
#2	13 (72.2%)	5 (27.8%)
#3	1 (5.6%)	17 (94.4%)
#4	6 (33.3%)	12 (66.7%)
#5	3 (16.7%)	15 (83.3%)

The majority of the participants (61.1-94.4%) considered the speaker’s language choice in Situations #1, #3, #4, and #5 to be normal. Eleven of the eighteen participants (61.1%) ranked the language choice in Situation #1 as normal, seventeen participants (94.4%) considered the speaker’s language choice in Situation #3 to be normal, twelve participants (66.7%) ranked the speaker’s language choice in Situation #4 as normal, and fifteen participants (83.3%) ranked the speaker’s language choice in Situation #5 as normal. In contrast, the majority of the participants (72.2%) considered the speaker’s language choice in Situation #2 to be strange. Thirteen

participants (72.2%) ranked the speaker’s language choice in this situation to be strange, while only five participants (27.8%) considered this language choice to be normal.

From this data, it can also be seen that more participants thought it was strange for a friend with whom they normally speak dialect to speak to them in Italian than for a well-dressed stranger to speak dialect. The number of participants who considered each of these speakers’ language choices to be normal is shown in Figure 12 below. This number is followed by the percent of the total number of participants who chose this response (percents are rounded to the nearest tenth).

Fig. 12

	Stranger chooses dialect (Situation #1)	Stranger chooses dialect (Situation #4)	Friend chooses Italian (Situation #2)
number of participants who chose “normal”	11 (61.1%)	12 (66.7%)	5 (27.8%)

Eleven out of the eighteen participants (61.1%) considered the stranger’s language choice in Situation #1 to be normal, and twelve of the eighteen participants (66.7%) considered the stranger’s language choice in Situation #4 to be normal. In contrast, only five participants (27.8%) considered the friend’s choice in Situation #2 to be normal while thirteen of the eighteen participants (72.2%) considered the friend’s choice to be strange.

The data also shows that when the speakers’ language choice was ranked by the participants as polite, the language choice was also ranked by the participants as normal. Figure 13 compares the number of responses for the different combinations of politeness rankings and expectedness rankings (“normal” or “strange”). The column entitled “Number of responses”

indicates the total number of times the indicated combination of ratings was selected, and the column entitled “Percent of total politeness ratings” indicates the percentage of the total 41 politeness ratings represented by the number.

Fig. 13

	Number of responses	Percent of total politeness ratings
Language choice is normal and polite	33	80.5%
Language choice is strange and polite	6	14.6%

Out of the 41 polite ratings, 33 of these also marked the speaker’s choice as normal which is about 80.5% of the total politeness ratings. In contrast, only six of the 41 politeness ratings marked the speaker’s choice as strange which is about 14.6% of the total politeness ratings. It is also interesting to note that the speaker’s language choice in Section 1 was ranked as rude nine times. All nine of these rankings (100%) were considered to be strange.

When the speaker had the same relationship to the participants in more than one situation in Section 1, the responses were consistent in the politeness ranking but varied in the expectedness ranking (whether the language choice was considered normal or strange). Between Situation #2 and #5, in which the speaker is a friend, the politeness rankings were consistent for a number of participants even though the friend’s language choice was different in each situation; however the expectedness of the language choice for these participants in each situation was different. This is shown in Figure 14 below. Each number indicates the number of participants who chose a particular response for the indicated situation. Each number is followed by the

percent of the total number of participants who chose that response (percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth).

Fig. 14

	Polite	Neither Polite nor Rude	Rude
Situation #2	6 (33.3%)	11 (61.1%)	0 (0%)
Situation #5	10 (55.5%)	7 (38.9%)	1 (5.6%)

Five (83.3%) of the six participants who considered the speaker’s language choice in Situation #2 to be polite also considered the speaker’s language choice in Situation #5 to be polite. Six (85.7%) of the seven participants who considered the language choice to be neither polite nor rude in Situation #5 also considered the language choice in Situation #2 to be neither polite nor rude. Four (57.1%) of these seven participants considered the language choice to be neither polite nor rude in Situation #2 but to convey politeness in Situation #5. In contrast, only one participant (16.7%) considered language choice to be neither polite nor rude in Situation #5 but to convey politeness in Situation #2. Twelve (92.3%) of the thirteen participants who considered the language choice in Situation #2 to be strange considered the language choice in Situation #5 to be normal.

Several participants also chose the same politeness and expectancy rankings between Situation #1 and #4, in which the speaker, who is a well dressed stranger, chooses dialect. The results for these two situations are seen in Figure 15 below. Each number indicates the number of participants who chose a particular response for the indicated situation. Each number is

followed by the percent of the total number of participants who chose that response (percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth).

Fig. 15

	Polite	Neither Polite nor Rude	Rude
Situation #1	4 (22.2%)	10 (55.6%)	4 (22.2%)
Situation #4	8 (44.4%)	7 (38.9%)	3 (16.7%)

Three of the four participants (75%) who considered the speaker in Situation #1 to be rude also considered the stranger in Situation #4 to be rude. The four participants who considered the speaker in Situation #1 to be polite, plus an additional three participants, considered the speaker in Situation #4 to be polite. These additional three participants considered the speaker's choice in Situation #1 to be neither polite nor rude (language choice had no effect on politeness in Situation #1). Ten of the eighteen participants (55.6%) considered the speaker's choice in both situations to be normal, and five of the eighteen participants (27.8%) considered the speaker's choice in both situations to be strange. Only four participants considered the context to affect how normal the speaker's choice was in these two situations.

5.2 Results of Section 2

In Section 2 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate if dialect or Italian was more effective in causing them to interpret the speaker's utterance in a particular way. The responses of all 21 participants who completed the questionnaire will be included in the analysis for this section. In Situation #1(a) in Section 2, participants were asked if the speaker's choice of

Italian versus dialect to make a request would cause them feel be more put-off by the request. In Situation #1(b), participants were asked if the speaker’s choice of Italian versus dialect would cause them to be more willing to help. The results are shown in Figure 16 below. The number in each cell indicates the number of participants who selected the indicated response. Each number is followed by the percentage of the total participants represented by the number (percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth).

Fig. 16

Situation Number	Number of participants
#1a (put-off by Italian)	12 (57.1%)
(put-off by dialect)	6 (28.6%)
(no effect)	3 (14.3%)
#1b (more willing if Italian is chosen)	8 (38.1%)
(more willing if dialect is chosen)	10 (47.6%)
(no effect)	3 (14.3%)

As seen in Figure 16, only three of the 21 participants (14.3%) did not consider the speaker’s language choice to have an effect on how willing they would be to comply with the speaker’s request in Situation #1(a). The same three participants stated that language choice had no effect in Situation #1(b). More participants stated that they would be more willing to help if the speaker used dialect than if the speaker used Italian; however, nearly the same number of participants would be more willing to help if Italian were chosen (38.1% of the participants selected Italian and 47.6% selected dialect). This is nearly a mirror image of the responses for

Situation #1(a), in which twelve participants (57.1%) would be more put-off if the speaker chose Italian (in comparison to the ten participants who were more willing to help if dialect was chosen) while six participants would feel more put-off if the speaker chose dialect (in comparison to the eight participants who were more willing to help if Italian was chosen). The answers of all but two of the participants were consistent between Situation #1(a) and (b); those that were put-off by dialect in (a) were more willing to help if Italian was chosen in (b), and those that were put-off by Italian in (a) were more willing to help if dialect was chosen in (b). The two participants who were not consistent selected Italian in both (a) and (b). This may have been an error on the part of these two participants, or the two participants may have believed that code choice does not matter in this situation.

The responses for Situation #2 are shown in Figure 17 below. The participants were asked to indicate whether Italian or dialect would be more effective at expressing the speaker's annoyance. The number in each cell indicates the number of participants who selected the indicated response. Following this number is the percentage of the total participants represented by this number.

Fig. 17

	Most Effective Code for Expressing Annoyance		
Situation	Italian	Dialect	no effect
#2	7 (33.3%)	12 (57.1%)	2 (9.5%)

As seen in Figure 17, only two of the 21 participants (9.5%) considered the speaker’s language choice in Situation #2 to have no effect in communicating the speaker’s annoyance. These two participants also believed language choice had no effect in Situation #1. The majority of the remaining participants considered dialect to be more effective at communicating the speaker’s annoyance. Twelve respondents (57.1%) considered dialect to be more effective at communicating annoyance, while seven (33.3%) considered Italian to be more effective at communicating annoyance.

The responses for Situation #3 are recorded in Figure 18 below. In this situation, participants were asked if the language sequence of Italian followed by dialect versus dialect followed by Italian was more effective in communicating the urgency of a request. The number in each cell indicates the number of participants who selected each response. Following this number is the percentage of the total participants represented by the number (percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth).

Fig. 18

	Most Effective Code Sequence for Expressing the Urgency of a Request		
Situation	Italian then dialect	dialect then Italian	no difference
#3	9 (42.9%)	10 (47.6%)	2 (9.5%)

As seen in Figure 18, only two of the 21 participants (9.5%) considered the direction of the code switch to have no effect in expressing the urgency of a request. These two participants also believed code choice had no effect in Situation #1. However, the participants were divided as to which direction of code choice would portray urgency more strongly. Nine participants (42.9%)

considered Italian followed by dialect to communicate greater urgency, and ten participants (47.6%) considered dialect followed by Italian to communicate greater urgency.

5.3 Results of Section 3

In this section, participants were asked whether they would choose Italian, dialect, or a mix of Italian and dialect with each of the addressees listed in every situation. Out of the 21 participants who completed the questionnaire, the responses of nineteen are eligible to be used in the analysis for this section. The responses of one participant will not be included in the analysis because they were not marked according to the instructions. The responses of a second participant also will not be included in the analysis because this participant's knowledge of dialect is passive; therefore the choices "dialect" and "mix of Italian and dialect" would not be options for this participant.

There was a general consensus in the responses for which language choice the participants would select for almost each of the listed addressees in this Section 3. A majority of the respondents would choose dialect with family and friends and Italian with strangers or people with whom they have a more formal relationship in each situation, as illustrated in Figure 19 below.

Fig. 19

General Responses	
Addressee	Preferred Language
family	Dialect
friends	Dialect
strangers	Italian

A more detailed illustration of the number of participants who preferred to use a particular language with a given addressee regardless of the situation is given in Figure 20 below. The number in the column entitled “# of Participants” indicates the number of participants who selected the indicated code with the indicated addressee. Each number is followed by the percentage of the total number of participants who completed this section represented by the number (percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth).

Fig. 20

Number of Respondents who Chose the Same Code with a Given Addressee Regardless of the Situation		
Addressee	# of Respondents	code choice
unspecified person & a colleague the respondent does not get along with	10 (52.6%)	Italian
strangers	16 (84.2%)	Italian
family	11 (57.9%)	dialect
friends	9 (42.9%)	dialect
colleague the respondent does not know well	16 (84.2%)	Italian
manager	13 (68.4%)	Italian

As summarized in Figure 20, a number of participants would choose the same code with a given addressee regardless of the situation. Ten of the nineteen participants (52.6%) would choose to use Italian with a person they do not get along with regardless of the situation. In contrast, two

participants (10.5%) would choose dialect and one participant (5.3%) would mix Italian and dialect with this addressee in regardless situation. Only three participants (15.8%) would choose a different code with this addressee depending on the situation. Although these three participants varied in their code choice, each chose the same code in the each situation with someone they do not get along with except in Situation #8, in which they have to borrow money from the addressee.

When the addressee was a stranger, sixteen of the nineteen participants (84.2%) would choose Italian regardless of the situation. Of the remaining three participants, two (10.5%) would code mix and one (5.3%) would choose dialect with a stranger in each of the situations. None of the participants would vary which language they chose with a stranger depending on the situation; each individual chose the same code with a stranger in every situation.

When the addressee was a family member (excluding non-sibling children), eleven of the nineteen participants (57.9%) would choose dialect regardless of the situation. Of the remaining eight participants, one (5.3%) would speak Italian with family members in each of the situations. This participant chose Italian with every addressee in each situation in Section 3 of the questionnaire. The remaining seven participants (36.8%) would choose a particular code with family members depending on the situation; however there was no pattern as to which code these participants chose for a given situation.

When the addressee was a friend, nine participants (47.4%) would choose dialect regardless of the situation. Of the remaining participants only one (5.3%) would choose Italian with friends regardless of the situation. This participant chose Italian with every addressee in each situation in Section 3 of the questionnaire. Nine of the participants (47.4%) would choose a

particular code depending on the situation; however there was no pattern as to which code these participants chose for a given situation.

The responses were similar when the addressee was the participants' manager or a colleague they do not know well. Sixteen participants (84.2%) would choose Italian with a colleague they do not know well regardless of the situation. Two of the remaining participants (10.5%) would code mix with this colleague regardless of the situation. Only one participant (5.3%) would vary his language choice depending on the situation. He chose to mix Italian and dialect instead of using only Italian in Situation #1, in which he spills his salad on the host and on the floor. None of the participants would choose dialect with a colleague s/he does not know well. Thirteen of the participants (68.4%) would choose Italian with their manager regardless of the situation. Twelve of these thirteen participants also chose Italian with a colleague they do not know well regardless of the situation. One participant (5.3%) would choose dialect with his manager regardless of the situation, and one (5.3%) would code mix with his manager regardless of the situation. Five participants (23.8%) would vary their code choice with their manager depending on the situation. Three of these five participants chose a different code in Situation #5, in which they need to confront their manager whose fish lunch makes the office smell everyday. Of the remaining two participants, one chose a different code in Situation #1, in which he spills salad, and one chose a different code in Situation #4, in which the participant would like her manager to close the window.

Finally, several additional generalizations were noted from the results. A maximum of six of the nineteen participants (31.6%) chose to mix Italian and dialect per situation, which shows that a majority of the participants would choose not to mix languages in most circumstances. There were also several situations in which nearly all of the participants selected

the same code. In Situation #2, in which the participant must give his/her opinion to someone about his/her outfit which the participant believes is inappropriate for a formal event, seventeen of the nineteen participants (89.5%) would choose Italian with a colleague they do not know well while the remaining two would code mix. In Situation #3, in which the participant must give a warning, eighteen of the nineteen participants (94.7%) would choose Italian with a well-dressed stranger while one would code mix. In the same situation, eighteen of the nineteen participants (94.7%) would choose Italian with a colleague they do not know well, and one would code mix. It should be noted that the speakers who chose to code mix with these two addressees were not the same. In Situation #4, in which someone makes the office smell by heating fish in the microwave everyday, seventeen of the nineteen participants (89.5%) chose dialect with a sibling while one would code mix and one would choose Italian. In Situation #7, in which someone is playing loud music preventing the participant from concentrating, seventeen of the nineteen participants (89.5%) would choose Italian with a stranger while one would code mix and one would use dialect. Finally, in Situation #8, in which the participant must borrow money for a ticket to get home, all nineteen of the participants (100%) would choose Italian with a stranger.

5.4 Connection Between Sections

Section 1 #1, #4 and Section 3 # 1(e), 2(e), 3(b), 5(d), 7(a), 8(e) involve speakers who are either addressing strangers or someone they do not know well. In Section 1 #1, a well dressed stranger asks for directions using dialect, and in Section 1 #4, a well-dressed stranger orders a meal in a restaurant using dialect. In Section 3 #1(e), the participant spills salad on the lap and the floor of a colleague s/he does not know well. In Situation #2(e), the participant must express his/her opinion to a colleague s/he does not know well about an outfit s/he is wearing that is inappropriate for a formal event. In Situation #3(b), the participant must warn a well-

dressed stranger. In Situation #5(d), the participant must confront a colleague s/he does not know well who makes the office smell by heating fish in the microwave everyday. In Situation #7(a), the participant must confront a stranger who is playing loud music, preventing the participant from concentrating. Finally, in Situation #8(e), the participant must borrow money from a stranger to buy a ticket to get home.

The responses of seventeen participants are eligible for analysis between these sections. The responses of four participants will not be included because they did not complete one of these sections correctly. None of the participants who considered the dialect-speaking stranger in Section 1 to be polite would choose to speak dialect with a stranger or someone s/he does not know well in Section 3. Only one participant would choose dialect with a stranger in any of the situations in Section 3, and this participant considered the dialect-speaking stranger in Section 1 to be neither polite nor rude. All of the participants who would use dialect or who would code mix when addressing a stranger in Section 3 considered the dialect-speaking stranger in Section 1 to be polite or neither polite nor rude. Out of the four participants who considered the dialect-speaking stranger in Section 1 #1 to be polite, two would code mix and two would use Italian in Section 3. Out of the seven speakers who considered the dialect-speaking stranger in Section 1 #4 to be polite, three would code mix and four would use Italian with a stranger in Section 3. Out of the seven participants who considered Section 1 #4 to be neither polite nor rude and the nine participants who considered Section 1 #1 to be neither polite nor rude, all but two would use Italian with strangers in Section 3.

Section 1 #5 and Section 3 #1(a), 2(a), 3(a), 4(d), 5(c), 6(a), 7(c), 8(a), and 8(b) involve speakers and addressees who are friends with the participants. In Section 1 #5, the participant is a waiter, and his/her friend places his order in dialect. In Section 3 #1(a), the participant spills

salad on the lap and the floor of a close friend. In Situation #2(a), the participant must express his/her opinion to a close friend about an outfit s/he is wearing that is inappropriate for a formal event. In Situation #3(a), the participant must warn a close friend. In Situation #4(d), the participant wants a close friend to close the window. In Situation #5(c), the participant must confront a colleague s/he is friends with who makes the office smell by heating fish in the microwave everyday. In Situation #7(c), the participant must confront a friend who is playing loud music, preventing the participant from concentrating. Finally, in Situation #8(a,b), the participant must borrow money from a close friend and a close friend s/he has not yet repaid to buy a ticket to get home.

The responses of seventeen of the 21 participants are eligible for analysis between these sections. The responses of four participants will be excluded because they did not complete one of the sections correctly. In Sect. 1 #5, ten of the seventeen participants considered the friend's choice of dialect to be polite. Nine of these ten participants (90%) would choose to use dialect with a friend in Section 3 in each situation⁵. Similarly, Section 1 #2 also involves a speaker who is a friend of the participant. However, this speaker is a friend with whom the participant normally speaks dialect, and in this situation, s/he uses Italian for the first time to ask a favor. Only six of the seventeen participants (35.3%) considered the speaker to be polite, and only two of these six participants would use Italian with a friend in any of the situations in Section 3.

5.5 Results of Section 4

In this section, participants were presented with three of the same situations found in Section 3 followed by two of the listed addressees. Participants were asked to write the words

⁵ However one of these speakers chose to mix Italian and dialect with the addressee in Section 3 #8b, in which the speaker owed the addressee money and needed to borrow more.

they would actually say to these addressees in the situations. The responses of eighteen of the 21 participants will be analyzed because three participants did not complete the section. The responses of eleven of the eighteen participants (61.1%) were written using the same code that they chose for the corresponding situation in Section 3. Four of the participants (22.2%) wrote only in Italian in Section 4 but chose dialect or a mix of Italian and dialect for the same situations in Section 3. Three of the participants who chose Italian or dialect in Section 4 depending on the context chose different codes for at least one of those situations in Section 3. Eleven of the participants (61.1%) between Section 3 and Section 4 were consistent, while only seven of the participants (38.9%) were inconsistent.

5.6 Results of Section 5

In Section 5, participants were asked to write comments related to the use of Italian and dialect. Twelve participants commented on their use of Italian and dialect; however these comments did not necessarily reflect their actual language use as indicated by their responses to the situations in the previous sections of the questionnaire. One participant commented, “It would be more appropriate to speak Italian with everyone because today in Italy, the majority speaks the Italian language” (translation by ER). However, this participant does not actually practice this. It would be expected that this participant would have selected Italian in most of the situations in Section 3; however this was not the case. This participant chose Italian, dialect, and a mix of Italian and dialect in Section 3 without selecting any of these codes in a majority of the situations.

For some participants, using dialect was considered acceptable. One participant commented that he would speak dialect with those who have little or no formal education to

make it easier for them to understand, while he would speak Italian with those who have a formal education. It would be expected that this speaker also would have chosen Italian in a majority of the situations in Section 3; however, this was not the case. This participant chose Italian, dialect, and a mix of Italian and dialect in Section 3 without showing a preference for any one code. Two participants considered the use of dialects to be acceptable as long as all of the interlocutors understand the particular dialect being spoken. This was consistent with their responses to Section 3 in which they selected a mix of language choices.

Some participants believed their upbringing affected their language use. One participant commented that she was not allowed to speak dialect as a child because her father thought it was inappropriate for young girls to speak a dialect; however she spoke it anyway with her sister and with her friends. This may be reflective of her responses in Section 3. She did select Italian, dialect, and a mix of Italian and dialect; however, this participant only chose dialect six times, while other participants selected dialect up to 33 times throughout the section. Three participants commented that they use dialect only at home and Italian outside of the home; however these participants selected dialect in Section 3 in situations that were clearly stated as taking place outside of the home. Another participant included a list of rules that he follows in deciding which language to choose. These rules are shown in Figure 21 below.

Fig. 21

- When approaching or speaking to a stranger or customer, Italian is used until or if the customer uses dialect. Then reply in kind.
- Dialect is used in the family unless one is in parental trouble: then – whatever works.
- Speaking to grandchildren (until they reach their teens) and receiving gifts – Italian.
- Outside the house:
 - Formal: teachers, manager, in businesses – Italian
 - Among friends: mostly dialect
 - In trouble or asking a favor – Italian depending on the type of favor. For a big favor use Italian, for a small favor use dialect.

It is difficult to determine how closely this participant adheres to these rules from the questionnaire because the contexts in some of the situations in the questionnaire were not specified. However, this participant does follow these rules in Section 3 #8(a,b) because he chooses to code mix with his friend to borrow money (which is considered a smaller favor) but uses only Italian with a friend who he already owes money (which is considered a larger favor) . He also chose Italian with his manager, with strangers, and with colleagues he does not know well in each situation in Section 3. In addition, in Section 2 #1, this participant stated that he would be more put-off if the colleague asked for him to cover for him at work while he was away in dialect instead of in Italian, which is consistent with using Italian to ask for a big favor.

Finally, some participants commented on their attitude toward dialects. Three participants expressed positive attitudes towards the general use of dialects. One believes that dialects should be considered separate languages. According to this participant, the only reason dialects are not considered languages is because there are no standards for writing dialects. The second participant comments that dialects are part of one's Italian heritage and they should be maintained to preserve their culture. The third participant commented, "Italians should be proud of their dialect...when I speak Sicilian with people, especially when I'm abroad, I feel right at home."

6.0 Discussion

In this section I will analyze the results from the questionnaire using Brown & Levinson's (1987) and Watts' (2003) models of politeness to show that language choice is used by bilingual speakers as a politeness strategy. These models also are useful in explaining how speakers use language choice to convey politeness and how hearers may interpret the speakers' language choice. In Section 5.1, I will discuss how the results from the questionnaire imply that language choice can convey politeness. In Section 5.2, I will apply Brown & Levinson's model to the data collected from Sections 3 and 5 of the questionnaire, which focus on the speakers' intentions. Finally, in Section 5.3, I will discuss how Watts' model accounts for variation in the participants' use of language choice to accomplish their speech goals. Watts' model also is useful in explaining variation in how the participants not interpreted the speaker's code choice.

6.1 Language Choice to Convey Politeness

The participants' responses to the situations in the questionnaire indicate that choosing a particular code may be interpreted as polite. In Section 1, participants were asked to rank whether the speaker's code choice in each situation was polite, rude, or neither polite nor rude. Between seven and thirteen of the eighteen participants (38.9-72.2%) who correctly completed Section 1 considered the speaker's language choice to convey politeness or rudeness in each situation. If language choice had no effect on politeness, it would be expected that a majority of the participants would have chosen "neither polite nor rude" for each situation; however, this was not the case. Only four of the eighteen participants (22.2%) did not consider language choice to convey politeness in any of the situations.

The responses to Section 3 also support the idea that language choice conveys politeness. In this section, participants were asked to select if they would use Italian, dialect, or a mix of Italian and dialect with the addressees listed in each situation. Eighteen of the nineteen participants (94.7%) who completed this section chose a different code at least once with the addressees listed within a single situation. If language choice did not convey politeness, it would be expected that a majority of the participants would not have varied their language choice depending on the addressee since it was stated in the questionnaire's instructions that each addressee spoke both Italian as well the participant's dialect. Instead, only one of the nineteen participants (5.3%) did not vary her code choice with the addressees listed within any of the situations.

Finally, the participants' comments in Section 5 also indicate that language choice is a way of communicating politeness. Several participants commented that dialects are spoken only at home and Italian is spoken outside of the home. Although these participants do not actually practice this, their perceptions of when a particular language is used indicate that there are contexts in which it is considered to be more appropriate to speak a particular language. The idea that language choice can convey politeness is also indicated by the participant who provided a list of rules to be followed to determine which language is the most appropriate in particular contexts with certain addressees. If language choice did not convey politeness, there would be no distinction as to when or where it is considered the most acceptable for an individual to choose a particular language.

6.2 Language Choice and Brown & Levinson's (1987) Model

Brown & Levinson's (1987) model illustrates how language choice may be used by a speaker to convey politeness in terms of maintaining the positive and negative face wants of the interlocutors. Although the notion of positive and negative face may not be representative of collectivist societies, it reflects the communication goals of interlocutors in western societies, such as Italy, and will be used here to analyze the choices of the participants who take the role of speakers in the situations described in the questionnaire.

Particularly relevant to this study is Brown & Levinson's fourth positive politeness strategy, *Use in-group identity markers*, which includes the use of an "in-group" code instead of an "out-group" code. These language classifications are nearly equivalent to Gumperz's (1982) distinction between the "they code," the majority language of the speech community which conveys social distance, and the "we-code," the minority language of the community which communicates solidarity. In Italy, the "out-group" or "they" code corresponds to Italian, the standard language of Italy. Italian is considered to be the language of prestige, has a strong literary background, and is understood by a majority of the population. In contrast, the "in-group" or "we" code corresponds to the dialects, which are considered inferior to Italian and are minority languages. Because the dialects are not mutually intelligible, each dialect is understood by a small percentage of the population, and dialects lack the literary tradition of Italian. However, Italian did not become the official language until 1861 and was not widely spoken across the nation until the beginning of the 21st century. Since Italy was not a nation until 1861 and most of the population had not been exposed to Italian, the dialects, not Italian, are considered to represent Italians' history.

Because dialects are distinct from Italian, are not mutually intelligible, and vary between each community, they function as “in-group” codes because speaking in one’s own dialect excludes those who do not have roots in that community. In contrast, although Italian does not represent the culture and heritage of most Italians, it is currently spoken and understood by a majority of Italians in all areas of Italy. Because of Italian’s status as a standard language understood by a majority of Italians, it functions as the “out-group” code for those speakers who are bilingual in Italian and one or more dialects. As a result, dialects are spoken predominantly in familiar situations and are used to convey solidarity, while Italian may be used in more formal situations to show respect and to convey social distance. However, since not all Italians speak a dialect or understand dialects besides those spoken in their local community, Italian may also be used in familiar situations to convey solidarity.

Brown & Levinson’s notion of politeness addresses the process a speaker may use to convey politeness and maintain the face of the interlocutors; however their model does not address how the hearer may interpret the speaker’s utterance. For this reason, Sections 1 and 2 of the questionnaire will not be discussed according to Brown & Levinson’s model because these two sections were designed to focus on the hearer’s interpretation and not on the intent of the speaker. Instead, Sections 3 and 5 focus on the speaker’s choices which may be explained by Brown & Levinson’s model. While Section 4 also was designed to focus on the speaker’s intent, the situations in this section are replicas of those found in Section 3 in order to check for consistency between the two sections. Because the situations in Section 4 were identical to the situations in Section 3, Section 4 will not be discussed below.

6.2.1 Language Choice with each Addressee

In Section 3, the participants were asked to select which language they would choose with each of the addressees listed for each situation. Some generalizations were noted in the participants' language choice with particular addressees which were consistent throughout all of the situations in Section 3. These addressees include strangers, colleagues the participants did not know well, managers, someone the participants do not get along with, family, and friends. The participants' choices with each of the above addressees will be discussed below.

When the addressee was a stranger, sixteen of the nineteen participants (84.2%) chose Italian regardless of the situation. For these participants, social distance between the interlocutors was more important than the context in choosing a politeness strategy. Choosing Italian, the language of prestige, falls under Brown & Levinson's fifth negative politeness strategy, *Give deference*. Because Italian is the standard and is considered more prestigious than the dialects, this language can be used to convey respect. Italian can also convey social distance because it is the "out-group" or "they" code. Strangers are socially distant from the participants, therefore choosing Italian is usually the more appropriate choice with these hearers.

When the addressee was a colleague the participants did not know well, sixteen of the nineteen participants (84.2%) chose Italian regardless of the situation. Fourteen of these participants also chose Italian with strangers regardless of the situation. Like the stranger, the colleague not known well by the participants is also socially distant from the participants. Choosing Italian with this colleague shows deference to the hearer because it is the "out-group" code of prestige which communicates respect and conveys social distance. In this way, using the more prestigious code lowers the speaker's status with respect to the status of the hearer by

showing that they are not familiars or members of the same group. Lowering one's status preserves the hearer's power and freedom of action because s/he is not obligated to act on the speaker's request.

When the addressee was a manager, thirteen of the nineteen participants (68.4%) chose to use Italian regardless of the situation. Unlike the stranger or colleague that the participants did not know well, a manager is not necessarily distant from employees on a social level. Instead, the most important factor that contributes to the difference in status between a manager and employees is power. A manager has the power to fire, promote, or demote employees or to raise or lower the employees' wages. Because of the manager's power over the employee, these thirteen participants considered the imbalance of power to be more important than the context of the situation in choosing a code. As a result, they chose the "out-group" code with the manager in each situation. The participants' choice to use Italian with their manager is a strategy to raise his status while lowering their own status by using the code of prestige, thereby preserving his negative face wants of being unimpeded.

When the addressee was someone the participants did not get along with, ten of the nineteen participants (52.6%) chose Italian regardless of the situation. For these participants, the social distance between interlocutors is more important than the context of the situation. Choosing Italian, the "out-group" code, is a way of communicating the social distance that exists between them and the person they dislike. This may have the result of preserving the hearer's negative face by showing deference and avoiding impinging on their desire to be unimpeded. This may also have the result of threatening the hearer's negative face by making him/her feel excluded from the speaker's social group through the use of the "out-group" code. In this case, this would be an intentional FTA meant to convey the speaker's dislike for the hearer.

Unlike the addressees discussed above, with whom the participants chose Italian regardless of the situation, there are fewer addressees with whom the participants would choose dialect with instead of Italian regardless of the situation. However, eleven of the nineteen participants (57.9%) chose dialect with family (excluding non-sibling children) regardless of the situation. Only six participants (31.6%) would ever use Italian instead of dialect or code mixing with family. Nine participants (47.4%) chose dialect with friends regardless of the situation; however only one participant (5.3%) would use Italian with friends regardless of the situation. For the participants who chose dialect in each situation, social distance is more important than the context of the situation in choosing a language. Family and friends have little social distance between them, and choosing the “in-group” code is a way of showing positive politeness by conveying that they share common ground. This preserves the hearer’s positive face by making them feel included and accepted.

6.2.2 Participants’ Perceptions of Their Own Language Use

In Section 5 of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to share comments relevant to their own or others’ use of Italian and dialect. A number of participants commented on their own language use. Some of these participants’ comments can be accounted for by Brown & Levinson’s politeness model. While these participants’ comments do not necessarily reflect their answers to the other sections of the questionnaire, their perceptions are likely a reflection of the general language use that they have encountered in speech interactions.

One participant commented that speaking Italian with everyone is best because it is spoken by everyone. This participant is more concerned with avoiding threatening the hearer’s positive face than with conveying solidarity. Speaking in a language not known to the hearer

threatens his/her positive face because s/he is being excluded from the conversation. If the speaker wishes the hearer to understand the utterance, speaking in a language unknown to the hearer also violates Grice's maxim of manner which requires the speaker to be clear. To avoid committing an FTA (face threatening act) to the hearer's positive face and flouting the maxim of manner, this participant said one should use Italian, which is understood by the majority, instead of a dialect, which is generally understood only by those who live in a particular community.

Similarly, the participant who said he would speak dialect with those who have little education and Italian with those who have a formal education wishes to avoid threatening the hearer's positive face. Those with little formal education are less likely to have a high level of proficiency in Italian, and choosing Italian would exclude such hearers. In contrast, those with a formal education are not always proficient in a dialect, and speaking a dialect with them would threaten their positive face. Choosing dialect may also threaten their negative face in contexts which require the speaker to show deference. Using the inferior "in-group" code lowers the status of the hearer placing the speaker and hearer on the same social level, which restricts the hearer's power and freedom of action.

Finally, the participant who provided a list of rules to determine which language to use with certain participants in certain contexts also seems to be concerned with avoiding FTA's. These rules are meant to maintain the positive and negative face of different hearers in different contexts. The rules are listed in Figure 22 below.

Fig. 22

Rules for Choosing Italian or Dialect

1. When approaching or speaking to a stranger or customer, Italian is used until or if the customer uses dialect. Then reply in kind.
2. Dialect is used in the family unless one is in parental trouble: then – whatever works.
3. Speaking to grandchildren (until they reach their teens) and receiving gifts – Italian.
4. Outside the house:
 - a. Formal: teachers, manager, in businesses – Italian
 - b. Among friends: mostly dialect
 - c. In trouble or asking a favor – Italian depending on the type of favor. For a big favor use Italian, for a small favor use dialect.

In the first rule, choosing Italian with strangers or customers conveys the social distance between the interlocutors and shows deference. However, if the stranger or customer uses dialect, the speaker should also use dialect to avoid violating Grice's maxim of manner. Insisting on speaking in one language while the hearer insists on speaking in another is not considered by Grice to be a strategy which achieves clear and organized communication. Although code mixing may be an effective strategy to convey certain ideas with bilingual speakers, a refusal to use the preferred code of the addressees threatens the hearers' positive face by causing them to feel unaccepted or disapproved of. This may also threaten the hearers' negative face by impinging on their desire to be free to speak a particular language.

In the second rule, choosing dialect with family is a positive politeness strategy used to convey the common background and low degree of social distance between interlocutors. However, parents may use Italian to discipline their children to show their authority and put

distance between them and their children. This threatens the children's positive face by making them feel disapproved of. This is similar to the use of Italian in the third rule. Speaking to one's grandchildren in Italian is a way of maintaining one's own negative face and teaches children to show respect and deference toward elders. However, using Italian to receive gifts does not communicate disapproval, but respect by using the "out-group" code to convey deference to the gift giver. This is a way of lowering the speaker's status in relation to the addressee.

In the fourth rule, using Italian in formal public situations again conveys social distance and shows deference to the addressee. In contrast, using dialect with friends shows that the interlocutors share common ground and that there is little social distance between them. Dialect functions as the "in-group" code used to maintain the hearers' positive face by making them feel included. When asking for a small favor, dialect functions as an appeal to the addressee by conveying that the interlocutors share common ground and are equals. This is intended to compel the addressee to fulfill the request. In contrast, for a big favor, using Italian raises the status of the addressee and shows him/her deference which maintains his/her negative face and does not require him/her to fulfill the request.

6.3 Watts (2003) to Account for Variation in the Responses

Watts' (2003) model of politeness rejects much of Brown & Levinson's model; however some of Watts' ideas are relevant to this study. Watts proposes that the perception of what is polite varies for each individual because every individual has had different linguistic experiences. Individuals form a habitus from these experiences which is used by speakers to determine what is the most appropriate speech behavior in a given interaction. Because everyone has had different experiences, everyone's habitus will vary, and as a result, what is considered polite is

subjective. While this idea is problematic in that it suggests that there is no consensus within a society of what may be considered polite, it may be helpful in accounting for why some members of a society will interpret the same utterance differently. Watts also proposes that linguistic behavior is only eligible for interpretation as polite if it goes beyond what is expected in a given situation. While Watts does not provide evidence for this idea, it may be useful in accounting for why some participants did not consider code choice to have an effect on the conveyed level of politeness or on their interpretation of the utterance. Watts' model will be used in this section to discuss the variation in the participants' responses in the questionnaire.

6.3.1 Variation in Section 1

In each situation in Section 1, several participants considered the speakers' language choice to have no effect on politeness, and a majority of these participants considered language choice, regardless of what it is, to be normal. This is consistent with Watts' idea that in order for something to be eligible for interpretation as polite, the speaker must go beyond what is expected in the given situation. In Section 1, out of 90 politeness ratings, "neither polite nor rude" was selected 41 times (45.6% of the total ratings) for the speaker's language choice. Out of these 41 selections of "neither polite nor rude," 26 of these selections (63%) were also considered to be "normal" on a scale of expectancy. From this, it can be seen that a majority of the participants who considered language choice to have no effect on politeness also considered the speaker's language choice to be normal.

In addition, several participants considered language choice to convey politeness or rudeness in some situations, but not in others. The participants answered differently for each situation because each participant has his/her own habitus. For example, in Situation #1, the four

participants who considered the dialect-speaking stranger who asked for directions to be polite consider it not only acceptable, but respectful, to speak in dialect with those who understand the language regardless of social distance. This attitude may be a result of their experiences in past interactions in which the interlocutors' face wants were maintained by the use of dialect regardless of their social distance or of the context. In contrast, the four participants who consider this speaker to be rude consider social distance to be more important than having a shared language and wish to be shown the deference conveyed by choosing Italian. These four participants have likely had experiences in which a hearer considered the use of dialect to be an FTA against his/her face. Seven of the ten participants who consider this speaker's choice to have no effect on politeness considered the speaker's language choice to be normal, which would classify it as politic behavior. These seven participants have likely been in speech situations in which the interlocutors' face was not threatened by the use of dialect regardless of their social distance or of the context. Three of the ten participants who considered this speaker's choice to have no effect on politeness considered the speaker's language choice to be strange; however from their habitus, language choice in this situation is not enough to classify an utterance as polite or rude.

It should also be noted that in Situation #3, thirteen of the eighteen participants (72%) considered the speaker's choice to be polite, and all of these thirteen participants (100%) considered this choice to be normal. For the same situation, seventeen of the eighteen total participants (94%) also considered this choice to be normal, regardless of whether they considered language choice to have an effect on politeness. Since the majority of participants answered similarly, they share a habitus for this type of situation. This indicates that there may be some consensus across the Italian society that one should use Italian with customers in order

to convey politeness. In terms of Brown & Levinson, this functions to maintain the customer's negative face by showing deference. However, this indicates that contrary to Watts' belief that politeness can only be conveyed by going beyond what is expected in a given situation, making the expected language choice can convey politeness. All of the participants who considered this speaker's choice to be polite also considered this speaker's choice to be normal. If Watts' idea was correct, it would have been expected that a majority of the participants who considered the choice to be polite would have also considered the choice to be strange.

Further evidence that going beyond what is expected in a given situation is not necessarily a prerequisite for an utterance to be eligible as polite is seen in the ratings of the entire section as a whole. Although a majority of the participants who considered language choice in Section 1 to have no effect on politeness also considered the language choice to be normal, fifteen (36.6%) considered the language choice to be strange. This provides some evidence that the expectedness of language choice alone is not enough for a speaker to consider an utterance as polite behavior or as polite. Further evidence is found from the total ratings of the speaker's choice as "polite" from the section as a whole. Out of the 41 ratings of a speaker's choice as polite in Section 1, 33 of these (80.5%) were considered to be the normal choice. This shows that an utterance does not necessarily have to go beyond what is expected in a situation to be eligible for interpretation as polite by the hearer.

6.3.2 Variation in Section 2

In Section 2, the participants' responses seem to indicate that the speaker's code choice affects the interpretation of the utterance and plays a role in communicating the speaker's attitude; however, the participants were divided as to which code is more effective at conveying

a certain meaning. In Situation #1, twelve of the 21 participants (57%) would feel more put-off if a colleague asked them in Italian to cover for him at work. Only six participants (28.6%) would feel more put-off if dialect was chosen, and three participants (14.3%) felt that code choice had no effect. These three participants may have considered the code choice to be politic behavior because it was stated in the situation that the colleague normally speaks both Italian and dialect with them. As a result, these three participants may believe that choosing a particular code cannot convey politeness because it does not go beyond what is expected in the situation if it is expected that the speaker will use either code. However, for the remaining participants, a majority may consider the use of Italian to threaten their positive face because the speaker chose the “out-group” code. This would cause the hearers to feel disapproved of or socially unaccepted.

In Situation #2, twelve of the 21 participants (57%) considered dialect to be more effective at conveying annoyance, and seven (33%) considered Italian to be more effective at conveying annoyance directed toward the hearer. Two participants (9.5%) considered code choice to have no effect. Dialect may have been chosen by the majority because choosing the “in-group” code makes it clear that no deference is being shown to the hearer. Those that considered Italian to be more effective at conveying annoyance may have developed a different habitus based on their past discourse experiences in which speakers that were annoyed chose Italian more often than dialect. The two speakers who considered code choice to have no effect may not consider either code to go beyond what is expected in the situation based on their past experiences.

In Situation #3, the participants were divided as to which code sequence was more effective for expressing the urgency of a request. Nine of the 21 participants (42.9%) considered Italian followed by dialect to be more effective while ten (47.6%) considered dialect followed by

Italian to be more effective. Only two (9.5%) consider the order to have no effect. This shows that code sequence may be an effective strategy; however its use varies. Different speakers' variation of the direction of code switching may cause interlocutors to develop a different habitus of what is appropriate in a given situation depending on their experiences in past interactions. The nine participants who believed Italian followed by dialect was more effective may have interpreted the repeated request in dialect as an appeal to their positive face. The emphasis of their shared background would cause the hearer to be more likely to want to comply with the request to remain accepted as a member of the hearer's "in-group." The ten participants who believed dialect followed by Italian was more effective may consider the repeated request in Italian to be a show of deference as a negative face strategy. However, these participants may also interpret the use of Italian as a threat to their positive face because the speaker chose the "out-group" code. The participants may then understand that the request is so urgent that not complying with the request would jeopardize their membership in the hearer's "in-group." The two participants who did not consider the order of codes to have an effect may have developed a habitus based on past experiences in which speakers used both sequences to convey annoyance. As a result, these two participants would consider either sequence to be expected and equally effective at conveying a sense of urgency.

6.3.3 Variation in Section 3

In Section 3 of the questionnaire, some general trends were observed in the code the participants chose with certain addressees as discussed above. However, there was also some variation in how the participants responded to the situations. Some participants chose different codes with different addressees depending on the situation. In addition, some participants chose the same code with the same addressee regardless of the situation; however they did not choose

the same code as the majority of the participants who consistently chose the same code with a particular addressee. This variation may be accounted for by Watts' notion of every individual's development of a habitus, and the reasoning behind each participant's choices may be explained by Brown & Levinson's politeness strategies.

For those speakers who did not choose the same code in every situation with a particular addressee, the weight of the FTA was more important than the social distance between the interlocutors. Three participants chose to use a code other than in Italian with a stranger in one of the four situations which listed a stranger/colleague the participant does not know as an addressee. One of these three participants chose to code mix with a stranger in Situation 3b, in which something was blown over that looks like it will hit the person. In this situation, the use of Italian shows the social distance between the interlocutors while the use of dialect shows that the speaker has the addressee's best interests in mind. This participant may have had past experiences in which the speaker mixed codes in a warning and the hearer did not interpret this code choice to be an FTA. The remaining two participants chose a different code in Situation 7a, in which the stranger is playing loud music preventing the participant from concentrating. However, these two participants did not choose the same code; one chose dialect and one chose to mix Italian and dialect. The participant that chose to mix codes may have chosen to use some Italian to convey the social distance between them. The participant's use of dialect is intended to appeal to the addressee's positive face to show that they have common background which makes the stranger want to fulfill the speaker's desire. The participant who chose only dialect may have done so for one of two reasons; the participant either intended to appeal to the addressee's positive face showing that they have common background to make the stranger want to fulfill the

speaker's desire, or the participant wanted to threaten the stranger's face by lowering the stranger's status during the interaction, constraining his/her freedom of action.

Similarly, three participants chose to mix codes instead of using only Italian with a colleague they do not know well depending on the situation. One of these participants chose to code mix only in Situation 1e, in which the participant is eating dinner at someone's house, tries to cut a tomato, and spills salad on the host's lap and on the floor. Choosing Italian shows the social distance between the interlocutors. However adding dialect may be meant to appeal to the addressee's positive face by showing that they have a common background and that the addressee should forgive the speaker. This participant may have had previous experiences in which adding some dialect in an apology was considered acceptable to interlocutors who were socially distant. The other two participants also code mixed in this situation, as well as in Situation 2(e), in which they had to express their opinion to a colleague they do not know well that their clothes are inappropriate for a formal event. Italian again communicates the social distance between the interlocutors and may communicate deference to preserve the hearer's negative face; however, adding some dialect communicates that they have a common background and preserves the hearer's positive face by showing that the speaker still approves of him/her.

When the addressee was the participants' manager, one participant chose dialect in each situation, one participant chose to code mix in each situation, and five participants chose a code depending on the situation. The participant who chose dialect in each situation is a construction worker, and there may be less distance between him and his manager than there would be between managers and employees in other professions. As a result, this participant may have a different habitus for this situation than the participants who have other professions. If the

manager and the participant have an informal relationship, then the participant's choice of dialect may be a positive politeness strategy used to show that they share common ground and that there is little social distance between them. The low social distance is more important for this participant than an imbalance of power between he and his manager. The participant who chose to code mix in each situation may have done so to convey deference to the manager's power while appealing to his/her positive face by showing that they have common background. Of the five participants who chose a code depending on the situation, three of them chose a different code in Situation 5a with their manager than in the other situations; however the participants did not all select the same code. In this situation, the manager always brought fish for lunch making the whole office smell, and the participant had to say something about the smell. These participants may have developed a habitus in which using a different code than they would normally choose may be necessary to make a complaint to someone who may be socially distant and/or have more power than the speaker.

When the addressee was someone the participants did not get along with, two participants always chose dialect, one always chose to mix Italian and dialect, and five chose a code depending on the situation. The two participants who chose dialect may have developed a habitus based on previous experiences in which dialect was the most appropriate or effective code with similar addressees. Dialect may be chosen as an attempt to maintain the positive face of the hearer or to intentionally threaten the hearer's negative face. Because of the social distance between the interlocutors, Italian would normally be chosen to show deference to the addressee. However, in this case the participants do not get along with the addressee and have chosen to forgo this requirement by doing less than is required of the situation. This threatens the addressee's negative face by lowering his/her social status within the discourse. The

participant who chose to code mix uses Italian to acknowledge the social distance between the interlocutors but adds dialect to avoid showing deference to the hearer. For those that chose a code depending on the situation, one chose dialect in both Situation 5(e), in which the addressee's lunch of fish causes the office to smell, and 7(e), in which the addressee is playing loud music preventing the participant from concentrating, and code mixing in Situation 8(d), in which the participant needs to borrow money for a ticket to get home. Situation 8 is the only situation in which the participant needs to ask the addressee for a favor. The participant's use of Italian in this situation shows deference to the addressee while the use of dialect conveys the tension in their relationship. Like this participant, another participant uses dialect in both Situation 5(e) and Situation 7(e); however he uses Italian in Situation 8(d). This participant's need for help is more important than the relationship between the interlocutors and he chooses Italian to show deference to the addressee.

There was more variation in the responses of the participants when the addressee was a family member or a friend than in the responses for addressees who were socially more distant from the participant. Eleven (57.9%) of the nineteen participants would use dialect with family (except a non-sibling child) in every situation and nine (47%) of the nineteen participants would use dialect with friends in every situation. This indicates that when the interlocutors are familiars, many speakers consider the context of the situation more important than social distance when choosing a code. In situations in which the interlocutors have more distant relationships, maintaining the addressee's negative face is more important, and dialect does not show deference because it has inferior status, so Italian is chosen. However, because Italian is the standard language, it is also acceptable to speak Italian in informal contexts with familiars. This allows the speaker more freedom in choosing a code, which accounts for why there is more

variation with familiars. These participants may have developed a habitus based on past experiences in which using Italian with familiars did not threaten the interlocutors' positive face and was considered acceptable. Only one participant would choose Italian in every situation with family; however this participant chose Italian with each addressee in every situation in Section 3. There does not appear to be a pattern between the participants, the situation, and their choices for the eight participants who chose a code with family depending on the situation. Similarly, only one participant chose Italian with friends in each situation; however, this is the same participant mentioned above, who chose Italian with each addressee in every situation in Section 3. Again, there does not appear to be a pattern between the participants, the situation, and their choices for the ten participants who chose a code with friends depending on the situation. This indicates that there is a variation in the habitus of the participants which allows them to decide what is speech behavior is appropriate in different interactions. As a result, it may be concluded that different codes may be used to express both distance and solidarity as negative and positive politeness strategies when the participants are familiars. However when the participants are socially distant, Italian is usually considered to be more appropriate than dialect as a negative politeness strategy because dialects lack the prestige of standard Italian.

7.0 Conclusion

The results from the questionnaire support my hypothesis that Italian effectively conveys both positive politeness (solidarity) and negative politeness (deference) and that dialects can effectively convey positive politeness only. In general, Italian functions as the “out-group” or “they” code between bilingual speakers of Italian and the same dialect because it is more prestigious and is the standard language. In contrast, dialects generally function as the “in-group” or “we” code because they are considered inferior to Italian and are not mutually intelligible. However, there was variation in some participants’ responses, and this variation may be attributed to each individual’s different linguistic experiences.

This experiment was intended as a preliminary study to determine if and how code choice may be used to express politeness by bilingual speakers. To obtain more accurate results from research conducted through a questionnaire, the questionnaire should be distributed to a larger number of bilingual speakers, preferably those who live in Italy instead of in the US. In addition, situations found in different sections of the questionnaire should be more closely related to one another with respect to the interlocutors and the context described in each situation. This will allow comparisons to be made between sections of the questionnaire. However, the ideal method of obtaining data would be to observe and record naturally occurring conversation in Italy between bilingual speakers of Italian and an Italian dialect to obtain data that is most accurately reflective of language use in Italy.

Despite these shortcomings, the questionnaire used in this experiment provided valuable insights as to native speakers’ intuitions with respect to language use in Italy. The participants’ interpretations of a speaker’s code choice in certain contexts, as well as their perceptions of their

own language use, are a reflection of how Italian and dialect are used in naturally occurring conversation. From the patterns found in the results of this experiment, further hypotheses may be formed regarding the use of language choice as a politeness strategy, and these findings may serve as a foundation for the design of future study of Italian and dialect as a politeness strategy.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of five sections. The entire questionnaire will take 20-25 minutes to complete. Section 1 consists of five questions, Section 2 consists of three questions, Section 3 consists of eight questions, Section 4 consists of three questions, and Section 5 consists of one question.

Section 1

*This section consists of five situations which take place in an area in Italy where your dialect is spoken. Rate how polite you would consider the speaker in each situation **based only on his/her choice of dialect or Italian**. A ranking of **1** is very polite, **3** is neither polite nor rude, and **5** is rude. Also say if you would consider this person's language choice to be **strange** or **normal** by placing a check mark under the appropriate choice.*

1. A well-dressed stranger walks up to you and uses dialect to ask for directions.

Polite		Neither Polite nor Rude		Rude		Strange		Normal	
1	2	3	4	5		_____	_____		

2. You have known your best friend for over ten years and speak dialect with each other in all situations. Your friend has never spoken to you in Italian. For the first time, your friend uses Italian with you to ask you for a favor.

Polite		Neither Polite nor Rude		Rude		Strange		Normal	
1	2	3	4	5		_____	_____		

3. You are working in a bookstore and a customer uses Italian to ask for help reaching a book on a high shelf.

Polite		Neither Polite nor Rude		Rude		Strange		Normal	
1	2	3	4	5		_____	_____		

4. You are a waiter in a restaurant and a well-dressed stranger places his order in dialect.

Polite		Neither Polite nor Rude		Rude		Strange		Normal	
1	2	3	4	5		_____	_____		

5. You are a waiter in a restaurant and a friend with whom you normally speak dialect places his order in dialect.

Polite		Neither Polite nor Rude		Rude	Strange	Normal
1	2	3	4	5	_____	_____

Section 2

In this section you will be given three situations in which someone says something to you. Please say if choosing dialect or Italian would have an effect on your interpretation of the utterance by circling either “Italian” or “Dialect” after each question.

1. A colleague with whom you speak both Italian and dialect asks you to cover for him at work for a week while s/he is away.

A) Would you feel more put-off if this colleague asked using Italian or dialect?

Italian Dialect

B) Would you feel more willing to help if this colleague asked using Italian or dialect?

Italian Dialect

2. Your parent/spouse asked you for a favor, but you forgot to do it. Your parent/spouse expresses annoyance towards you. Would this person seem to be more irritated if s/he expressed his annoyance in Italian or dialect?

Italian Dialect

3. Your parent/spouse is holding a meeting with colleagues at your house, and making a good impression is very important. This person emphasizes that it would be best if you were not at home during the meeting. Would the urgency of this request be stronger:

A) if it was made in Italian and repeated in dialect

or

B) if it was made in dialect and repeated in Italian

Section 3

*In this section there are eight social situations. Each social situation is followed by a list of people you need to address. Imagine that each situation takes place in your hometown or where your dialect is spoken. The people you are addressing speak **both Italian and your dialect**. Circle the language you would choose to use with each person to react to the situation. Possible answers are “**Dialect**,” “**Italian**,” or a “**Mix of Italian & dialect**.”*

1. You are having dinner at someone’s house. You are cutting a cherry tomato in your salad, but your knife slips. The tomato lands on the host’s lap and some lettuce with dressing falls onto the wood floor. Which language would you choose if this person were:

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. a close friend: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |
| b. a parent: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |
| c. a sibling: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |
| d. your manager: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |
| e. a colleague that
you don’t know well: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |

2. Someone comes in wearing clothes s/he intends to wear to a formal event. The color looks terrible on the person and is too bright for the event. This person asks for your opinion. What language would you choose if this person were:

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. a close friend: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |
| b. your grandparent: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |
| c. you parent: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |
| d. a sibling: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |
| e. a colleague that
you don’t know well: | Italian | Dialect | Mix of Italian & Dialect |

3. You are walking home. There is a storm coming and it is very windy. You see a person nearby walking toward you. The wind blows something over that looks like it will hit the person from behind. What language would you choose if this person were:

a. a close friend:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
b. a well-dressed stranger:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
c. a colleague that you don't know well:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
d. a sibling:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
e. a parent:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect

4. You are standing in a room and the window is open. It is the middle of winter and you are freezing. You want the person standing by the window to close it. What language would you choose if this person were:

a. a parent:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
b. a sibling:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
c. a colleague:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
d. a close friend:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
e. your manager:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect

5. You are at work and someone at the office always brings fish for lunch and heats it in the office microwave. The whole office always smells like fish and you can't take it anymore. What language would you choose if this person were:

a. your manager:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
b. your secretary:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
c. a colleague that you are friends with:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
d. a colleague that you don't know:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
e. a colleague that you don't get along with:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect

6. Someone gives you a beautiful hand-carved shelf with intricate designs that s/he made himself. What language would you choose if this person were:

a. a friend:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
b. a sibling:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
c. a colleague:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
d. a child family member:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
e. a grandparent:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect

7. You are working on a project for work/school and someone in the room is playing loud music. You can't concentrate. What would you say if this person were:

a. a stranger:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
b. a sibling:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
c. a friend:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
d. a colleague:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
e. someone you don't get along with:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect

8. You need to buy a ticket for the train/bus to get home and discover that you have forgotten to bring money. What language would you choose to borrow money from the following people:

a. a close friend:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
b. a close friend you have already borrowed money from 4 times in the past 2 weeks and have not yet repaid:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
c. a colleague:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
d. someone you don't get along with:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect
e. a stranger:	Italian	Dialect	Mix of Italian & Dialect

Section 4

*This section consists of three social situations followed by two people you need to address. Each situation takes place in Italy where your dialect is spoken, and **each person you are addressing speaks both Italian and your dialect**. To the best of your ability, please write the **words you would actually say** to these people in each situation. Answers may be in only dialect, only Italian, or a mix of Italian and dialect, and you may **use statements, questions, jokes, exclamations, etc.** in your answers.*

1. You are having dinner at someone's house. You are cutting a cherry tomato in your salad, but your knife slips. The tomato lands on the host's lap and some lettuce with dressing falls onto the wood floor. What would you say if this person were:

a) a parent

b) your manager from work

2. You are at work and someone at the office always brings fish for lunch and heats it in the office microwave. The whole office always smells like fish, and you can't take it anymore. What would you say if this person were:

a) a colleague who is your friend and with whom you speak both Italian and dialect

b) your manager

3. You need to buy a ticket for the train/bus to get home and discover that you have forgotten to bring money. What would you say if you needed to borrow money from one of the following people:

a) a close friend you have already borrowed money from 4 times in the past 2 weeks and have not yet repaid

b) a colleague that you don't know well

Section 5

Any additional comments on Italian versus dialect use would be appreciated. Please use the space below and the attached sheet.