Final Individual Report

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Team - 2
Social Hierarchy in Real/Virtual World Settings

Language and Society

Aim

My team project is titled as above. We have tried to identify various ways through which we can extract instances, where it is reflected. So, our project gets subdivided further into 4 parts, namely :

• Through survey (in real world settings), by crafting a series of interesting choice questions, as to what those individuals would do in certain situations involving social hierarchy of some kind.

• Through advertisements, by trying to analyse various ads where the social hierarchy comes into play.

• Through print media, by analysing speeches and obtaining critical thinking of individuals in accordance with the given topic.

• Through cinema and web series, this being a diverse subpart requires 3 team members. Here is where my role comes into play.

I've analysed the film Article 15, since it has multiple occurrences of our project idea, the film being loosely based on the discrimination against lower castes, so naturally classes come into conflict, and the social hierarchy comes into play.

Methods

To study and analyse the linguistic variations in the movie, all the interactions and conversations taking place in the film was subdivided into 5 categories :

• Protagonist's Language

• Language of his sub-ordinates

• Language of his superiors

• Language of Regional people (Further distinction between literate and illiterate)

• Mode of Addressal

Observations

- Regional dialects are used sparingly, so as to connect to the villagers' plight and simultaneously not overdo it. Using these dialects facilitates the connection between viewers and villagers.

- The use of pronoun "hum" is retained in most of the scenes, irrespective of whether the speaker is literate or illiterate, the speaker just needs to hail from the village. It is more of a regional linguistic feature. All of them speak in Hindi, some code-mixing it with English when they feel.

- Sporadic use of English is also done, particularly when the protagonist is in the scene. He speaks in Hindi code-mixed with English, retains the use of pronoun "Main", and resorts to English for his outbursts towards his subordinate officers.

- A lot about the order of social hierarchy can also be understood by the different mode of addressals to the protagonist by different people. For eg. most of his subordinates refer to him as "Sir" and when they have to use a pronoun, they invariably use "Aap". At the same time, the SP of the area calls him using his "name" and uses the pronoun "Tum". Whereas, most of the villagers refer to him as "Saheb".

- Whereas, the protagonist's mode of addressal is also telling. He mostly addresses everyone using the pronoun "Aap ". But when he gets angry, he switches to the pronoun "Tum" for addressing his subordinates, whereas the use of pronoun "Aap" is retained if he's addressing a senior official. This clearly exemplifies the order of social hierarchy.

Analysis

- In the movie, the language Hindi code-mixed with English is predominantly used, and how it's used is also very interesting, sometimes to establish the social class, sometimes to bridge the social gap, sometimes it shows a will to impress the superiors, while sometimes it happens naturally.

- Extreme emotions impact the linguistic pattern of people, language switch happens, and the modes of addressals are changed.

- Regional dialects are used sparingly, so as to connect the villagers' plight. Using the local dialect somehow facilitates the connection.

- The use of pronoun "HUM" is reatined in most of the scenes, irrespective of the literacy of the person, if they hail from that region.

- Speeches given by politicians also tells us a lot about how they manipulate the public, and their off-screen performance is well chronicled.

- The interaction between subordinates and the villagers is a different story though, the subordinates are heavily overbearing, stamping their authority over the villagers whereas, the protagonist tries to do no such thing.

Challenges

- Finding exactly which regional dialect is used in the opening song of the movie proved to be a very difficult task.

- Since the interactions between the protagonist and his superiors are very far and few, and rarely in a non-formal setting, recording the change in linguistic patterns again was an arduous job.

- "How much code-mixing comes naturally" was a point which has to be looked upon carefully, since almost all of them speak predominantly in Hindi code-mixed with English. Determining exactly when it begins sounding deliberate was another difficult task.

- Overwhelming amount of data, not exactly a challenge, but still required careful filtering out of the repetitive ones and the anomalies.

References

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_15_(film)

- https://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/article-15-movie-review-ayushmann-khurrana-stands-tall-in-this-essential-film-about-cops-and-caste-4-5-stars/story-fivzSl1g0IV7kGnY2IXISO.html