Stance and politeness in spoken Latvian

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The present article is concerned with the concept of stance and its relationship to face, face work and politeness applied to Latvian spoken discourse. It offers an extensive review of relevant literature on stance and politeness theories, followed by an illustrative analysis of politeness strategies and stance markers found in a radio interview. On this basis, the article argues that stance markers – epistemic, evidential, mirative and hedging devices – may be considered a negative politeness strategy, responding to the speaker's and hearer's desire for autonomy. In conclusion, it suggests a hypothesis that could explain differing use of stance markers and politeness strategies by speakers fulfilling varying conversational roles and of various social standing.

Keywords: discourse, epistemic modality, evidentiality, face, Latvian, politeness, stance

1. Introduction

This article is concerned with the concept of stance and its relationship to politeness in contemporary spoken Latvian. In a previous study, stance has been defined as "the speaker's assessment of knowledge expressed in a proposition in terms of its certainty, reliability, expectedness and other criteria, encoded by linguistic means" (Chojnicka 2012: 7). More specifically, stance is an umbrella term for a set of linguistic categories concerned with matters of truth, certainty, reliability, authority, inference, reporting, evidence, confirmation, surprise, expectedness, etc. (cf. Bednarek's list of evidential meanings, whereby a broad definition of evidentiality, corresponding to the definition of stance, is adopted (2006: 637); also Chafe 1986; Chafe & Nichols 1986; Caffi & Janney 1994; Mushin 2001). For Latvian, these categories include epistemic modality, evidentiality, mirativity, and hedging. It has been confirmed that at least with regard to this language, it makes sense to operationalize the umbrella term of stance to refer to a network of interconnected meanings traditionally attributed to these categories (cf. Chojnicka 2012 and section 2.1 below).

The purpose of this study is to continue, extend and test previous research on stance in Latvian in two directions. First, in theoretical terms, it will be shown that the theory of stance may be linked to politeness theory, as Latvian stance markers may be considered a strategy

of negative politeness (section 2). Second, in empirical terms, the stance theory – developed on the basis of a corpus of Latvian parliamentary debates – and its connection to politeness theory will be verified by means of an empirical analysis of an example of another spoken discourse genre, namely a radio interview (section 3). The goal of this preparatory and exploratory analysis is, on the one hand, to support the suggested connection between stance and politeness in Latvian, and, on the other hand, to test the applicability of such an analysis before undertaking a larger corpus-based study of Latvian spoken discourse. Conclusions and suggestions pertaining to possible future research directions are provided in section 4.

2. Theory

2.1. Stance theory

The word *stance* has many synonyms: *attitude*, *position*, *stand*, *posture*, *point of view*, *viewpoint*, *judgement*, *standpoint*, etc. None of these phrases, however, explains what the term STANCE stands for in linguistics and related disciplines. The literal understanding of the word can be misleading and seriously blur the definition and scope of reference of the scientific term that happens to sound the same.

The term STANCE in linguistics and sociolinguistics is quite new, and the literature where it is mentioned is limited. However, in spite of this scarcity, there is a wide discrepancy between definitions suggested by different authors. Some claim that stance comprises expressing personal feelings, attitudes, value judgements, or assessments (Biber et al. 2007: 966). This would mean that we encounter stance whenever the speaker articulates his or her attitude – with adjectives, e.g. *awesome/awful*, nouns, e.g. *beauty/beast*, with prosodic means such as voice pitch and stress, or even with extralinguistic features, for instance face expressions or gestures. Such an approach seems to be far too broad; in the light of this and similar definitions, basically every utterance made by a human being could be interpreted as expressing stance.

When defining evidentiality, Chafe wrote that it is concerned with "attitudes towards knowledge" contained in the speaker's proposition, or "epistemological considerations" (1986: 266) coded – or marked – linguistically. I have decided to apply this definition to stance, as the author's understanding of evidentiality was much broader than it is recognized by linguists today. It comprised such attitudes as degree of truthfulness, belief, induction, deduction, hedges and expectations. What is important, it excluded moral/aesthetic judgements (e.g. *right/wrong*, *beautiful/ugly*) about elements of the "real world", or states-of-affairs. In this definition, stance is concerned with attitudes towards propositional contents as "mental constructs, thoughts about states of affairs, that only exist in the mind of their user, are user-dependent" (Hengeveld 1998: 345).

On the basis of, *inter alia*, Chafe 1986, Bednarek 2006, Hunston & Thompson 2000, Precht 2003, White 2003, the four stance sub-categories mentioned above may be characterized as follows:

– epistemic modality – concerned with the speaker's attitude to the knowledge expressed in the proposition, i.e., the speaker's degree of certainty about this knowledge, or his/her assessment of the validity of a claim;

– evidentiality – concerned with the source of knowledge expressed in a proposition, or with the type of evidence for this knowledge;

– hedging – concerned with the use of expressions that make a claim less definite and categorical, and as a result, less certain and more polite;

– mirativity – encodes the speaker's reaction to new information, indicating that this information is surprising and unexpected.

In Latvian, epistemic meanings are marked with:

– epistemic modal adverbs – *iespējams* 'possibly, probably' and *varbūt* 'maybe';

– epistemic-support markers, e.g. *neapšaubāmi* 'undoubtedly' (expresses full epistemic support), *droši vien* 'surely' (expresses partial, or not full, epistemic support), *laikam* 'maybe' (expresses absent epistemic support);

– epistemic verbs, e.g. *es domāju* 'I think', *es ticu* 'I believe', *es zinu* 'I know'.

Evidentiality is marked with verbs of senses, e.g. *es redzu* 'I see', the mental verb form *es saprotu* 'I understand', and the oblique – a peculiar verb form ("petrified participle form", Matthiassen 1997: 131) used to mark information that does not come from the speaker (second-hand information).

Hedging is marked with particles *tā kā* and *kaut kā* 'somehow, someway, sort of', as well as phrases *tā teikt* 'so to speak' and *teiksim* 'let's say'. The former pair marks the speaker's wording as improper or inadequate, while the latter pair indicates that the speaker's wording is spontaneous and provisional.

Mirativity has only one marker, *izrādās* 'it turns out', which introduces information that the speaker has recently found out (usually to his or her surprise and/or displeasure) or the speaker's deductions made on the basis of the recently found information.

The claim that these categories are interconnected is validated by the existence of multifunctional markers, such as the oblique (whose meanings cut across categories within and without the network of stance: not only evidentiality, but also epistemic overtones, reported speech, quotative, irony) and *it kā* (a particle/conjunction meaning 'as if', 'as though', expressing epistemic modality, evidentiality and hedging). Second, there exist bifunctional markers – epistemic evidentials (otherwise known as *epistentials* (term introduced by Faller 2002), e.g. *acīmredzot* 'apparently', 'obviously', *liekas/šķiet* 'it seems', 'it appears'), epistemic hedges (e.g. *ja nemaldos* 'if I am not wrong') and evidential hedges (e.g. *tā saucamais* 'so-called'), cf. Chojnicka 2012: 234-236. Such connections between meanings of these categories in other languages have been reported by: Aikhenvald 2004, Dendale & Tasmowski 2001, Mauranen 2004, Plungian 2001, White 2003.

The full network of stance meanings in Latvian is shown in Appendix 1, reproduced from Chojnicka (2012: 237).

2.2. Stance, face and negative politeness

All stance markers are additionally connected by a pragmatic function that they have in common: they are face-saving devices. The concept of FACE was defined by Goffman as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (1967: 5).

"To fail to have one's identity ratified is to lose face in an encounter, to have one's identity ratified is to have face, to maintain an identity that has been challenged is to save face. Face, then, is something that resides not within an individual, but rather within the flow of events in an encounter" (Holtgraves 2002: 38).

Stance markers are used when speakers do not wish to utter their statements in a direct – face-threatening – way. Assertions marked for stance are offered as opinions or beliefs and not claims to truth; as such, they presuppose that alternative viewpoints exist (White 2003: 264) and liberate speakers from responsibility for the truth, correctness, precision of their utterances (leading to the conclusion that stance means distance). In other words, they protect speakers from losing their face.

It may be noted that stance in Latvian seems to have a special relationship to such grammatical means as future tense and conditional mood (Chojnicka 2012: 291). They express probable, hypothetical, conjectural, tentative, etc. meanings – meanings that speakers cannot be certain of, meanings that need to be mitigated.

Stance is also connected to the pragmatic domain of politeness (in terms of politeness theory developed by Brown & Levinson 1987), itself inextricably linked with the concepts of face and face work. Linguistic politeness strategies are used to respond to two basic and universal interpersonal desires: "negative face, or the desire for autonomy, and positive face, or the desire for connection with others" (Holtgraves 2002: 39). Face is under potential threat during every encounter, and speakers must attend to positive and negative face of both themselves and others. In simplest terms, then, politeness boils down to avoiding or alleviating obviously face-threatening utterances (e.g. requests, disagreements, criticisms, complaints).

Such an approach to politeness, however, has been criticized on many grounds. Here, it is relevant to emphasize, following the most recent politeness research, that it should not be seen as a property of words, expressions, or even whole utterances; politeness is built over the entire encounter as a manner of maintaining social relationships and social identities of conversation partners. It is about acknowledging or challenging one's position in the social hierarchy (Mills 2011: 24).

Against this backdrop, it may be claimed that using stance markers is meant to protect not only the speaker's face, but also the hearer's – in particular, negative – face. Negative face is commonly threatened with impositions, and bare assertions may be seen as imposing a given point of view. They may also be seen as inappropriate in specific configurations of social positions between conversation partners, for instance when a speaker in a "lower" position offers a bare assertion to a speaker in a "higher" position.

In the following section, this hypothesis shall be tested by means of an exploratory analysis of an example of Latvian spoken discourse. This analysis shall function as a pilot study, where the applicability of the thesis is verified before an advanced study, based on a larger and more diversified corpus, may be undertaken. The pilot study thus tests not only the applicability of the theory, but also the suitability of the chosen genre of Latvian spoken discourse (a radio interview). The conclusions drawn from such an analysis should not be interpreted as applying to Latvian spoken discourse in general.

3. Analysis

3.1. Material and method

The present study uses a recording of a radio interview conducted by the radio DJ Jānis Šipkēvičs with the actress Vija Artmane, aired live on August 21, 1998, and rebroadcast ten years later – on August 17, 2008 – after her death in 2007. The interview constitutes one episode of a program *Ar dziesmu par dzīvi* ('With a song about life'), broadcast weekly on Radio SWH.

For the needs of this article, the episode in question has been downloaded from the channel's Internet page (www.radioswh.lv/raidijumi/ar-dziesmu-par-dzivi) and transcribed in full using the program Transcriber. The total running time, excluding fragments with music only (no speech), amounts to 38 minutes 55 seconds.

The recording of the interview has been transcribed, for the most part, according to orthographic principles. In the resulting transcript, orthographic words are separated by spaces, regardless of the way they were actually uttered. On the other hand, most punctuation conventions pertaining to written sentences are disregarded, particularly the use of capital letters and punctuation marks such as commas, full stops, question or exclamation marks. Longer pauses, repetitions, hesitations/fillers, false starts, self-corrections and other forms of interruption or delay in speech flow are marked.

The audio recording has first been listened to carefully and repeatedly in order to identify issues of interest – moments in the exchange which could be relevant to theories of face work, politeness and stance. Special attention has been paid to such utterances which could be identified as face-threatening, on the basis of either (not always intended) pragmatic effects of the utterances themselves (cf. examples (4), (9), (10)) or ensuing reactions to them – e.g. hesitation (cf. pause in example (3)), request for clarification or explanation, protest (example (7)), etc.

The transcribed text has been additionally examined for occurrences of Latvian stance markers listed in Appendix 1, as well as any other possible expressions of stance.

Politeness theory and stance theory offer frameworks "for examining interpersonal underpinnings of language use" (Holtgraves 2002: 38). They reflect the ways in which social context, social roles and identities shape what people say in interactions and how they say it. For this reason, the social aspects of the communicative event under investigation must be clarified.

An interview is a communicative event involving two main participant roles – an interviewer who asks questions and an interviewee who answers them. A radio interview, in particular, takes place for the benefit of an audience whose presence is always presupposed. The audience is thus a third participant type, no matter whether it is present in the studio or its involvement is mediated.

In the interview under investigation, the participants performing interviewer and interviewee roles are not positioned equally. The former is a younger man, the latter – an older woman; the norms of interpersonal behaviour in Latvian society require the interviewer to hold the interviewee in high regard and respect. Additionally, the conversation takes place on the day of the interviewee's birthday, at the peak of her international career full of widely

recognized artistic accomplishments; these issues intensify the inequality of the partners. Such aspects of their relationship are expected to affect their choice of stance and politeness strategies.

3.2. Face work and politeness in the interview

The first thing to notice at the beginning of the interview is the use of deferential (polite) forms of address, incl. plural pronouns, e.g.:

(1)   mēs katrs atrodamies kāda zīmējuma vidū
           'we are all in the middle of some drawing'
           kur   **jūs**   šobrīd   atrod-at-ies
           where   **you**:PL   now   find.PRS-2PL-RFL
           'where do **you** find yourself right now'

The system of familiar/deferential forms of address can be considered in terms of politeness theory, although only to a limited degree – Joseph notices that it is so conventionalised and institutionalised that an individual choice can hardly be seen as a face strategy (2006: 69). The interviewer, however, has used familiar (singular) pronouns of address in other interviews (with other interviewees), which makes this choice significant. Since the interviewer speaks first, it is his responsibility to decide on the form of address. He chooses the deferential one probably due to the difference in gender, age and experience. The fact that it is his first interview with this particular actress – which he emphasizes later in the program – also seems important.

The second feature of the interview relevant to politeness is the interviewer's slow, careful and refined manner of speech – unusual when compared to his other radio programs, but similar to the interviewee's pronunciation. It could be interpreted as an example of convergence, a type of speech accommodation whereby a speaker tries to "alter various aspects of his speech in order to achieve similarity" (Holtgraves 2002: 79; accommodation theory was originally formulated by Giles (1973)). The key motive for convergence – which can thus be considered a positive politeness strategy – is assumed to be a need for approval from one's conversational partner.[1]

In the interview at hand, convergence pertains not only to pronunciation, but also to the choice of words and topics, at least at the beginning of the conversation. The interview takes off in a kind of high-off-the-ground, metaphorical, figurative manner, which probably reflects the interviewer's wish to accommodate what he expects to be an "artistic", inspired, spiritual speaking style (example (1) continued):

(2)   interviewee: /pause/
                          nu es atrodos tāda viena zīmējuma lapas puses apakšā jeb
                          pareizāk sakot augšā
                          'well I am at the bottom of one such drawing page, or to put it
                          more correctly, at the top'

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[1]   The other type of accommodation, divergence, is "viewed as a desire to emphasize one's identity with a reference group that is external to the current situation" – thus, a negative politeness strategy (Holtgraves 2002: 80).

interviewer: <u>pareizāk sakot augšā</u> augšā tas ir kur
                     '<u>to put it more correctly at the top</u>, the top which is where'
interviewee: augšā tuvāk visumam
                     'at the top, closer to the universe'
interviewer: **mmm** visums šajā gadījumā **ir ir kā tāds** jūsu dvēseles stāvoklis vai tas ir **vai tas ir yyy** tas ko jūs **yyy** gaidāt pēc **yyy** kaut **kā:**da **es nezinu** (**khm**) eksplozīj**as** sevī?
                     '**mmm** universe in this case **is is like some** state of your soul or is it or **is it yyy** this what you **yyy** are waiting for after **yyy** some kind of **I don't know** (**khm**) explosion inside yourself?'

In the underlined fragment, the interviewer repeats Artmane's evaluative expression concerning her own choice of words (*pareizāk sakot* 'to put it more correctly'), which sounds rather awkward and unfocused, adding to the impression that he must be quite nervous. In his next move, he repeats the word *visums* ('universe') and thinks it best to continue in this high-off-the-ground, metaphorical style, but soon loses his confidence. Note the use of breaks, repetitions (*ir-ir*, *vai tas ir-vai tas ir*), fillers such as *mmm*, *yyy*, *khm* or the unusually strong stress on the syllable *kā* in *kaut kāda* (indefinite pronoun 'some', 'some kind of'), indicating hesitation. The change (correction) of grammatical gender (*kaut kāds* (*kaut kāda* in Gen.) is masculine, while the noun it relates to, *eksplozīja*, is feminine) points to lack of planning. Finally, the rather straightforward *es nezinu* ('I don't know'), a break and a sigh followed by a throat-clearing sound (*khm*) all indicate a crisis. Diani believes the pragmatic marker *I don't know* to express much more than just the meaning of a negated *I know*; it functions to "minimize praise of self: maximize dispraise of self"; "avoid explicit disagreement; avoid commitment; minimize face-threatening acts; mark uncertainty" (2004: 163). I would argue that at this point, the interviewer realizes that accommodation as a positive face strategy has failed, and frankly admits to this failure by sacrificing his own negative face and appealing to the interviewee's positive face. There are 5 occurrences of *es nezinu* in the interview and they all seem to have a similar function: to mark a crisis (not in understanding, but in formulating a message) and appeal to the partner's commitment to the common good (positive face) for support, help – or forgiveness.

While seemingly trying very hard to protect her positive face, the interviewer repeatedly threatens his partner's negative face – by, for example, forcing her to continue expressing gratitude for a birthday gift she receives from him, even after she has thanked him for it:

(3)   interviewee: paldies tas ir ārkārtīgi skaisti
                               'thank you it is extremely beautiful'
      interviewer: kā jūs jūtaties šobrīd
                                 'how do you feel right now'
      interviewee: paldies es jūtos ļoti labi
                                 'thank you I feel very well'
                                 /pause/
                                 ļoti labi un jūtos ļoti mierīga un ļoti es jūtos ļoti pagodināta ka jūs mani uzaicinājāt tieši šādā reizē
                                 'very well and [I] feel very calm and very I feel very honoured that you invited me on such an occasion'

In a couple of other moves, the interviewer seems to be threatening the interviewee's negative face by asking peculiarly formulated questions about her past life choices, as if suggesting that these choices were wrong or other, better choices existed:

(4)   interviewer: un kāpēc tieši Murjāņi un un nevis
                          nekāda cita vieta ne Jūrmala vai nē
                          'and why actually Murjāņi and and not
                          some other place not Jūrmala right'

(5)   interviewer: kā tas notika jūs tieši kopā ar viņu bijāt un nevis ar ar ar
                          kādu nu tajā laikā varbūt galantāku vai augstāk stāvošo
                          ietekmīgāku cilvēku?
                          'how did it happen that you were together with him and not
                          with someone at that time maybe more gallant or higher posi-
                          tioned, more influential person?'

When the actress replies that 'it was difficult to find anyone more gallant than him', her partner immediately, practically interrupting her, corrects himself saying 'I'm taking the words back'. Example (6) shows the simultaneous utterances of both speakers:

(6)   interviewee: galantāka cilvēka par Arturu Dimiteru bija grūti atrast tajā
                          'a more gallant person than Arturs Dimiters was difficult to find
                          at that'
           interviewer: ………………………nebija…………………………viss….
                          '…………………...there wasn't……………………….all……'
           interviewee: laikā hehe………………………..
                          'time hehe………………………..'
           interviewer: …. **es ņemu vārdus atpakaļ** hehe
                          '….**I am taking the words back** hehe'

Examples (3)-(6) illustrate various strategies of reacting to face threats. In (3), the interviewee interprets and reacts to the question 'how do you feel right now' literally, as if it were an inquiry concerning her general well-being. But the question is, in fact, an indirect request to continue talking about the birthday gift and her gratitude for it. The actress is aware of this, and after a pause she yields to this request. The interviewee ignores the face threat in (4), and reacts jocularly to the one in (5).

There is a moment in the program, however, when she seems to lose her patience and expresses her irritation with the interviewer's face-threatening moves (example (7)). For some reason or another, the interviewer is particularly interested in getting to know how popular with men the interviewee was in her youth. When asking her about it, he uses the colloquial expression *jūs **noteikti** aplidoja simtiem kavalieru* ('hundreds of bachelors **definitely** ran after you') which clashes with the formal course of the conversation. The woman tries to cut the subject short by explaining that she was 'reserved/shy' (*atturīga*). But her partner does not notice the hint (the reference to shyness should be read as reluctance to talk on the topic) and repeats his question, using another colloquial word *piebraukt* 'make advances' (*jums **droši vien** gribēja ... piebraukt* '(they) **certainly** wanted to make advances

at you'). Note the use of epistemic adverbs (in bold) in both questions (see also 3.2 below). The interviewee reacts in a critical way that threatens her partner's positive face:

(7)　　　šī piebraukšana　　es nezinu kas
　　　　'this running after　I don't know what'
　　　　kā　　　man　　　ļoti　　sak-āt
　　　　how　　I:DAT　　very　　say/talk.PRS-2PL
　　　　'what you're trying to talk me into'

To summarize, the interviewer attends to the interviewee's positive face by accommodating (converging) and claiming the responsibility for failures and crises (sacrificing his own face), and to her negative face by using deferential forms of address (and stance markers, discussed below). On the other hand, he commits some mistakes that threaten her negative (but not positive) face. When it comes to the actress, her efforts to ignore (example (4)) or alleviate (example (5)) these threats can be seen as an effort to protect the interviewer's positive face, although she challenges it with a critical move in example (7). Also, she never sacrifices her own face.

3.3. Expressions of stance

A search of the transcribed text for stance markers listed in Appendix 1 has yielded the following results:

Table 1: Stance markers in the interview

	Latvian marker	English translation	Tokens	Tokens in Chojnicka (2012)
1.	*(es) domāju*	'I think'	8	524 (2.)
2.	*liekas*	'seem, appear'	7	82 (8.)
3.	*laikam*	'maybe'	4	75 (11.)
4.	*varbūt*	'maybe'	4	554 (1.)
5.	*manuprāt*	'in my opinion'	3	–
6.	*acīmredzot*	'obviously, apparently'	2	180 (3.)
7.	*droši vien*	'surely'	1	107 (7.)
8.	*it kā*	'as if, as though'	1	72 (12.)
9.	*šķiet*	'seem, appear'	1	78 (10.)
10.	*neapšaubāmi*	'undoubtedly'	1	48 (17.)
11.	*noteikti*	'definitely'	1	129 (5.)
12.	*teiksim*	'let's say'	1	61 (15.)
13.	*var būt*	'may be'	1	61 (16.)
14.	*iespējams*	'possibly'	0	142 (4.)
15.	*(es) uzskatu*	'I am of opinion'	0	126 (6.)
16.	*skaidrs*	'(it is) clear'	0	82 (9.)

Stance markers are ordered according to the number of occurrences in the transcript, from the most to the least frequent. The last column in the table indicates the number of tokens in the 3000-minute long corpus of Latvian parliamentary debates (Chojnicka 2012) and, in brackets, the place taken by the given marker according to the number of occurrences in that corpus.

It should be emphasized that the intention of providing the numbers from Chojnicka 2012 here is not to suggest that the two sources of material (the 3000-minute long corpus and the 39-minute long interview) are comparable or that the results of the present study could be generalized to apply to all instances and genres of Latvian spoken discourse. The intention is merely to point out tendencies that may be indicated by the overlaps in the two corpora.

The first conclusion from studying the table is that stance markers used in the radio interview coincide with the most common markers in parliamentary debates (places 1-3, 5, 7-8, 10-12, 15-17 out of 35 investigated markers). Next, the table confirms that such markers as *(es) domāju* 'I think', *varbūt* 'maybe' and *acīmredzot* 'apparently, obviously' are popular in both sources.

The frequency of marking stance (per minute) in both sources is very similar (approx. 0.89 occurrences per minute in the interview and approx. 0.92 occurrences per minute in the debates).

In order to discuss the functions of these markers, it is worth having another look at examples provided so far. Below is a list of examples that contain such markers:

(8)   interviewer: kā tas notika jūs tieši kopā ar viņu bijāt un nevis ar ar ar
                             kādu nu tajā laikā **varbūt** galantāku vai augstāk stāvošo
                             ietekmīgāku cilvēku?
                             'how did it happen that you were together with him and not
                             with someone at that time **maybe** more gallant or higher posi-
                             tioned, more influential person?'

(9)   interviewer: jūs **noteikti** aplidoja simtiem kavalieru
                             'hundreds of bachelors **definitely** ran after you'

(10)   interviewer: jums **droši vien** gribēja ... piebraukt
                             '(they) **certainly** wanted to make advances at you'

Example (11) below is a fragment of the interviewee's answer to (10), and example (12) provides an illustration of a conversation turn particularly rich in stance markers:

(11)   interviewee: man bija tāds man tā-tāds instinkts bija dots es **acīmredzot**
                             sevi aizstāvēju tādā veidā
                             'I had some I was this instinct was given to me I **apparently**
                             protected myself this way'

(12)   interviewer: jā **manuprāt** ka jums iekaroto tirgu kā kā **teiksim** tagad sauc
                             šovbiznesu un arī kino industriju jums tas bija arvienu arvien
                             augsti vilcieni jo tajā laikā šo filmu **manuprāt** noskatījās visi
                             un arī vēl pēc tam un ja būtu bijuši skaistuma konkursi tad **es
                             domāju** ja būtu tad iznākums arī būtu zināms kurš tajā uzvarētu
                             'well **in my opinion** the market conquered by you like like **let's
                             say** today [it] is called show-business and also cinema industry
                             you had always ever great influence everyone **in my opinion**
                             saw that movie and also after that and if there had been beauty
                             contests **I think** if there had been then the result would also be
                             known who would win in it'

Note that each of the negative face-threatening moves in examples (8)-(10) contains an epistemic marker: the epistemic modal adverb *varbūt* in (8), *noteikti* in (9), which expresses full epistemic support, and *droši vien* in (10), which marks partial epistemic support. This fact confirms that stance marking may function as a negative politeness strategy. Example (11), in turn, contains the epistential *acīmredzot*, which is functionally somewhat closer to a prototypical evidential than epistemic marker (see Appendix 1). The marker used twice in example (12) – *manuprāt* 'in my opinion' (not included in the network of stance markers before) – may, on the face of it, be considered an evidential referring to a source of one's information. Aikhenvald claims, however, that pointing to oneself as the source would be "counterintuitive" (2004: 9). *Manuprāt* is then closer to *es domāju* (also used in (12)), the most popular Latvian mental act verb expressing the meanings of "having an opinion" or "holding a view", but also functioning as a pragmatic floor-holding or attention-drawing device with bleached or cancelled semantic meaning (Chojnicka 2012: 118). The final stance marker present is the hedge *teiksim* in (12).

It is no coincidence that in the presented examples the interviewer uses only epistemic, while the interviewee – epistential markers. In the entire interview, with the exception of the hedge in (12), the DJ uses only epistemic devices (*laikam* – 2 tokens, *varbūt* – 3, *(es) domāju* – 2, *droši vien* – 1, *notekti* – 1) and *manuprāt* – 3 times.[2] The interviewee's choice of stance devices is more diverse – she uses epistemic (*laikam* – 2, *varbūt* – 1, *(es) domāju* – 6, *neapšaubāmi* – 1, *var būt* – 1), epistential (*acīmredzot* – 2, *liekas* – 7, *šķiet* – 1) and multifunctional (*it kā* – 1) markers.

There is, then, a strong preference for epistemic markers over all others (23 to 12, respectively) and a strong dispreference for evidentials (none used). If this a tendency rather than a coincidental effect (such a trend is certainly visible in the larger corpus of parliamentary debates) it may suggest a genre-independent phenomenon. This issue could be addressed by future research focusing on stance sub-categories.

What could be the cause of the above-mentioned discrepancies between the interviewer's and interviewee's use of stance markers?

I would argue that they are associated with the roles the two participants play in the encounter. The interviewer is responsible for asking questions and choosing/changing topics. Due to this responsibility he is particularly vulnerable to making decisions that could threaten both his and the interviewee's face. Thus, he needs strategies that reduce certainty, assertiveness, that mark meanings as tentative, hypothetical.

His conversation partner's role is reduced to reactions, she never initiates topic changes or asks questions that would introduce new information (that are not requests for clarification or explanation). The time she has for reactions is also limited. Thus, she needs strategies that mark her statements as conclusions of a hurried, real-time thinking process, as inferences or guesses, which is the function of epistentials. Epistentials simultaneously mark epistemic necessity (assessing how necessary it is that a proposition is true) and inferential evidentiality (referring to deduction process as a source for the speaker's knowledge). In both cases, the proposition is marked as 'inference' (e.g. *Kate must be home now – the light is on*), an overlapping value of epistemic modality and evidentiality (van der Auwera & Plungian 1998: 85).

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[2] Even if one objects to classifying *manuprāt* as epistemic, it is still definitely not evidential/epistential.

Note that also the study of stance in Latvian parliamentary discourse reported stance use to be dependent on the speaker's role (Chairperson, debater, expert) in the communicative event of a parliamentary sitting (Chojnicka 2012, Chapter 2). It was, however, only able to show differences in overall frequency of marking stance. During the debate itself, as one part of a sitting, all debaters are on equal footing, at least in terms of their conversational roles (although their place in the social hierarchy could differ on the basis of such variables as age, gender, experience, popularity). Any differences in their stance marking strategies (e.g. a preference for a certain marker or sub-category of stance) should thus be seen as a matter of individual style.

3.4. Stance and politeness – combining the perspectives

To my knowledge, there are no studies on the relationship between stance and politeness. One may only find references to politeness strategies that overlap with means of marking stance – cf. the following list of negative politeness strategies:

– being conventionally indirect;

– avoiding presuming or assuming anything regarding the hearer's beliefs or desires, by using e.g. hedges or if-clauses,

– lessening coercion by using e.g. the subjunctive, tag questions, remote possibility markers, deferential forms of address (Holtgraves 2002: 45).

Possibility markers and some hedges are stance devices, and being indirect may involve stance marking as well (e.g. by using epistemic modal verbs).

Most likely, however, stance and negative politeness do not merely share the same markers. Their closeness becomes apparent when the two concepts are considered in the most technical sense – stance as a set of markers expressing DISTANCE, and negative politeness – as attending to negative face, i.e. the desire for AUTONOMY. Both concepts, then, are concerned with marking the speaker's detachment, avoidance of commitment.

In interactive genres of discourse, stance markers reduce not only the speaker's commitment, but also the imposition on the hearer. The latter is especially relevant to utterances that provoke a response – in an interview, these are the interviewer's moves. The present pilot study suggests that epistemic markers may be especially suitable for such utterances: they are present in all examples of acts that Holtgraves (2002: 40) considers particularly threatening to the hearer's negative face, such as requests (examples (8)-(10)) or compliments (which impose a specific reaction, cf. example (12)).

In such a personal, intimate interview as the one under investigation, the interviewee's responses serve an important presentational purpose. Here, protecting the speaker's, not the hearer's face is in focus. The speaker wishes to appear in the best possible light – here, the positive face as the need for communion, unity, closeness with others is involved. This may explain the increased use of epistentials, marking the speaker's statements as ad-hoc inferences that should not be taken as reliable representations of the speaker's personality, intelligence, sensibility, etc.

In the light of such close relations of stance and negative politeness, are both terms necessary?

Stance is a property of individual words, phrases, or grammatical forms. Politeness is not a property of individual words or even utterances. It refers to the entire communicative event, it is a quality built utterance after utterance, "worked out by participants in context" (Mills 2011: 38). Stance marking is one of the ways in which this is achieved; but politeness is not a direct function of stance markers, rather a side-effect of stance-saturated speech.

Defined this way, politeness cannot be attributed to non-dialogic genres of discourse. Even in parliamentary debates, when speakers take turns to talk about a specific topic, politeness as a result of cooperative, mutual face work cannot develop. Each speaker cannot talk more than twice, and the consecutive speeches only rarely refer to each other (they do not form adjacency pairs but for exceptional situations).

On the other hand, stance – as a property of individual expressions – can be studied in any genre, also in monologues or hybrid monologic-dialogic genres (e.g. parliamentary debate as a sequence of mini-speeches).

There is a significant difference between stance and politeness pertaining to the domain of face-to-face conversations that emerges from the analysis of examples in sections 3.2 and 3.3. It may be claimed that the divergent use of stance markers by the interviewer (more epistemic devices) and the interviewee (more epistentials) depends directly on their roles in the interaction – the former's initiating and the latter's responding, reacting function. The divergent use of politeness strategies, on the other hand, seems to be dependent on their social roles, positions in the social hierarchy. The interviewer, occupying a lower position, attends to the face of both himself and the interviewee, while the latter focuses mostly on her own.

Again, it must be noted that such a conclusion could not be drawn on the basis of a study of parliamentary debates. This genre makes it possible to study stance marking, but is blind to the effect of varying conversational roles. And although the debate participants' social positions could probably be established (on the basis of additional background information), the effect of social standing on politeness strategies would not be visible, as the genre is not dialogic enough for this phenomenon to be realized and studied.

4. Conclusions

The purpose of this article has been twofold: first, to apply the stance theory developed previously to another genre of spoken Latvian discourse in an exploratory, pilot study; second, to validate the suggested link between this theory and the concept of politeness before undertaking a larger corpus-based investigation.

Drawing on evidence from just one interview, this pilot study could only point at the use of epistemic, evidential and epistential markers; only one marker of hedging (*teiksim* 'let's say') and no markers of mirativity have been found. To explore the latter two categories further, studies based on larger corpora are necessary.

The study has shown that there are no significant differences between the realization of stance in the corpus of parliamentary debates and the particular radio interview chosen for analysis. Whether or not this means that the study results could be interpreted as applying to public spoken Latvian discourse more generally should be verified by more extensive future research.

In accordance with other studies (e.g. van der Auwera & Plungian 1998; Faller 2002), the use of epistentials – marking the overlapping epistemic and evidential meanings of epistemic necessity and inferential evidentiality, respectively – confirms the close relationship between the two categories. What is more, the pragmatic function of attending to face provides another link between different sub-categories of stance.

The concept of face connects not only stance categories to one another, but also stance to politeness. They both attend to face in ways that can merge or overlap. Since stance markers reduce the speaker's commitment and the imposition on the hearer, they could be seen as negative face-saving devices, i.e. negative politeness strategies. They occur in utterances that inherently threaten negative face, e.g. requests or compliments. But the study has revealed also some positive politeness strategies, e.g. ignoring or alleviating threats to one's own face or accommodation (convergence), which are not stance-related.

The most important conclusion of the study is the claim that different use of stance markers between speakers is attributable to their varying conversational roles, while different use of politeness strategies – to their varying social roles. This proposal still needs to be validated by further studies of various genres of spoken discourse. Such studies investigating the connections between stance and politeness must focus on possibly spontaneous, nonelicited face-to-face conversations with varying communicative roles and social positions of the speakers.
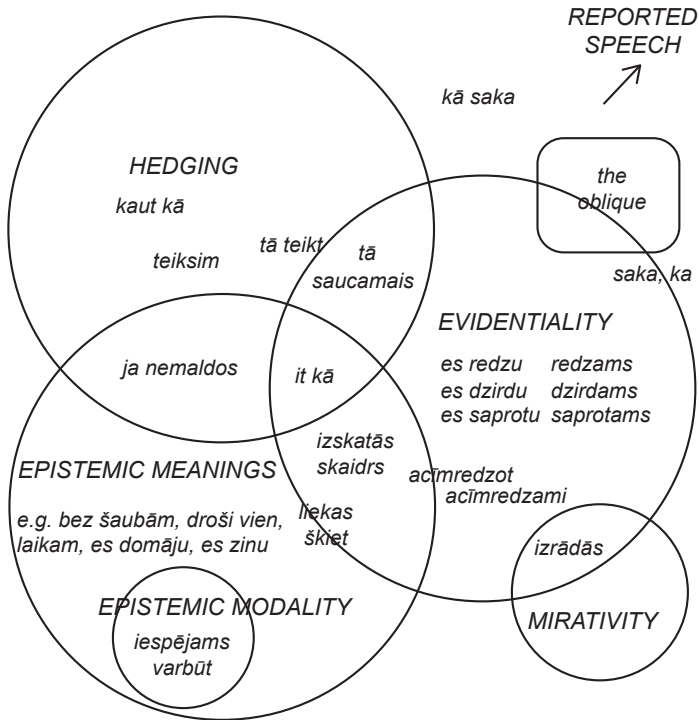
Abbreviations

2 – second person; DAT – dative; PL – plural; PRS – present; RFL – reflexive.

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Appendix 1: The network of stance markers in Latvian

REPORTED SPEECH

kā saka

HEDGING

kaut kā

teiksim   *tā teikt*   *tā saucamais*

the oblique

saka, ka

ja nemaldos   *it kā*

EVIDENTIALITY

es redzu   redzams
es dzirdu   dzirdams
es saprotu   saprotams

izskatās
skaidrs

acīmredzot acīmredzami

EPISTEMIC MEANINGS

e.g. bez šaubām, droši vien, laikam, es domāju, es zinu

liekas šķiet

izrādās

EPISTEMIC MODALITY

iespējams varbūt

MIRATIVITY

multifunctional marker:
it kā 'as if, as though'

epistemic markers:
bez šaubām 'no doubt'
droši vien 'surely'
laikam 'maybe'
es domāju 'I think'
es zinu 'I know'

evidentials:
es redzu 'I see'
es dzirdu 'I hear'
es saprotu 'I understand'
redzams 'as may be seen'
dzirdams 'as may be heard'
saprotams 'clearly, obviously'

epistemic modal markers:
iespējams 'possibly'
varbūt 'possibly, maybe'

epistemials (epistemic-evidential markers):
liekas, šķiet 'it seems, it appears'
izskatās 'it looks like'
acīmredzot, acīmredzami 'apparently, obviously'
skaidrs 'it is clear that'

evidential-mirative markers:
izrādās 'it turns out'

evidential hedges:
tā saucamais 'so-called'

epistemic hedges:
ja nemaldos 'if I'm not wrong'

hedges:
kaut kā 'somehow, someway'

hedges, but close to evidentiality:
teiksim 'let's say'
tā teikt 'so to speak'

evidential/reported speech markers:
saka, ka '(they) say that'
the oblique (+other functions)

reported speech markers:
kā saka 'as (they) say'