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Introduction: Studies focusing on "Perceptual Dialectology" have often referred to Southerners as polite, patient, and respectful (Preston, 2004). The constant use of honorifics and titles (e.g., *sir* and *ma'am*, "Dr. Smith") in speech is typical in everyday conversation across various contexts and settings. In the Southern United States, both urban and rural settings, it is a common stereotype that politeness in speech is an important personality trait to have.

How then are these expectations on polite discourse in the South reflected at Georgia State University?

Purpose: The purpose of our exploratory research was to study the effects of age, gender, and communicative tasks in the use and frequency of politeness markers between university-based (i.e., GSU-based) interlocutors. Other common stereotypes suggest that younger individuals are less likely to be polite when randomly approached in an informal setting, and that females are more likely to be polite than their male counterparts (Eckert, 2008).

Methods: In this study, we examined the distributions of grammatical politeness markers (e.g., *thanks, please, you're welcome*), greetings and apologies (e.g., *hi, how are you; I'm sorry*) and associated paralinguistic features as they occur in multiple settings. We hypothesized, among others, that opposite gender interactions (i.e., male and female interactions) will be more polite compared to male – male or female – female interactions; and that older speakers are more likely to be polite

than younger speakers. We tested our hypotheses and assumptions by conducting an observational, micro-ethnography that codes the use of polite speech across contexts such as face-to-face conversation, asking and giving directions, telephone-based inquiries, and informal talk.

Results: Our results, presented in the form of a conference poster, shows interesting patterns that point to the interaction of gender, age, and tasks as influencing the distribution of polite speech at the GSU campus. We include in our discussion our related observations about the nature of polite discourse, cultural implications, and future research directions.

Conclusions: As expected, the GSU campus does not completely represent or mirror the linguistic patterns of politeness by most Southerners but there are clear parallels as to the typical expectations, norms, and linguistic behaviors that are observable and quantifiable in this setting. Face-to-face interactions and phone calls are interesting settings for more in-depth analysis of polite discourse in an urban setting.