

## Pragmatic Analysis of Some Expressions of Politeness in Kihavu (D52/J53)

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**ABSTRACT:** This study investigates the pragmatic expressions of politeness in Kihavu. It analyzes pragmatically different expressions of politeness in accordance with the Havu culture and custom. To achieve this research, I used the documentary research, the questionnaire, the observation of gestures of politeness that accompany polite utterances, and the interviews, especially with mature speakers of Kihavu. After the analysis, the findings have revealed that polite utterances in Kihavu are culture-specific, i.e. they are specific to the Havu culture and custom, and most of them are partially gestural. Furthermore, the investigation has shown that Havu people do not use expressions of politeness randomly insofar as they have some culture-oriented goals, intentions, purposes and decisions while uttering them.

**KEYWORDS:** the bald on-record strategy, off-record indirect strategy, positive politeness, negative politeness, cooperative principle (cp), politeness principle (pp).

**SYMBOLS:** ↑h: desirable for the hearer/addressee, ↓h: undesirable for the hearer, X: utterance, / rising tone, \ falling tone.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The subject matter of pragmatic theory is ostensibly linguistic communication, much of it deals, in fact, with the more general problem of human interaction, which is independent of linguistic considerations and of which linguistic communication is just a particular manifestation (T. Reinhart 1978:53).

In fact, the pragmatic analysis of Havu expressions of politeness falls in the scope of socio-linguistics. This area has tremendously interested linguistic-minded researchers such as Geoffrey Leech (1983:1) who considers this study as a way of getting meanings of utterances in their context, i.e. how language is used in communication or in different situations and interactions, Grice (1981:13) who gives the maxims that must be observed in conversational exchanges, Searle (1979:16) who carried out some research on speech acts and recent linguistics where he applied Grice's maxims to certain grammar notions. Besides, Belinda Hill (2008:2) says that pragmatics refers to social language skills we use in our daily interactions with others. They include what we say, how we say it, our body language and whether it is appropriate to a given situation.

Analyzing expressions of politeness in Kihavu in a pragmatic way necessitates knowing the ethno-pragmatic mechanisms that govern those expressions. It requires the access to cultural norms in uttering them, the context in which they are uttered, the rules observed while producing them and the people to whom they are addressed.

#### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The attitudes of language speakers to utter or hold any kind of language or speech regardless of the person being addressed to, tremendously impedes the communicational process and therefore considered as a social gaffe. In this perspective, language appropriacy is paramount. The problem is thus; to know whether the expressions of politeness uttered by different categories of Bahavu (native speakers of Kihavu) are appropriate in the situations they are uttered, whether they convey some crucial linguistic and /or cultural meanings of politeness, or whether they are uttered in respect of specific rules or principles of politeness.

## 1.2 A GLIMPSE ON KHAVU

Kihavu is a Bantu language classified in the linguistic zones D52 by Guthrie and J53 by Meeussen. It is the only ethnic language spoken on the Idjwi Island with its three dialects namely the Nyeju (ekinyeju), the Bindi (ekibindi), and the Buzi (ekinyabuzi). This investigation is concerned with the Nyeju, a dialect spoken on the area extending from Boza, Mugote, up to the northern part of Idjwi bordered in the west by Kalehe Administrative Territory.

## 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This analysis investigates on how politeness is pragmatically handled by native speakers of Kihavu through the daily use of Kihavu, their native language of communication. The following are the questions that govern this research:

- How do the Bahavu (native speakers of Kihavu) view politeness?
- What are the circumstances in which politeness is expressed and mostly needed in Havu culture and language?
- How do native speakers of Kihavu proceed to express politeness in front of people having different age and status?
- What do the rules and/or principles of politeness constitute in Kihavu?

## 1.4 ASSUMPTIONS/ HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses can stand for provisional answers to the above questions:

- Politeness is vital in the Havu culture. Havu language speakers, like some other language speakers, have their own ways of expressing politeness which are inherent to their socio-cultural and geographical realities. However, some Havu language speakers who are not culturally trained in the Havu language (Kihavu) tend to use any kind of expression towards any kind of person regardless of the age, social status, and the like. Such language users create a kind of communication failure so that they need to be trained consequently.
- In the Havu culture, politeness is needed in many situations. It can, for example, be expressed during people's greetings, suggestions, but also during request with intentional purposes.
- While expressing politeness, the Bahavu utter a few expressions to mean much. In some circumstances, they even use gestures while uttering these expressions to show how polite they are towards the addressee(s).
- In the Havu culture, politeness constitutes the equilibrium, the friendly relations among people and the humble attitude to people on power or in higher position in the culture.

## 1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This work aims at analyzing pragmatically the different expressions of politeness as used in Kihavu, find their appropriacy in terms of the type of politeness used, and point out the dominant and broken maxims of CP and PP, classify them according to people who produce them, speculate whether they should be used in such or such contexts, and finally draw some conclusions related to their context of use.

## 1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To make the present investigation much clearer, it is worth stating its theoretical setting as well as the definition of the key concepts which are crucial and that pave the way to the understanding of the whole work. They are listed hereafter: Politeness, Rhetoric, Positive politeness (Pp), Negative politeness (Np), the Bald On-Record Strategy and the Off-Record Indirect Strategy.

### 1.6.1 POLITENESS

In principle, using a language is an orderly process whereby people talk to others with regard to their age, social status or rank, the circumstances in which they find themselves, the language context, and more importantly the language social functions. When Havu people use their language in expressions of politeness, they fairly well implement some language norms taking into account important factors such as age, sex, social rank/ status, circumstances and language functions which assuredly make Kihavu a coherent code. It is then in this perspective that I paid heed to the pragmatic analysis of expressions of politeness in Kihavu.

Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2002:1090) defines politeness as a behavior which follows all the usual rules of the society. It is also known as courtesy or courteousness, i.e. the formal politeness used in social situations. Politeness is the good manner and respect for the feelings of others that is socially correct behavior (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 1122). Politeness is a redressive action taken to account for the balance between communication and conversational strategies (Penelope, 1968:4). Furthermore, politeness is the act of showing good manners towards others, as in behavior, speech, etc... (<http://www.CognitiveLinguistics.org/reviews/watts>).

In expressing politeness, four strategies are distinguished for the main purpose of dealing with Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). Face Threatening Acts are acts that infringe on the hearer's need to maintain his / her self esteem, and his/her need to be respected (<http://www.CognitiveLinguistics.org/reviews/watts>). The four types of politeness strategies as described by Brown and Levinson, sum up human politeness behavior. These strategies are found hereafter: the positive politeness, the negative politeness, the Bald On-Record Strategy, and the Off-Record Indirect Strategy.

#### 1.6.1.1 THE POSITIVE POLITENESS STRATEGY

In this type of strategy, the speaker recognizes that the hearer has a desire to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is friendly and expresses group reciprocity. For instance, (Kihavu): **Kwàkàbà kwinjà nkólés'ákéři kàwè?** i.e. "Is it ok if I use your knife? / I wish I used your knife".

In the above utterance, the speaker asks the hearer for the permission to use the latter's knife taking into account his/her face though the speech in question is friendly.

#### 1.6.1.2 THE NEGATIVE POLITENESS STRATEGY

It is similar to Positive Politeness in that the speaker recognizes the hearer's face, but to some extent; the speaker is assumed to be in some way imposing on the hearer. For instance, (Kihavu): **òrhàkántábéré n'ákéři kàwè?**, i.e. "Wouldn't it be a good idea to use your knife?" / "Wouldn't you help me with your knife?" In this utterance, the speaker politely addresses a negative utterance to the hearer considering his / her face; but seems to show that using a knife may be his right.

#### 1.6.1.3 THE BALD ON-RECORD STRATEGY

It is the one which provides no effort to minimize threats to your hearer's face. For instance, the statement (Kihavu): **inshóndér'ènkólés'ákéři kàwè?** "I want to use your knife". As it can be obviously remarked in this utterance, the speaker asks for permission to the hearer in a seemingly polite way, but he does not take care of the self-esteem that the hearer is supposed to display in his/her family or society.

#### 1.6.1.4 THE OFF-RECORD INDIRECT STRATEGY

This strategy consists of taking some of the speaker's pressure off, i.e. it discards from the speaker any kind of pressure that can have a negative effect on the hearer's face. For instance, a person who has, on purpose decided not to let the hearer guess directly what he/ she is asking can simply say: (Kihavu) **Ákéři lyàkàbér'éjibù**, i.e. "a knife would be the answer". For this particular way of expressing politeness, the speaker tries not to directly impose by asking a knife, but looks for an indirect way which will make the hearer be aware of the need being expressed.

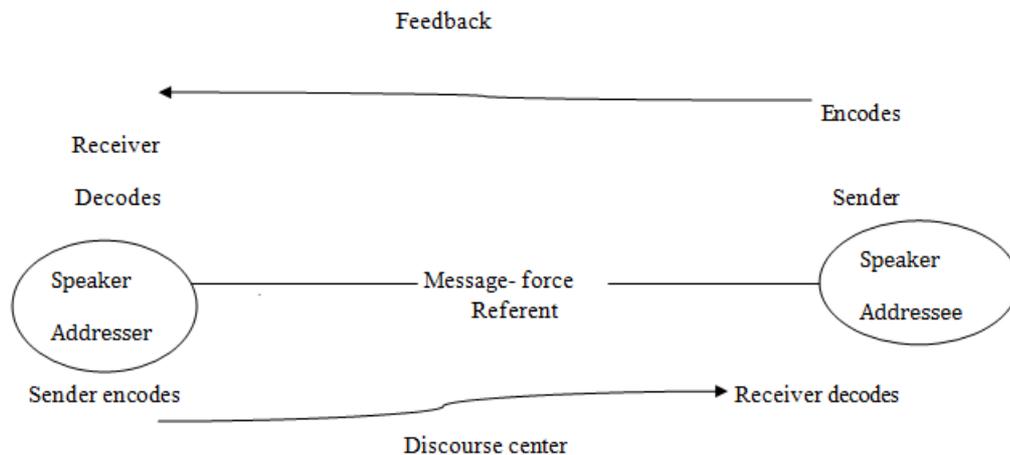
### 1.6.2 FORCE OF HAVU EXPRESSIONS OF POLITENESS

The pragmatic force of Havu expressions of politeness depends on how consistent the speaker utters these expressions and how the hearer interprets the message. These expressions are mainly socio-deictic, i.e. the speaker uses a powerful expression of politeness when the hearer is of a high social rank and uses an ordinary expression, even the Bald On-Record Strategy depending on the lower status of the hearer.

#### 1.6.2.1 THE SPEAKER OR THE ADDRESSER

He is the one who manoeuvres an expression of politeness depending on the hearer being addressed to. Whichever variety of Kihavu he uses, i.e. (formal, informal, neutral, colloquial, or ordinary spoken Kihavu); he/ she needs to have sufficient cultural background knowledge in the language so that he/ she cannot offend the hearer's face. Sometimes the

hearer can become the speaker in polite communication exchanges as it can be seen in the following chart of communication:



For example:

- Speaker A: Nàkàsimiré ngéré wálihà, “Your majesty, I would like to have the way free”.
- Speaker B: Néchimwáná wáni, i.e. “You can pass my child”.

From the above two utterances, we notice that (A) and (B) are at the same time speakers and hearers, because they have to consider not only each other’s face, but also the Interpretation of the heard utterance.

#### 1.6.2.2 THE HEARER OR THE SPEAKER

In order to see how an utterance can have its force in Kihavu focusing on the addressee, let us consider (1) and (2) here below:

(1) Rhwàlámúsiz’ómúkùlù, i.e. “Our greetings, dear chief”.

(2) Rhwàcìré búfi Nnákùndò, i.e. “We humble ourselves, dear land owner!”

These two utterances used to greet people of a high social rank have two different pragmatic forces as far as the addressee is concerned. In (1) the speaker is in presence of any authority or respectful Havu person who may or not be in charge of judging or providing people with hints and important life guide lines. In (2) however, the speaker is in presence of the representative of the Havu culture and custom. So, in terms of force, (2) is said to be more powerful than (1) in reference to the addressee concerned.

#### 1.6.3 RHETORIC

The term rhetoric traditionally refers to the study of the effective use of language in communication, i.e. the art of using language skillfully for persuasion, public speaking and literary expression (Leech 1983:15). As far as pragmatics is concerned, the term rhetoric is considered as a goal-oriented speech situation in which the speaker uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the hearer. The term rhetoric is two-fold: the interpersonal and the textual rhetoric. Each of the two rhetorics consists of a set of maxims and sub-maxims. In this investigation, it is the interpersonal rhetoric that I have resorted to for various comments and analyses.

Grice (1975:44) apart from showing conversational implicatures, he also gives the maxims of the interpersonal rhetoric to be observed in conversational exchanges. He shows the three principles of the interpersonal rhetoric namely the Cooperative Principle (CP), the Politeness Principle (PP) and the Irony Principle (IP) with their maxims and sub-maxims. The present research is mainly focused on the first two principles of the Interpersonal Rhetoric (IR). The CP comprises the quantity, quality, relation and manner maxims whereas the PP is made of tact, generosity, approbation and modesty maxims. The choice of the aforementioned principles was dictated by the fact that we realized that they work hand in hand pragmatically. While expressing politeness, cooperation is of paramount importance, especially in the Havu culture and custom.

## **2 WORKING POLICY**

To carry out this research, I resorted to various methods, approaches, techniques and processes during the data gathering / collection and analysis.

### **2.1 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

To have access to the necessary data, I firstly resorted to the library research which was based on the intensive reading of books pertaining to pragmatics and expression of politeness, theses, magazines, articles and other written sources. The library or documentary research requires the consultation of official and private documents. The researcher does not exercise any control on the way those documents have been established but he must rather select those that pertain to his research. Furthermore, it allows the researcher not only to exploit the information of people as a source in order to actually elaborate the problem statement, formulate hypotheses better and choose the techniques of treatment of the data well, but also to facilitate the interpretation of available findings( Gratwitz and Pinto, 1967:19). It is worth noting that the use of this documentary research enabled me to have broad knowledge on the topic under study. Secondly, I had recourse to the ethnographical research. This consisted of getting into contact with my respondents. According to Mulamba (2009:7) in his lecture notes of "Research Methods in Linguistics for Graduate Students", states that this particular type of research is based on the use of informants or respondents, subjects or interviewees. He pursues saying that this contact with respondents can either be oral or written. Thirdly, I both used a questionnaire and interviews. Kotari (1985:42) asserts that scientific readers wish to be given details about the way the study was carried out, especially on whether the data were collected through a questionnaire or an interview, what were the questions and how they were selected. As for the present article, I employed a questionnaire in which there were tasks of elicitation procedure. Corder (1973:61) defines the elicitation procedure as "any procedure which causes a learner or a respondent to make judgment about something and provoke him into generating a linguistic response".

My choice of a questionnaire sides with Coleman and Douglas (2001:21). They state in their articles on data collection methods in Applied Linguistics that "through a questionnaire the researcher is able to collect data regarding information related to his/her subjects' communicative behavior that they perform". It is in this perspective that I had to make open-ended questions in accordance with the principle of pragmatic consistency so that my respondents could deal with them pragmatically. That always enabled the addressee to make what he/she believes to be a consistent set of information into account (Adler, J, 1980:73). Finally, I used structured and unstructured interviews, especially when I wanted to get data from illiterate speakers of Kihavu.

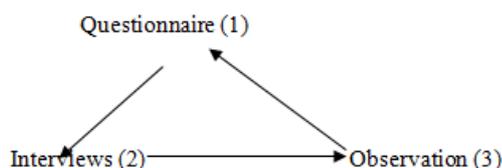
### **2.2 METHODS OR APPROCHES OF DATA ANALYSIS**

The following are the methods and approaches I used to analyze some Havu polite utterances pragmatically: the socio-linguistic approach, the pragmatic approach, and the analytical approach. The first approach enabled me to study the social factors in Kihavu. Mulamba (2009:26) states that "social factors in relation with language can be for instance, the education level and type of education, age, ethnic origin and the like". He pursues saying that they can also be either macrosocio-linguistics (language planning, language policy, or language attitudes) or microsocio-linguistics (interpersonal meaning making). The present study is both macrosocio-linguistics and microsocio-linguistics in that it first of all deals with the attitudes that Havu people (people speaking Kihavu) display while expressing politeness. Secondly, it looks into the possible relationships among the Bahavu in terms of the meanings conveyed through politeness. The second approach which proves to be the most important one helped me to pragmatically and validly interpret and provide the meanings to different expressions politeness. The pragmatic approach is concerned with the hearer's meanings, i.e. how the hearer interprets the message. It is associated with speech acts and cultural knowledge, and is mainly important in culture-oriented topics such as speech acts, use of gestures, ceremonies etc. (Mulamba, 2009:4). As for Leech, G. (1983:12), "thanks to the pragmatic approach; the utterances meanings are looked at in different situations". The third and last approach helped quite a lot in analyzing Havu expressions contextually and culturally. Adler. (1980:73), argues that "analyzing utterances requires their contextual interpretation taking into consideration certain pragmatic principles". In this view point, my analysis accounted not only for the context in which expressions are used but also the pragmatic principles that govern Havu expressions of politeness.

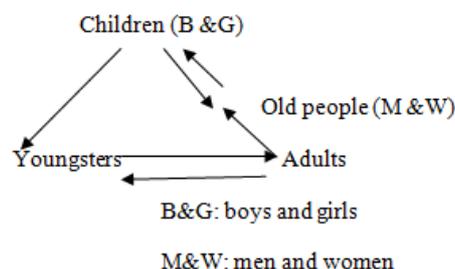
### **2.3 RESEARCH PROCESSES**

According to Mulamba (2009:11), processes are steps, actions or series of actions that the researcher has to go through in order to reach a given result. Hereafter is the way I made triangulations of techniques and informants to access the data I needed for this work.

(A) Triangulation of techniques



(B) Triangulation of informants



The above triangulations overtly show how the techniques were used and how I resorted to a group of Havu people having a given age before moving to the next group and sometimes came back to the former group whenever the answers I got were not fully satisfactory. That is especially found in (a) ↔ (d) and (b) ↔ (c).

### 3 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

To pragmatically and validly proceed with the analysis of Havu expressions of politeness, I had to identify (1°) the type of politeness found in the expression under analysis and its dominant maxims of the CP and PP, (2°) the meanings they convey to the hearer, (3°) the context in which they are used; (4°) the intention of the speaker and the addressee's attitude. It is by following these steps rigorously that I happened to draw some conclusions. Sustaining this point of view, Mulamba (2009:17), shows that "before reaching a conclusion, a researcher has to analyze available and reliable facts or pieces of information. Further, Adler, J., (1980:73) in his turn argues that "analyzing utterances requires their contextual interpretation taking into consideration certain pragmatic principles". This analysis accounted mainly for the culture in which polite utterances are produced and the principles that govern pragmatics and politeness.

#### 3.1 EXPRESSING POLITENESS AMONG PEERS

These expressions are much more concerned with people having the same age or sharing the same social rank and professional status.

##### 3.1.1 GREETINGS

(1) A: Nàlámúsizè múzáwée! → B: Néchi múzá wée!

"I have greeted, mister"

"yes, mister"

Índé wàlámúsizè? "Who have you greeted?"

(2) A: Máhyó múzá wée! → B: Néchi múzá wée!

(3) A: Òkóméré sí wáni? → B: Néchi wáni

"My friends, brother..., are you all right?"

"Yes, my friend, brother..."

In the above three utterances, the speaker resorts to the Bald On-Record Strategy of politeness with the assumption that he/she cannot devote much energy or effort of politeness to somebody of his age or he/she is familiar to. In fact, in utterance (1), the literal translation being "I have greeted, mister", the utterer does not give the right amount of information that the listener or hearer needs. For that reason, he overtly breaks the maxim of quantity, because even though he has the goal to convey his greetings to the addressee, he/she does not give much precision about the person he/she wants to greet. This can also lead to ambiguity in the sense that the person to be greeted is not clearly stated; hence, another breach based on the manner maxim. The interpretation of this utterance by the hearer is two-fold. First, the hearer can think that the speaker is reporting to him/her that he/she has already greeted somebody. Second, the hearer can think that he/she is being greeted. In utterance (2) however, the speaker somehow observes the maxim of quantity, but breaks the approbation maxim because of much familiarity. It can be translated as follows: "My greetings, mister". Furthermore, looking at utterance (3) which is "My friend/mister, are you all right/ are you strong enough?" we can say that the speaker makes his greeting as informative as needed (quantity maxim) but breaks to some extent the approbation maxim. In the Havu community, the

above expressions are employed in a polite way by someone who wants to appear familiar with other people having the same age or sharing the same profession or social rank with them. To utter those expressions, the speaker does not need to make special gestures or signals of politeness. As for the answers that the hearer gives, in (1, 2) B: "**Néchi múzá wée**", and in (3) B: "**Néchi wáni**", all contain the Bald On-Record and lack informativeness just in case the hearer reacts to a greeting of someone from a group of more than two persons.

### 3.1.2 APOLOGIZING

**Múzá wée, ákábá wàgàyìr'ókúlémá nákúderhà kúbi ngási hóshi nàgèrèrè, ómbér'óbónjò:** "Mister, if you are angry for I have badly talked about you everywhere I pass, forgive me". As it can be obviously remarked in this utterance, though the speaker is talking to his/her peer, he/she recognizes that his/her addressee needs to be respected. In this respect, he/she uses the positive politeness strategy. As for the interpretation from the addressee, he can either think that the speaker does not recognize his fault because of the condition he places, but he simply wants to solve the problem by apologizing, or he can think that the speaker simply feels guilty and wants to be forgiven. In the former interpretation, in case it is the right one, the speaker is said to have broken the quality maxim because he says what he believes to be false by simply trying to avoid problems. In the latter case the speaker is said to have observed the maxim of agreement because he minimizes disagreement between himself and his addressee and maximizes agreement between himself and his addressee. In the Havu community's use of language, the present expression is not uttered in any circumstance. It requires its utterer to avail something edible or drinkable that he has to offer to his addressee in order to have reconciliation and enable the maxim of agreement to take place.

## 3.2 CUNNUBIAL EXPRESSIONS OF POLITENESS

These are expressions resulting from marriage and mostly used by husbands with their wives or the other way round.

### 3.2.1 GREETINGS

(1) **Nàlámúsizè nyábàná múkází wáni** "My greeting, mother of my children/my wife".

(2) **Nàlámúsizè shábàná múlúmé wáni** "My greeting, father of my children/my husband".

The above expressions are uttered by a husband or his wife when they meet after a long period separation. In them, the cooperative principle is upheld and the two utterances are made fully polite by the use of the cultural terms resulting from fruitful marriages, such as "Nyábàná" in (1) and "Shábàná" in (2) and their use is due to a high consideration on either part.

In utterance (1), A: Pos<sub>x</sub> (sense-given)

B: S praises h (approbation)

C: S believes that x is not false (quality)

D: S believes that x is as informative to h as is required (quantity)

E: S believes that x is relevant (relation)

F: S is perspicuous through x (manner). This analysis shows that h is aware of being praised, understands the conveyed greeting, and finds x clear to interpret. This analysis is not different from the one we can come across after the interpretation of (2).

Rule:

—shábàná múlúmé wáni— /or—nyábàná múkází wáni—

## 3.3 EXPRESSING POLITENESS TO PEOPLE HAVING A MORE ADVANCED AGE

Hereafter is a sample of some polite utterances produced by people of a lower age towards other people of a more advanced age. It can be children- adult, adult- old person and so on depending upon the case.

### 3.3.1 GREETING

(1) **Rhwàlámúsizè, dárhà/ nyámà** “We have greeted, father/ mother”.

### 3.3.2 WARNING

(2) **Nyám’òrhàgáyàgà, sí álikò nàgàsímírè nkúwírè k’ókágér’àhò wágw’ómúkíchókòlè.** “Mother, do not mind me, but I would like to tell you that if you pass there, you will fall into a very deep hole”. The speaker of utterance (1) is a young boy/girl of around twelve to thirty years old who greets a man or a woman who is nearly as old as his/her father or mother. He/she can even extrapolate by uttering this polite expression towards a man or a woman who is as old as his/her grandfather. Here the emphasis is put on age equivalence rather than on family relationship. In fact, being a particle of politeness, the amount of information is not quantitative in that the addressee can understand the sense of that utterance, but can still wonder whether the speaker wants to greet him / her or he/she has just greeted somebody else and wants to report it to him/her. This lack of complete guessing of the polite expression is due to the fact that it is uninformative to both **S** and **h**. The words “Rhwà”, i.e. “we” for a single person and the deliberate use of “dárhà” and “nyámà”, i.e. father and “mother” for whoever has the age of father or mother makes this Havu piece of greeting a polite expression. The speaker recognizes his addressee’s age and thinks that his face needs to be protected from any kind of threat (positive politeness). As for utterance (2) the speaker can be a child, a youngster, an adult, even an old person who, by recognizing the addressee’s age, calls her “nyámà”, i.e. “mother”. Furthermore, the use of the negative politeness strategy makes the utterance rather polite and cooperative. The whole context can be represented as follows:

A: Neg<sub>x</sub> (sense—given)

B: S believes x to be as informative as is required (quantity)

C: S believes x to be accurate (manner)

D: S believes x to be a clear expression (manner) and x is ↑h

E: S believes that x is true (quality). If **S** knows that **h** will be angry because of x, then quality is violated. In addition, the modesty maxim is upheld.

### 3.3.3 OFFERING FOOD

**Dàrhà, nàgàkúbázíz’ákábá wàgàsím’òbéhy’òbúnú búnóbùnò** “Father, I would like to ask you if you may want to lie the mouth right now”. The speaker considers that by using the expression “òbéhy’òbúnù”, i.e. “lie the mouth” which actually means to eat sufficiently and quench one’s thirst, he/she will have diminished the boastfulness and self-praise involved in saying “welcome to this special food”, (modesty maxim). In the same utterance, by using the positive politeness strategy, the speaker becomes too polite at the point that he fails to observe the quantity maxim, because he mitigates the polite utterance and makes it more informative than is required. In addition, by the time that the speaker offers food to the hearer immediately implies an expense or cost to the speaker and benefit to the hearer (the beneficiary of the food offered), i.e. (modesty and tact sub-maxims are observed). Pragmatically, this can be represented as follows:

A: Pos<sub>x</sub> (sense—given)

B: S makes x more informative for reasons of high degree of politeness (ostensible breach of the quantity maxim)

C: S believes that x is not false (quality)

D: S is searching for h’s benefit (tact) and x is ↑h

E: S is not boastful (modesty)

### 3.4 EXPRESSING POLITENESS TO CHILDREN

In this point, the convenient expressions to be addressed to children and people having a lower age in general are sampled.

### 3.4.1 GREETING

(1) **Chùbáká wée òkóméré?** That means “builder, are you strong/ well?”

(2) **Òkóméré sí múlègà?** i.e. “Are you well? **Múlègà** (a clan-related term)

In Kihavu, when mature people greet children or young people at any time, they use the children and /or young people grandfather’s names or terms related to their clan. In (1), the positive politeness being used, the speaker is a man, a woman, or an old person who considers that the young boy he/she talks to is evolving and becoming strong enough so that people in the community have high hopes on him. That is why he is called “**chùbákà**”, a polite way of naming an important builder or a person on whose actions the future can be founded. By praising the addressee in such a way, the speaker upholds the approbation maxim. It is also worth saying that both S and h are being cooperative, because h cannot respond with a harsh answer. In (2), the speaker overestimates the hearer’s clan (modesty) and seems to underestimate his. The term “**múlègà**” is an obligatory clanic word without which presence, especially in greetings, the expression becomes blunt. The following are the rules that govern expressions used to talk to children or youngsters:

Rules:

I: greeting + noun of quality

II: greeting + clanic term

### 3.4.2 ADVISING

**Òrhàyirhàg’óbúsólè bwàwè búsh’ómúkúlémá wázimbà** “Do not spoil your youth in stealing”. This is addressed to a young person who is in an excessive situation of theft. The speaker resorts to the negative politeness with the hinting strategy. In fact, he is sure that the hearer, having a younger age, needs to be respected, and to succeed changing the young man’s reprehensible behavior, he utters his illocution as a hint. Considering “**óbúsòlè**”, i.e. “the youth” as the most important period in a human being’s life, h observes the approbation maxim. Furthermore, the hinting strategy exploits the maxim of relation in that in the context envisaged in the utterance, a hint about the h’s ability to change his behavior will only conceivably be relevant as a means of the h’s eventual performance of the utterance. Moreover, the slight impositive side that the utterance bares is beneficial to the hearer, and can lead to a cooperative interaction between S and h. For instance, h can answer saying “**Néchi**”, i.e. “yes” to mean that he has tremendously been affected by the utterance even though it can sometimes be ↓h if the latter is delinquent.

### 3.5 EXPRESSING POLITENESS TO PEOPLE ON POWER

Hereafter is the cultural way a person speaking Kihavu can talk to someone on power or the “**Mwámì**”, the representative of the Havu culture and custom:

Greeting:

A: **Lébé, óndángúlè** “Mr. X, make me see”, i.e. “Convey my greeting to the Mwámì” which is impolite.

B: **Àyirwísè** “He has understood and greets you too”. In (A) the speaker wants to greet the representative of the Havu culture and custom, but to convey his greetings to the “mwámì”, he/she must kneel down and put his/her hands up and he/she cannot by himself/herself convey the greetings to the “mwami”, but he/she must ask other people around the “mwami” to greet the latter for him/her though the speaker may be looking at the “mwami” personally. When the people around the “mwami” hear the greeting, they reply saying “**Àyirwísè**”, i.e. “he has understood”. They cannot say “**Àyùnvírhé**” though it is its synonym because it is used for any Havu person who has heard something. Hereby, the speaker resorts to the Off-Record Indirect Strategy and upholds the approbation maxim. The speaker is more cooperative and careful to talk to that powerful and respectful figure in the Havu culture than he can be for other people.

## 4 CONCLUSION

This small-scale research has tried to analyze some expressions of politeness used in Kihavu. It has attempted to give some rules and formulas of politeness that govern conversational utterances in Kihavu, identify the types of politeness used, make an inventory of utterances in respect of the situations in which they are used, check the maxims of the cooperative and politeness principles which are broken and the upheld ones, and show the peculiar way politeness is performed in Kihavu.

The analysis revealed that the social extent to which an expression of politeness is used in Kihavu very much depends on the Bahavu's ability to perform the cultural values that are required. It has also shown that the Bahavu have their own ways of expressing politeness given that the polite utterances they produce are culture-specific. Havu people partially use gestural expressions, clanic, connubial, family-oriented, even honorific terms for reasons of love, familiarity, or high social respect. Furthermore, the present research showed that the bulk of maxims that Havu people break in their exchanges result on the one hand from the lack of adequate cultural training and the constituents of the Havu language itself on the other hand.

All in all, the discovery of some rules of Havu polite expressions and their analysis and the awareness of their accurate use can enable both scientists and non-scientists to make a judicious choice of polite expressions before addressing them to people.

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