

POLITENESS IN TSHIVENDA<sup>^</sup>

by

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(i)

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this work is my own original work and has not previously submitted in any form whatsoever, to this University or to any other educational institution for any degree or examination purpose.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Arun Kumar", written above a horizontal line.

SIGNATURE

12.02.2002

DATE

## **DEDICATION**

I am proud to dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful wife, Maṭamba Annah, my four daughters, Phaṭhutshedzo, Mashudu, Khuliso and Mulavhelesi, and my son, Atondaho Uafulufhedzea.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I once read a book and the author spent several pages on acknowledging people who had played an important role in the formation of his book. In fact, he observed that if it were done correctly, every author would do the same. I would like to take the time and thank those who have assisted in the completion of this dissertation.

My sincere and special gratitude goes to Prof N.R. Maḡadzhe, my promoter, for giving so generously of his time, for his guidance, encouragement and patience, for never failing to ask exactly the right questions, above all his experience and insights. To him I say: *Mudzimu kha vha shudufhadze a vha engedze maḡuvha a vhutshilo havho. Ndo vhona vhuthu, lufuno na thuthuwedzo, zwine ndi nga si zwi hangwe.*

My heart-felt gratitude is also directed to my Pastor, Masakona A.M., his dear wife and children for allowing me to miss some of the Church Services in order to attend to this dissertation.

(iv)

I am also deeply indebted to Mrs Ramurunzi, Mrs Neluvhalani, Mr Mudzielwana and Mr Mabanda my colleagues for their constant and moral support during the course of my study.

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Lastly, I would like to thank OUR ALMIGHTY GOD for giving me another day and mental strength to complete this study within the envisaged period. For without His Mercy and Grace I wouldn't have completed this dissertation.

## **ABSTRACT**

Chapter 1 serves as an introductory section of the study. Main issues dealt with in this chapter include statement of the problem, aim of study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, methods of study and different views on politeness.

Chapter 2 treats the relationship that exists between the noun classes and politeness. The chapter shows that noun classes denote various meanings and this has a bearing on politeness expression.

Chapter 3 focuses on the role of greetings in bringing about politeness. Various types of greetings in Tshivenda have been examined. It has also been shown that greetings display several functions, and that they play a vital role in bringing about harmony in society.

Chapter 4 deals with requests as another component of politeness. Ample examples has been provided to illustrate the various function of requests.

Chapter 5 gives the conclusion of the study.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Tshivenda is a language of respect and dignity. Some words are not that simple to be used in every situation. A child who grows up amidst the Tshivenda speaking people who strictly adhere to their culture will differ greatly from a child who grows up among people who have adopted Western culture.

It is necessary to conduct research on this topic because most of the Tshivenda words that denote politeness are gradually disappearing, because of the frequent use of English as a medium of communication. Most, if not all the churches that are mushrooming today use English as their medium of communication, hence one also finds a number of families among the same Tshivenda speaking people communicating in English even among themselves.

Furthermore, many Tshivenda speaking people send their children to multiracial schools where Tshivenda is not studied – not even as a second or third language. In this case, communication is all done in English.

There is an argument between the elderly people and the youths because of the use of English. These two groups have different viewpoints on the way of communicating. The elderly people want to preserve their culture whereas the youth want to change.

At the same time the particular change that is being stressed and enforced affects Tshivenda as a language negatively.

According to Tshivenda speaking people, communication among different age groups should not be the same. The elderly people of the same age communicate in their own way and “respect” is the order of the day. Young people view respect in a totally different manner, yet society expects them to show respect at all times.

In order to restore dignity, respect and “ubuntu” amongst the Tshivenda speaking people, the study of politeness is most relevant.

## **1.2. AIM OF STUDY.**

The aim of this study is to examine politeness among Vhavenda from a sociological perspective. Both linguistic and cultural aspects that have a bearing on politeness will be scrutinized. Moreover, the study will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Is politeness relevant in present day South Africa?
- Which methods can be employed to strengthen politeness?
- Can what has been lost in politeness be regained?

### **1.3. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY.**

This is the examination of politeness in Tshivenda which helps us to understand the behaviour of the Tshivenda speaking people. This will help young people and people who study Tshivenda literature to understand the norms and values of the Vhavenda. The study will among other things introduce different ways of showing politeness among the Vhavenda, i.e. positive and negative.

### **1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.**

The study as a whole will contribute towards the better understanding of appropriate politeness features in Tshivenda.

The study will make people aware that politeness can be used as an effective tool to promote harmony in society.

Furthermore, the study will also help to inform other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and psychology that preservation of politeness in Tshivenda is of paramount importance.

Lastly, the study will also be useful as a reference for future studies on politeness.

## **1.5. METHODS OF STUDY**

In this research, different approaches will be followed. Among others the following methods will be used:

- Contextual method.
- Consultative method.
- Sociological method.
- Data collection

### **1.5.1. Contextual method.**

The term contextual has been derived from the noun context, which means facts or circumstances surrounding something. A contextual method is important in that it enables us to understand the context of the author's own society and his or her position within it.

### **1.5.2. Consultative method.**

From the look of things, the term consultative is a word derived from something discussed. Hornby (1997:247) defines consult as to go to a person, books, etc for information, advice etc. Therefore the term consultative which is an adjective, may be defined as giving advice, or making suggestion. This method will be useful in obtaining and analysing information from the elderly people who have theoretical and practical experience in politeness.

### **1.5.3. Sociological method**

This is the method whereby a researcher utilizes the knowledge of his culture to analyse information or data. The method will be relevant to this study, as the researcher will be compelled to apply his Tshivenda cultural knowledge on a regular basis.

### **1.5.4. Data collection.**

Two different methods will be used for data collection, namely, interviews and data already collected by experts (secondary data) in the field of politeness. Interviews will be necessary in this study as some of the information relevant to the topic can only be obtained from young and old people themselves. Unstructured questions will be used in interviews. However, the questions will concentrate on the following issues:

- The significance of politeness among the Tshivenda speaking people.
- The advantages and disadvantages of politeness.
- Types of politeness
- Features that show politeness and impoliteness.

The documentary method will also be used for data collection. A variety of reference materials such as journals, articles, library books and theses will be consulted.

## **1.6. POLITENESS**

The aim of this section is to define the term politeness. The works of different scholars who outlined this concept will be utilized for reference purpose. Analysis of different viewpoints will help in getting a proper perspective of the term politeness.

In order to achieve the abovementioned aim, the section will focus on the following:

- Definition of politeness.
- Types of politeness.

### **1.6.1. What politeness is all about.**

Relevant literature on politeness will be used throughout the study. Some of the most important literature in this regard may be summarized as follows:

Politeness is a noun that has been derived from the word polite. It means behaving in a manner that is socially correct and shows awareness of and caring of other people's feelings. In this regard the following questions are apt:

- What are one's reactions when people speak?
- How does one answer questions, is one emotional?
- Does one's actions show respect or disrespect?



The explanation of the term politeness as propounded by Hornby (1998:893) deals somewhat with the above-mentioned questions. Hornby defines politeness as follows:

Politeness is having or showing that one has good manner and consideration for other people.

The main idea in the above definition by Hornby is that when one speaks to others, one should respect them. In fact one's actions must show clearly that one considers them as human beings and they must be accorded respect and courtesy at all times.

In support of the above-mentioned definition by Hornby, Brown (1997:1121) regards politeness as embracing the following characteristics:

Refined manner, courteous, well-bred and cultivated

Following Brown's viewpoint, politeness may refer to those aspects of human behaviour, which would qualify a person to be regarded as maturely grown, friendly and approachable.

It must be born in mind that language usage also forms part and parcel of human behaviour. In support of this view, Leech (1983:104) defines politeness as:

Those forms of behaviour which are aimed at the establishment and maintenance of comity of

participants in a socio-communicative interaction  
in an atmosphere of relative harmony.

According to Stayt (1968), a woman in Tshivenda community shows respect by greeting anybody who is older than she is. She utters the interjective **aa** kneeling, in fact lying on her side with hands on top of each other and fingers facing upwards.

Stayt (1968:157) describes the position aptly:

A woman kneels with buttocks on heels and body  
bending forward, head bent and eyes on the ground.  
She places her hands together in the same way as the  
man, but instead of clapping them lifts the two forefingers  
up and down.

For every new encounter between people or groups, there must be greetings to indicate respect and politeness. In this regard, Stayt goes further to state that politeness must take place at all places, on the road, at work, shopping centres, at home, to mention but a few places.

### **1.6.2. Types of politeness.**

Brown and Levinson (1978) divide politeness into two types, positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness is the wish to have one's behaviour approved by

society while negative politeness is the desire to maintain one's independence at all times.

#### **1.6.2.1. Positive politeness.**

Positive politeness is the manner in which an individual reacts or responds to other people in an acceptable way. This has to do with someone who has good manners and behaviour in a way that is socially correct and considerate of other people's feelings. People must respect other's feelings and not hurt them when they are involved in a conversational contract.

Finegan (1994:334) defines positive politeness as:

Positive politeness is when we let people know  
that we enjoy their company, feel comfortable with  
them, like something in their well-being

Finegan (1994:33) continues to say:

Positive politeness may be extended by when  
we attend a party, invite someone to a dinner  
or call friends on the telephone to check up on them,  
when your friends share about personal problems  
and expects sympathy.

Following the above remark by Finegan one may deduce that people want to share their problems with their peer group or elderly people in order to be helped. The people whom one has shared one's problems with may show positive politeness by acknowledging one's problem.

On the other hand people want to share joy with friends through the telephone, inviting them for dinner, and to celebrate with them. Positive politeness deals with the desire to be liked, approved, respected and appreciated by others. This may be perceived as being the hearer's benefits.

Positive politeness involves actions such as thanking, inviting, congratulating and appreciating people. This also shows things that people say or do simply because they are correct to the society.

#### **1.6.2.2. Negative politeness.**

This is the behaviour that someone may show that may hurt the feelings of the other people. It is the undesirable manner of communication or action which people find themselves in. This may occur when people ignore their cultural way of doing things.

People are expected to act according to rules but negative politeness shows that people who are expected to follow those rules are not doing so.

Kasper (1990:194) says:

Negative politeness refers to the violation of the norms  
of behavior due to ignorance.

Negative politeness depends on the cultural traits. What is positive in one culture may be negative in the other. For instance in Tshivenda when a youth speaks to the elderly while standing is called negative politeness whereas in educational institutions, based on western culture learners show respect to their educators by standing when spoken to.

Furthermore, negative politeness has to do with unwanted and undesired attitude by a particular group of people who are engaged in a conversational contract. According to Dlaki (2001:76) negative politeness may involve actions such as threatening, ordering, demanding, accusing, cursing and reprimanding of the hearer.

The following table summarize positive politeness and negative politeness:

POSITIVE POLITENESS	NEGATIVE POLITENESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To like something in someone's personality</li> <li>➤ To attend a party.</li> <li>➤ Calling others</li> <li>➤ Congratulating people for something.</li> <li>➤ Appreciation.</li> <li>➤ Thanksgiving.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To dislike something in someone's personality.</li> <li>➤ To be in isolation.</li> <li>➤ Stop answering telephone.</li> <li>➤ Accusation of other people.</li> <li>➤ Threatening other people.</li> <li>➤ Cursing and reprimanding people.</li> </ul>

## 1.7. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

Chapter One is an introductory chapter, which covers statement of the problem, aim of the study, rationale of the study, significance of the study, methods of study, definition of politeness and types of politeness.

Chapter two focuses on the use of the noun classes in politeness.

Chapter three deals with the role of greetings in politeness. The chapter will also treat the structure of greetings and types of greetings.

Chapter four concentrates mainly on how requests affect politeness. The chapter includes the structure of request and types of requests.

Chapter five concludes the study and summarizes the main findings of the previous chapter.

# CHAPTER TWO

## THE USE OF THE NOUN CLASSES IN POLITENESS

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role that noun classes play in politeness. In order to achieve this aim, all the noun classes in Tshivenda will be examined. As already stated in Chapter One, politeness is divided into two major types: positive and negative politeness. This chapter will therefore endeavour to show how noun classes are involved in bringing about the aforementioned types of politeness.

### 2.2. TYPES AND STRUCTURE OF NOUN CLASSES

Nouns in Tshivenda like in other African languages, belong to classes nouns. The noun consists of two parts i.e. prefix and stem, example: munna (man) in Tshivenda consists of class prefix *mu-* and stem *-nna*. In the example above, the part that forms the noun class is the part called prefix.

According to Poulos (1990:13) noun classes are miscellaneous in semantic content, certain generalizations can be made about the significance of the classes, noun classes are different because of their respective features. This means that class prefixes in different nouns may bring about different meanings:



- (1)            Munna (man)  
                   Vhanna (men)  
                   Tshinna (Small and short man)  
                   Zwinna (Small and short men)  
                   Vhunna (manhood)

The above examples have different meanings which result from the usage of different class prefixes. All these nouns are formed from one stem *-nna*.

According to Ziervogel et al (1979:2) noun classes are internationally numbered. The following are noun classes which are found in Tshivenda:

(2) Noun class	Noun prefix	Example
1	mu-	munna (man)
2.	vha-	vhanna (men)
3.	mu	muomva (banana tree)
4.	mi-	miomva (banana trees)
5.	li-	linngo (mango)
6.	ma-	manngo (mangoes)
7.	tshi-	tshimange (cat)
8.	zwi-	zwimange (cats)
9.	n-	nn̩du (hut)
10.	dzin-	dzinn̩du (huts)
11.	lu-	luimbo (song)

12.	-	-
13.	-	-
14.	vhu-	vhubva (laziness)
15.	u-	u imba (to sing/ singing)
16.	fha-	fhasi (down)
17.	ku-	kule (far)
18.	mu-	murahu (back)
19.	-	-
20.	ku-	kusidzana (little girl)
21.	di-	dithu (monster).

Again the purpose of this chapter is to denote positive and negative politeness. Only noun classes which affect positive politeness will be discussed.

## 2.3. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE POLITENESS

### 2.3.1. Noun classes 1 and 2.

These are noun classes which largely contain nouns which indicate persons. They are characterised by the prefix **mu-** in singular form and the prefix **vha-** in plural:

Examples:

- (3) muthu (person)  
vhathu (persons)

The nouns in these classes are imbued with a sense of respect; they thus reflect politeness. Note the following examples:

- (4) munna (man)  
mutukana (boy)  
mukalaha (old man)  
mukegulu (old lady)

In the above examples i.e. **munna, mutukana, mukalaha and mukegulu**, have the same class prefix **mu-**. This prefix is associated with day to day usage in life where there is positive attitude. This means that all nouns which are formed by way of affixation of prefix **mu-** of class 1 denote positive politeness.

Note the plural examples:

- (5) vhanna (men)  
vhatukana (boys)  
vhakegulu (old ladies)  
vhakalaha (old men)

In the above example class prefix *mu-* has been replaced with the prefix *vha-* to form the plural. This class prefix *vha-* contributes in bringing about positive politeness because if one places the prefix *vha-* with another prefix, positive attitude may change to negative attitude.

Examples:

- (6)            (li-) nna (big man)  
                  (li-) dukana (big boy)  
                  (li-) gegulu (big old lady)  
                  (li-) galaha (big old man)

Poulos (1990:14) states that class prefixes *mu-* and *vha-* may refer to certain tribes:

Singular

- (7)            Mubeli            (a Pedi person)  
                  Muzulu            (a Zulu person)  
                  Mutshangana    (a Shangaan person)

Plural

- (8)            Vhapedi            (Pedi people)  
                  Vhazulu            (Zulu people)  
                  Vhatshangana    (Shangaan people)

The above examples express respect to the tribe concerned. This shows that the speaker is signifying respect and honour to those tribes concerned. This view is echoed by Du Plessies and Maqadzhe (1999:31) when they state:

The appearance of the prefix **mu-** in the above nouns seem to denote respect, affection and courtesy towards the ethnic groups being referred to.

Noun classes 1 and 2 have subclasses i.e. 1a and 2a. In this chapter, only prefix **vho-** will be dealt with. Prefix **vho-** is referred to as the class prefix of relationship (Ziervogel et al (1979:14)

In the first instance class prefix **vho-** may be used to express plurality of class prefix 1a and other class prefixes.

Note the following examples:

- (9)                      vhomakhadzi (aunts)  
                              vhomalume (uncles)  
                              vhokhotsi (fathers)  
                              vhomme (mothers)

From the above examples the class prefix **vho-** has been affixed to the following nouns to form the plural form of the following words:

- (10)                    makhadzi (aunt)  
                             malume (uncle)  
                             khotsi (father)  
                             mme (mother).

The affixation of prefix **vho-** has brought about the change in meaning. The class prefix **vho-** in this case conveys plurality with integrity. The noun formed thereby commands respect and honour.

Apart from indicating the plural, **vho-** may be used for honorific purposes. It must be remembered that honour is defined as great respect for somebody. (Hornby 1998:571),

Note the following examples:

- (11)                    vhomme (pastor's wife)  
                             vhomakhadzi (paternal aunt)  
                             vhomalume (maternal uncle).

From the above examples positive politeness is therefore revealed. **Vho-** may be affixed to proper nouns of people to express mister (Mr) and mistress (Mrs).

Let us take a look at the following examples:

- (12)           Vho-Muofhe (Mrs Muofhe)  
                  Vho-Vele (Mrs Vele)  
                  Vho-Maemu (Mrs Maemu)  
                  Vho-Mukwevho (Mrs Mukwevho)

In the examples above the prefix **vho-** has letter **V** written in capital and this shows respect and politeness to the person concerned.

### **2.3.2. Noun classes 3 and 4.**

Nouns which belong to these noun classes are distinguished by the use of the singular prefix **mu-** and the plural prefix **mi-**. These noun classes in most instances refer to animals and natural phenomena. As they do not refer to people, they will not be discussed in this study.

### **2.3.3. Noun classes 5 and 6.**

These are classes which are distinguished by the class prefix **li-** of class 5 and class prefix **ma-** of class 6. **li-** indicates the singular and **ma-** the plural. These classes refer to a variety of things – such as animals, natural phenomena and people. This study will only concentrate on the aspect of people.

The class prefixes **li-** and **ma-** may express either positive or negative politeness depending on the context.

The following examples are expressing positive politeness:

### Singular

- (13)
- a. **li-** + khomba > gomba (big girl)  
Kha de **gomba** langa  
(Come my beautiful girl)
- b. **li-** + -tukana > dukana (big boy)  
Lo shuma **dukana** langa  
(You have worked my big boy)
- c. **li-** + -sadzi > lisadzi (big contemptible woman)  
Kha Maemu hu khou tou takuwa **lisadzi** vhukuma  
(Maemu is becoming a big and beautiful woman)

### Plural

- (14)
- a. **ma-** + khomba > magomba (big girls)  
Kha de **magomba** anga  
(Come my beautiful girls)



b. **ma- + - dukana** > madukana (big boys).

O shuma **madukana** anga

(You have worked my big boys).

c. **ma- + - sadzi** > masadzi (big contemptible women)

Kha vhoMaemu hu khou takuwa **masadzi** vhukuma.

(Maemu and friends are becoming big and beautiful women).

Under normal circumstances the prefix **li-** and **ma-** reflect impoliteness. But in the above cases, they show politeness. Positive politeness is dependent on the context in which both class prefixes **li-** and **ma-** are used.

Besides signifying positive politeness, the above examples are also used for praising the people referred to.

Under normal circumstances both class prefixes **li-** and **ma-** reflect negative politeness. The following examples are illustrative of this:

Singular

(15) a. **Li- + -khuwa** > **likhuwa** (white person)

**Li- + -zulu** > **lizulu** (Zulu)

b. **Li- + -sadzi** > **lisadzi** (big contemptible woman)

**Li- + -nna** > **liduna** (big contemptible man).

- c. **Likhuwa<sub>^</sub>** li a fhura vhathu.  
(A white person does rob people)
- d. **Lizulu<sub>^</sub>** li tea u pandelwa.  
(A Zulu must be expelled)
- e. **Lisadzi<sub>^</sub>** lo rwa n̄wana.  
(Big contemptible woman has beaten the child)
- f. **Liduna<sub>^</sub>** li a tswa.  
(Big contemptible man steals)

### Plural

- a. Ma- + -khuwa > Makhuwa (white people)  
Ma- + -zulu > Mazulu (Zulus)  
ma- + -sadzi > masadzi (big contemptible woman)  
ma- + -nna > maduna (big contemptible men)
- b. **Makhuwa** a vhenga vharema.  
(White people hate black people)
- c. **Mazulu** kha pandelwe fhano.  
(Expel Zulus in this place)

d. **Masadzi** a khou semana.

(Big contemptible women are insulting each other)

e. No a vhona **maduna** a no tswa?

(Did you see big contemptible men who steal)

In the above examples, there is no indication of politeness. In the above context the class prefixes **li-** and **ma-** are conveying an idea of greatness in an abnormal and derogatory manner. The class prefixes **li-** and **ma-** are expressing negative attitude towards the people referred to. Therefore the class prefixes **ma-** and **li-** have brought about negative politeness.

#### 2.3.4. Diminutive noun classes 7, 8,11,14 and 20.

Diminutive is an adjective derived from the noun diminution which means decreasing or being decreased.

According to Hornby (1998: 324) the term diminutive refers to something extremely or unusually small.

Following the discussion in this chapter diminutive nouns are nouns which have been extremely or unusually reduced through the affixation of diminutive class prefixes. These prefixes under normal circumstances, express impoliteness, but it depends on context that they may express impoliteness or positive politeness.

### 2.3.4.1. Noun classes 7 and 8

These classes (7 and 8) are associated with class prefixes **tshi-** and **zwi-** respectively .

Class prefix **tshi-** expresses singularity whereas class prefix **zwi-** denotes plurality.

Note the following examples which express positive politeness:

Singular

- (17) a. tshi- + -tukana > tshitukana (little boy)  
**Tshitukana** tshanga ndi a tshi funa.  
(I love my my little boy).
- b. tshi- + -sidzana > tshisidzana (little girl).  
**Tshisidzana** tshawe tsho phasa.  
(His little girl has passed).
- c. tshi- + -nna > tshinna / tshiduna (short man).  
Hetshi **tshiduna** tshi a shuma nga maanda.  
(This short man works very hard).

Plural.

(18) a. zwi- + -tukana > zwitukana (little boys)

**Zwitukana** zwanga ndi a zwi funa.

(I love my little boys)

b. zwi- + -sidzana > zwisidzana (little girls)

**Zwisidzana** zwawe zwo phasa.

(His little girls have passed).

c. Zwi- + -nna > zwiduna (short men)

Hezwi **zwiduna** zwi a shuma nga maanda

(These short men work very much).

In the above examples, the nouns **tshitukana**, **tshisidzana**, **tshiduna**, **zwitukana**, **zwisidzana** and **zwiduna** have been used in context which expresses love and appreciation. People concerned are being praised towards what they have achieved or done. Therefore **tshi-** and **zwi-** in these circumstances signify positive politeness.

Note the following examples where the prefixes **tshi-** and **zwi-** denote negative politeness:

Singular

- (19) a. tshi- + -tukana > tshitukana (little boy)

**Tshitukana** itshi tshi a dina

(This little boy is troublesome)

- b. tshi- + -thannga > tshithannga > (small old boy).

**Tshithannga** itshi tshi a tswa.

(This small old boy steals).

- c. tshi- + - kegulu (small old lady)

Itshi **tshikegulu** ndi muloi.

(This small old lady is a witch).

Plural

- (20) a. zwi- + - tukana > zwitukana ( little boys)

**Zwitukana** izwi zwi a dina.

(These little boys are troublesome).

- b. Zwi- + -thannga > zwithannga (small old boys)

Hezwi **zwithannga** zwi a tswa.

(These little old small boys steal).

c. Zwi- + - kegulu > zwi kegulu ( small old ladies)

Hezwi **zwi kegulu** zwi a lowa.

(These small old ladies are witches).

The above examples are conveying negative messages. The negativity of these messages depends on the context in which prefix **zwi-** and **tshi-** have been applied. **Tshi-** and **zwi-** are expressing misfeeling and disrespect on both the speaker and the people referred to.

#### 2.3.4.2. Noun classes 11 and 14.

Classes 11 and 14 are characterised by class prefixes **lu-** and **vhu-** respectively. **Lu-** indicates the singular whereas **vhu-** indicates the plural. Both of these class prefixes refer to variety of things such as insects, instruments, languages, abstracts, collectives and people. Concerning this study people will be the aspect to deal with.

Note the following examples denoting negative politeness:

Singular

(21) a. lu - + - sidzana > lusidzana (tiny girl)

**Lusidzana** ulu lu a levhela vhañwe.

(This tiny girl provoke others).

b. lu- + - ṭhannga > luṯhannga (tiny old boy).

**Luṯhannga** ulu a lu tswi nyana.

(This tiny old boy steals).

Plural

(22) a. vhu- + - sidzana > vhusidzana (tiny girls)

**Vhusidzana** uvhu vhu a levhela vhañwe.

(These tiny girls provoke others)

b. vhu- + -ṭhannga > vhuṯhannga (tiny old boys)

**Vhuṯhannga** uvhu a vhu tswi nyana.

(These tiny old boys steal).

In the above examples the class prefixes **lu-** and **vhu-** have been used in a derogative manner. People who are being referred to, are not well considered nor respected. Therefore negative politeness is revealed.

#### 2.3.4.3. Noun class 20

Class 20 is characterised by class prefix **ku-** which signifies diminutive things. Because of the context in which **ku-** may be used, it qualifies to express both positive and negative politeness.



Note the examples which denotes positive politeness:

(23) a. ku- + -tukana > kutukana (a small boy).

**Kutukana** kwawe kwo naka.

(His small boy is handsome)

ku- + -sidzana > kusidzana (a small girl).

**Kusidzana** kwawe ku na vhudele.

(Her small girl is always clean).

In the above examples nouns which were formed by affixing the prefix **ku-**, have been applied in the context which favour positive politeness. People who are referred to are being honoured, appreciated and praised. Therefore positive politeness has been revealed.

Note the following examples which are expressing negative politeness:

(24) a. ku- + -tukana > kutukana (a small boy)

**Kutukana** kwo farwa nga mapholisa.

(Police have arrested a small boy).

b. ku- + -kalaha > kukalaha (a small old man)

**Kukalaha** kwo tswa tshelede.

(The small old man has stolen money)

In the above examples, prefix **ku-** has been used in the context which suits negative politeness. People who are being referred to in the above examples are not respected at all.

#### 2.3.4.4. Noun class 21

Class 21 is characterised by the class prefix **di-**. According to Poulos (1990:65) the prefix **di-** conveys a derogative meaning which in this case suggests contempt, criticism and disapproval. He further says that the prefix **di** also conveys negative or biased attitude. Under no other circumstance, it would seem, does prefix **di-** denotes positive politeness in Tshivenda.

Note the following examples:

- (25)            **di-** + -thu > **dithu** (huge ugly person)  
                  **Dithu** li khou ri tswela radio.  
                  (Huge ugly person is stealing our radio)

As discussed above no positive politeness is being revealed in the above example. The person referred to is being referred to disapprovingly. Therefore negative politeness has been revealed.

### 2.3.5. Clause 9 and 10.

These classes 9 and 10 are characterized by the class prefixes **n-** and **dzin-** respectively.

According to Poulos (1990:30) classes 9 and 10 are generally referred to as the animal classes since they contain many names of animals. He further says that they also include numerous other miscellaneous terms, among other names of parts of the body, "nature" terms, personal nouns, tools and household items and a few abstract nouns.

The prefix **n-** indicates the singular whereas **dzin-** indicates the plural.

As indicated before, this study is concerned with words, which concern personal nouns.

Note the following examples:

Singular

- (26)
- a. Khosi (chief)
  - b. Ndumi (deputy chief)
  - c. Khomba (girl of marriageable age).

Plural

- (27)
- a. (dzi) khosi (chiefs)
  - b. (dzi) ndumi (deputy chiefs)
  - c. (dzi) khomba (girls of marriageable age).

In the above examples these class prefixes **n-** and **dzin-** are associated with day-to-day usage of the above words. This means that class prefixes **n-** and **dzin-** appear or are only used to reflect positive politeness.

### **2.3.6. Noun class 15**

Nouns which belong to noun class (15) are distinguished by the use of class prefix **u-**. It is referred to as infinitive. According to Poulos (1990:58) this noun class is dual in nature i.e. it manifests both nominal as well as verb features. As it does not refer to people it will not be discussed in this study.

### **2.3.7. Noun classes 16, 17 and 18.**

Nouns which belong to noun classes (16), (17), and (18) are distinguished by the use of class prefixes (16) **pha-**, (17) **ku-** and (18) **mu-**. According to Poulos (1990:61) these three noun classes contain words which have a locative or adverbial

significance. As these noun classes do not refer to people, they will not form part of this study.

## 2.4. SUMMARY

This chapter has helped in exposition of noun classes in Tshivenda that bring about positive and negative politeness.

There are some class prefixes that denote only positive attitude such as class prefixes **mu-** of class 1, class prefix **vha-** of class 2, their subclasses 1a and 2a, and class prefixes **n-** and **dzin-** of classes 9 and 10 respectively. Classes 11,14,and 21 which are characterised by class prefixes **lu-**, **vh-** and **di-** respectively, only express negative politeness.

As the main aim of this study is to focus on people and politeness, therefore classes 7, 8, 15, 16, 17 and 18 were just mentioned briefly as they do not refer to people. The chapter has shown that the rest of noun classes express positive and negative politeness but depending on the context.

The following table gives a summary of the noun classes and the type of politeness they are associated with:

(28) Class	Class prefix	Positive politeness	Negative politeness
1.	mu-	+	-

1a	θ	+	-
2.	vha	+	-
2a	vho-	+	-
3	mu-	-	-
4	mi-	-	-
5	li- ^	+	+
6	ma-	+	+
7	tshi-	+	+
8	zwi	+	+
9	n-	+	-
10	dzin-	+	-
11	lu-	-	+
12	θ	-	-
13	⊖	-	-
14	vhu-	-	+
15	u-	-	-
16	fha-	-	-
17	ku-	-	-
18	mu-	-	-
19	⊖	-	-
20	ku-	+	+
21	di ^	-	+

# CHAPTER THREE.

## 3. GREETINGS

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the role that greetings play in expressing politeness in day-to-day activities of the Vhavenda. In the light of this, the following questions seem pertinent:

- Are greetings still being utilised in present day discourse among Vhavenda communities?
- Does the advent of information age mean the demise of greetings as we know them?
- Is there any respect and honour embodied in greetings?

It seems greetings form part and parcel of every culture in the world. Although there may be similarities between two or more cultures in this regard, each and every culture however, has its own peculiar ways of greeting. Tshivenda as a language is related to many other languages such as Northern Sotho, Xitsonga, Shona, to mention but a few languages. When it comes to greetings, it displays its own peculiar characteristics. The chapter will examine these characteristics and attempt to show how they relate to politeness.

It must also be stated here that the Tshivenda speaking people have imbibed and adopted aspects of Western culture in a big way. This is often reflected in their greetings as well.

There are various ways of greetings. For example, written greetings on postcards, letters, computers, radio and newspapers. Apart from verbal greetings, greetings may be expressed through physical contact between individuals: hand-shaking, kissing, hugging, etc. Such greetings will not receive attention in this analysis. This chapter will focus on face to face greetings with regard to politeness in Tshivenda.

### **3.2. DEFINITION AND STRUCTURE OF GREETINGS.**

For every new encounter between people or groups, there must be greetings to show politeness. Greeting does not consider place, it takes place at all times on the road, at work, shopping complexes, at home, to mention but a few places.

Greetings in Tshivenda are known as **ndumeliso** (u losha). Colbuild (1994:130) defines a greeting as something friendly that one says or does on meeting someone. The Longman Group Dictionary (1994:646) concurs with the above definition when it state that greeting is to welcome with gestures and words. According to Stayt (1986:157) a greeting means to salute or honour someone.

Brown (1997:648) echoes Stayt when he says greeting is the act of saluting or welcoming. When one honours a person one welcomes that person.



According to Hornby (1998:522) a greeting is a noun derived from a verb greet which means to give a sign or a word of welcome or pleasure when meeting somebody or receiving a guest.

Webster (1986:998) states that greeting is an expression of kindness or joy; a salute at meeting or a compliment from one absent. She further says that greeting is a formal gesture of welcome.

All of the above definitions echo clearly that greetings are imbued with positive connotations. It is therefore reasonable not to expect greeting where there are misunderstanding and enmity. That is the reason why one may ask the following questions if not greeted when there is no misunderstanding between the two people meeting.

- (1) a. Ndi ngani vha sa ndumelisi? Kani ri khou lwa?  
(Why don't you greet me? Are we fighting?)
  
- b. Ndi ngani vha sa ndumelisi? Kani ndo vhifha?  
(Why don't you greet me? Am I ugly?)

The first question (1a) may be posed by anybody who feels that he should be greeted but to his surprise, he is not greeted. Lack of greeting from another speaker leads this person to think that there is enmity or misunderstanding between him and the one who is supposed to have greeted him. Unless there are squabbles between people; it is regarded as a given that people should greet one another.

The second question (1b) tends to be posed mainly by ladies who realize that the men, they would definitely like to have a relationship with are ignoring them. The question in fact serves as a declaration that the lady is available and is willing to fall in love with the listener or at least she would like her presence to be acknowledged. Again, the said question sort of compels the man to respond positively and reassure the lady that she is not ugly, she is in fact very beautiful. Even if indeed the lady is very ugly, it would be very insensitive and impolite of the man to say the lady is ugly.

There is a variety of greetings which express politeness. They are employed inter alia to seek information on the health of a person and his or her family, to show deference or respect to fellow human beings, etc. In Tshivenda, greetings are also determined by age, gender, occupation and setting. When a man greets males and females, he uses the interjective: **Ndaa**. Etymologically, it is believed that **nda** originated from the phrase **nda** **ya** **nduna** (a male lion). When a man utters this word, he is expected to take off his hat. If the person being greeted is older than the speaker, the speaker is expected to kneel or squat and then utter the word **nda**. By so doing the initiator of greeting is showing respect to the person being greeted. When the listener responds, he is acknowledging the existence and presence of the speaker. Traditionally, it is the young men who are expected to initiate the greeting sequence. In this regard Fen Akindele (1990:03) has this to say:

The younger person typically initiates greetings whenever the occasion arises. This is considered as a mark of deference to the older person.

However older persons sometimes initiate greetings, for example when the younger has not caught sight of the older, or when the older does so out of respect for the achievement of the younger.

Moreover, when greeting takes place among people, whether they are of the same age or different ages, respect and compassion is the order of the day. Therefore positive politeness is being expressed.

Whilst men use the interjective **ndaa** to greet people, women employ **aa** instead. According to Tshivenda culture, a woman is expected to greet anybody who is older than she is, it may be male or female. She utters the interjective **aa** while at the same time kneeling down; in fact lying on her side with hands on top of each other and fingers facing upwards as a symbol of honour.

Stayt (1968:157) describes the above-mentioned cogently.

A woman kneels with buttocks on heels and body bending forward, head bent and eyes on the ground, she places her hands together in the same way as the man, but instead of clapping them, lifts the two forefingers up and down.

Because of the promotion of gender equality and westernisation, this type of greeting is no longer practised by most women, especially educated women and those who have moved from rural areas to urban areas. Women think that it is demeaning to act like

this. They argue amongst many other reasons, the type of attire they use does not encourage this and that they are equal to men and this type of greeting reinforces the inferior status they have in the community.

Nowadays this unwritten rule of greeting seems to have vanished. Young men and women tend to pass older people without greeting them. It would seem that people only greet those that they know or are familiar with. In traditional societies, greetings used to take place even between total strangers as a sign of respect and honour to fellow human beings. People were exhorted to show respect and politeness to everyone and one way of showing it was through greetings.

This is one of the aspects that the researcher feels should be revived. This type of behaviour (greeting) must be instilled in children at home and at school as one of the ways to express politeness, Children should grow up knowing that elders must be greeted kindly and accorded respect. Nowadays it seems there are no boundaries between the younger and older generations. Impoliteness is expressed by people of the same village or neighbourhood who pass one another without greeting (like strangers). There is no longer any sense of community or of belonging or of brotherhood or sisterhood. If there is any greeting at all, it is distinguished by vulgar and unpalatable words.

From early childhood these days children are taught the rules:

- (2) Ni songo lumelisa mutsinda.  
(Do not greet a stranger).

The rule is invoked in order to protect children from kidnappers and molesters. It does not therefore come as a surprise that greetings between strangers are hardly heard these days. In urban areas, it has become the norm not to greet strangers. If one greets a stranger, a stranger often responds thus:

- (3) Vha nngdivhela ngafhi?  
(Do you know me?)

Other respondents are even more rude. One may greet by using the phrase:

- (4) Hu ita hani?  
(How do you do?)

The answer would be:

- (5) Kha mini?  
(Where).

The answer as reflected in (5) above is indeed very rude to say the least. This answer does not encourage the continuation of the conversation. The conclusion that one arrives at is that this answer denotes nothing but impoliteness in the extreme.

### 3.3 TYPES OF GREETINGS.

#### 3.3.1. Greetings which are determined by time of the day.

In Tshivenda culture , time of the day plays an important role in greeting. These phrases of greetings on their own are there to wish other people good luck for reaching that specific time while still healthy and still alive. They are there to deliver a message of positive politeness and encouragement. Let us take a look at the following examples:

- (6)           a.    Ndi matsheloni  
                  (Morning).
- b.    Ndi matsheloni avhudi  
                  (Good morning)
- (7)           a.    Ndi matavhelo  
                  (Late morning)
- b.    Ndi matavhelo a vhudi  
                  (Good late morning)
- (8)           a.    Ndi masiari  
                  (Afternoon)

- b. Ndi masiari avhudi  
(Good afternoon )
- (9)
- a. Ndi mathabama  
(Late afternoon)
  - b. Ndi mathabama avhudi  
(Good late afternoon)
- (10)
- a. Ndi madekwana  
(Evening)
  - b. Ndi madekwana avhudi  
(Good evening)

The above greetings are used in accordance with suitable time of the day. In most instances, they form the first part of greetings, scientifically this is referred to as the prefatory greeting (Akindele, 1990).

This part of greeting is of great importance because it also serves as the introduction. It has to be done properly otherwise the whole greeting sequence may not be successful. These types of greetings are short and precise. They do not waste time. They are thus utilised by people who are in a hurry. At the same time they fulfill a positive function as the listener would indeed realise that he has been greeted, he has not been neglected or by-passed as if he was a non-human-being.

### 3.3.2. Greetings between strangers.

Greetings between strangers are mostly associated with the olden days where people were under the influence of communal life. According to Brown (1997:1457) a stranger is someone who is not known in a certain place. Homby (1997:1179) defines a stranger as a person that one does not know or who is not familiar to one. This type of greeting, which is associated with strangers, expresses respect and show humanness among Vhavenḡa. The following adage supports this exposition.

(11) Muthu ndi muthu nga vhaḡwe.

(You become a person because of being among other people)

People are exhorted to show respect to everyone, and another way of showing it, is through greeting those whom one does not know. This type of greeting does not take long as the people who are engaged in it are not familiar with each other. It may take less than a minute.

Let us take a look at the following examples:

#### Man to man greetings

(12) a. Ndaa

b. Ndaa



### **Man to woman greetings**

- (13)           a.    Ndaa.  
                  b.    Aa

### **Woman to woman greetings**

- (14)           a.    Aa  
                  b.    Aa

### **Woman to man greetings**

- (15)           a.    Aa  
                  b.    Ndaa

Owing to the fact that the speakers are not familiar with each other, they immediately part ways after greetings. Deep in their hearts, the speakers feel fulfilled because they have accomplished their traditional norms. All in all, this shows a spirit of *vhuthu* (humanness), which is associated with positive politeness.

Amidst the Tshivenda speaking people when one passes people and does not greet them, one is expressing impoliteness. In fact one may be regarded as spoiled brat. This type of behaviour is regarded as totally unbecoming of any Tshivenda speaking person.

### 3.3.3. Greetings between friends and relatives.

These types of greetings are the ones which are still practised in different cultures. People often greet those they know or those they have something in common with in life. Friends and relatives, are people who have something in common. These are people who use positive greetings among themselves to denote positive politeness. They do this as a symbol of love and respect to one another.

Unlike in greetings between strangers, greetings between friends / relatives tend to last longer (Akindele,1990). They may even take more than two minutes. Such greetings often seek information about the well-being of a person and his or her family. The following example illustrates this point succinctly:

- (16)
- a. Ndi masiari  
(Afternoon)
  
  - b. Ndi masiari avhudi.  
(Good afternoon)
  
  - a. Vhathu vho vuwa hani hayani?  
(How are people at home)
  
  - b. Vho vuwa zwavhudi  
(They are well)

- a. Hafhu mme awe vha shuma mini?  
(By the way what type of work does your mother do?)
  
- b. Ndi mudededzi.  
(She is a teacher).
  
- a. Hai ndi zwavhudi.  
(Good bye).
  
- b. Ndi zwone.  
(Bye).

The first part of the above greeting is called the opening or prefatory greeting while the second part is called the informatory greeting. The last part of the greeting is the conclusion.

Positive politeness is being expressed in the above type of greeting because the speaker shows that he or she cares about the well being of the listener and listener's relatives. It is obligatory to ask about one's friend's situation lest the speaker be regarded as rude, arrogant and uncaring. In traditional societies, one might even be accused of practising witchcraft if one passes people without greeting them (Akindele, 1990).

There are other ways of greeting friends or relatives. This may happen when one is a visitor at his or her relative's home. Greeting may take place in the following manner.

- (17)
- a. Ri a vusa.  
(How are you).
  
  - b. Ndaa or Aa
  
  - a. Vho vuwa hani?  
Are you well?
  
  - b. Ro vuwa zwavhudi)  
(I am well).

The above example (17) shows that the speaker is appreciating the coming of the listener, furthermore, he or she wants to know about the well being of the listener. This shows the speaker is concerned about other people's welfare. Therefore the above greeting is associated with positive politeness.

Greetings between friends or relatives may take place when a member of the family has just returned home after a visit. To show appreciation for his or her safe return, the following greetings may be uttered:

- (18)
- a. Vhadali or vhatshimbili.  
(Visitors or travellers)

b. Vhadali ndi vhano or vhatshimbili ndi vhano.

(We are visitors or we are travellers)

a. Vho tshimbila hani?.

How did you travel?

b. Ro tshimbila zwavhuḽi.

(We traveled safely).

a. Ri a livhuha arali vho tshimbila zwavhuḽi.

(We are thankful for your safe journey).

The above example (18) of greeting show that the people at home are concerned about the visit. They are happy that he or she has returned home safely and still in good health. Most importantly their seeking information shows love and appreciation for what the listener has done. This may be regarded as another way of showing positive politeness. Should the above questions not be posed, the listener wouldn't feel welcomed. Another connotation might be that the speaker did not want to see the listener having returned home safely.

In addition to the aforementioned greetings, there is also another type of greeting which is called informatory greeting (Akindele,1990). Information greeting may take place when a person has just arrived at home from performing a certain task. To show that the family members are on his or her side or are appreciating what he or she was doing, they greet him or her in the following manner:

- (19)
- a. Vhañwali vha milingo.  
(Writers of examinations)
  - b. Vhañwali ndi vhano.  
(We are writers)
  - a. Vho ñwala hani?  
(How did you write?).
  - b. Ro ñwala zwavhudi.  
(We wrote well).
  - a. Ri vha tamela mashudu.  
(We wish you good luck).
  - b. Ro livhuwa  
(Thank you).

After the greetings in example (19) above have been uttered, the listener will feel that he or she has been warmly welcomed. Thus he or she understands that the family is on his or her side. This is what is regarded as expression of positive attitude towards fellow human beings.

It is a matter of fact that when one is going for a visit the family must bid him or her farewell. This is one of the ways of maintaining cordial relationship amongst family members.

Let us take a look at the following example:

- (20)
- a. Tāṭa  
(Bye-bye)
  
  - b. A tshimbile zwavhuḡi.  
(Travel safely).
  
  - a. Ndi ḡo tshimbila zwavhuḡi.  
(I will travel safely).

The example (20) above shows words of encouragement. This makes the listener feels that there are people who wish him or her good luck in his or her life.

Friends and relatives are supposed to greet each other on special days. There are particular expressions which are used to give someone you love good wishes on special occasions:

## **On Christmas Day**

Simpson and Weiner (1989:182) define Christmas as the festival of the nativity of Christ, kept on the 25<sup>th</sup> of December. Webster (1986:400) defines Christmas as an annual church festival kept on December in memory of the birth of Christ, celebrated generally by a particular church service, special gifts and greetings are observed in most Christian communities as a legal holiday.

It must also be borne in mind that most Tshivenda speaking people today are Christians, and they thus observe Christmas day as one of the highlights of the year. In this research, the researcher observed that even those Tshivenda speaking people who are not Christians celebrate Christmas as a day of goodwill and rejoicing.

In this research only greetings which are sent to relatives to wish them happy Christmas will be observed.

Let us take a look at the following examples:

- (21)
- a. Hephi Khrisimasi.  
(Happy Christmas)
  
  - b. Hephi Khrisimasi na kha inwi.  
(Happy Christmas to you also).



The example (21) above shows appreciation to the people on Christmas. If such a greeting is not rendered, people feel upset and offended. This greeting also shows that people love their Christ, hence they celebrate that day as an honour.

### **On New Year's Day**

According to Webster (1986:1524), New Year's day is the first day of the calendar year observed as a legal holiday in many countries including South Africa where the majority of the Tshivenda speaking live. Simpson and Weiner (1989: 279) defines New Year's day as the first day of the year. On this day people come together and celebrate. They wish one another good luck and a prosperous year.

Let us take a look at the example that follows:

- (22)           a.    Ñwaha muswa.  
                  (Happy New Year).
- b.    Ñwaha muswa na kha vhone.  
                  (Happy New Year to you).

The example (22) above expresses joy and happiness between the two speakers because they have been blessed enough to see New Year. They wish each other a happy New Year. This expresses positive politeness.



states that birthday is the day on which a person is born or celebration of anniversary of one's birth. People wish someone good luck on this day:

**When a new baby has been born:**

- (24) Ri ni tamela mashudu a n̄wana muswa.  
(Wish you good luck for a new baby).

**Celebration of an anniversary of one's birth.**

- (25) a. Duvha ja mabebo avhudi.  
(Happy birthday).
- b. Ndi a livhuwa.  
(Thank you).
- a. Ni hule ni lingane na ndou.  
(You should grow and become big like an elephant)
- b. Ndi a livhuwa  
(Thank you).

### **On wedding day.**

According to Webster (1986:2591) a wedding is a marriage ceremony usually with its accompanying festivities. The two who are getting married, people greet the two who are getting married through wishing them good luck in their marriage life. The following example illustrates this point succinctly:

- (26)           a.   Dakalo kha munyanya waṛu.  
                  (Happy wedding to you)
- b.   Ri a livhuwa  
                  (Thank you).

The above example (26) shows that there is a sound relationship between the speakers. Speaker (26a) is appreciating the newly wed through greeting whereas speaker (26b) is giving thanks to what has been said. This shows that there is a mutual understanding between the two. Moreover, the above special occasions take place during happy moments and are therefore associated with positive politeness.

### **3.3.4. Greetings at the work place.**

In African communities it is regarded as a duty to greet people who are at work. According to Akindele (1990:03) greeting persons at work is regarded as a matter of respect in one's occupation. He further argues that a person who does not know how to greet is defective in his or her upbringing.

There are a variety of duties which are performed by Vhaventxa as a nation. These duties, among others are: the cultivation of land for crops, looking after the domestic animals, washing clothes at the river and fetching wood from the forest. All these tasks adumbrated above, require their own peculiar greetings. These greetings are known as situational greetings because they depend on the occupation of the speakers and listeners.

The most common term or the one that suits every occupation in Tshiventxa is:

- (27)           a.   Vhashumi  
                  (I greet you workers).
- b.   Vhashumi ndi vhanu.  
                  (Yes indeed we are workers).

In every work related situation, there is the one that begins with greetings. In example (27) above, the one who begins with greeting is the one who is not involved in the duty that is being performed.

Traditionally, Vhaventxa are people who cultivate land for their living. Their lives depend on products from the tilling of the soil. When people come across people who are cultivating the land, the greeting sequence goes thus:

- (28)
- a. Vhalimi or vhagweḽi  
(We greet you cultivators)
  
  - b. Vhalimi (vhagweḽi) ndi vhano.  
(We are cultivators).
  
  - a. Vha vhona ri tshi do a wana ṅaṅwaha?  
(Do you think we shall have a good harvest this year?)
  
  - b. Khamusi.  
(Maybe).

In the above example (28), if the person who is greeting, is male, and he is greeting elderly people who are cultivating the land, he ought to take off his hat as a symbol of respect. Females will show respect by way of kneeling down and putting their hands together ( u losha).

If the one who is tilling the soil is female and the one who is uttering the greeting is older than she is or is male, the lady would still be expected to answer kneeling down and putting hands together as a symbol of honour and respect.

Therefore, this means that greetings are not merely made up of words; they go hand in hand with relevant actions. The one who is beginning to greet, must stop walking if he or she is walking, and the one who is busy cultivating the land, should also stop



women who are bathing. They will be allowed to pass after the women shall have put on their clothes.

The other job which is associated with ladies in Tshivenda culture is to fetch wood in the forest. The greeting which takes place in this situation is associated with this type of work. The greeting sequence goes thus:

- (30)
- a. Vhareḽi vha khuni.  
(Fetchers of wood).
  
  - b. Vhareḽi ndi vhano.  
(We are fetchers of wood).
  
  - a. Dzi khou vhuya dza wanala?  
(Is there any wood?)
  
  - b. Vhuḽasana vhu khou wanala.  
(Only small wood we are collecting).

In the example (30) one may sense the mood between the two speakers is of mutual understanding, hence positive politeness.

One of the jobs that men do with regard to Tshivenda culture is to look after the cattle. The greeting in this type of job is as follows:



- (31) a. Vhalisi vha kholomo.  
(I greet you herdsmen)
- b. Vhalisi ndi vhano  
(We are herdsmen).

The examples in (31) show that the first speaker (31a), is appreciating the work of the listener; and this may be regarded as positive politeness.

Failure to offer greetings to people who are engaged in certain type of job, may inter alia, be interpreted as follows:

- One may be regarded as a spoiled brat.
- According to Tshivenda culture one may be accused of practising witchcraft
- One would be considered to be jealous of the other people's achievement.

### **3.3.5. School situation**

Brown (1997:1316) defines a school as an institution for education or instruction, especially one for instruction of a more elementary kind than that given at universities. On the other hand Hornby (1998:1049) defines a school as an institution for educating children. A school is an institution engaged in the building of character of a person. This is the place where positive politeness comes into play on a regular basis. It is perhaps important to state that the school system used by Vhavenda is western in nature. The following examples reveal how greeting takes place at school:

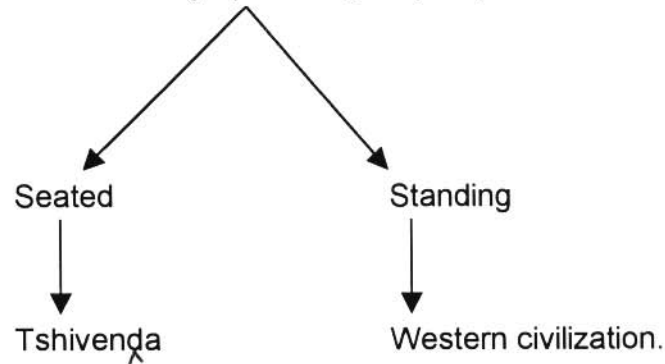
- (32)
- a. Ndi matsheloni.  
(Good morning)
  
  - b. Ndi matsheloni avhuḁi mudededzi.  
(Good morning teacher).

When the above greetings are taking place, learners are expected to stand on their feet. No one is allowed to greet one of the teachers seated on their chairs. Standing when speaking in a school environment is a symbol of respect and honour to teachers. Respect and honour go hand in hand with politeness.

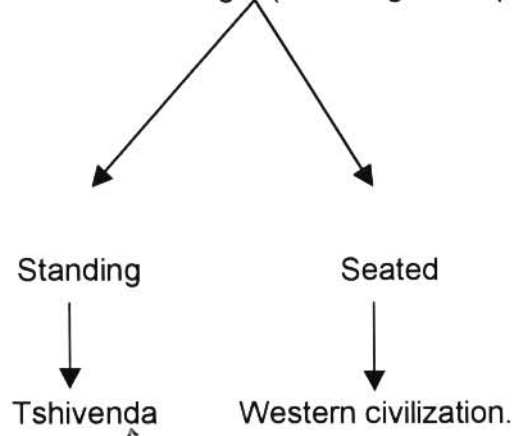
The picture as painted above is in conflict with the traditional Tshivenda greeting customs. Thus far, the chapter has shown that in Tshivenda, greetings are performed while the speaker is seated or squatting. This sometimes causes confusion among the youth. The youth find themselves living in a world where they are expected to live according to the western norms whilst at the same time not forgetting their roots. This situation may be illustrated in diagrams as follows:

(33)

a. Greetings (Denoting respect)



b. Greeting (Denoting disrespect)



### 3.3.6. Greetings at initiation schools

The word initiation is derived from the verb initiate. According to Brown (1997;758), initiate means to instruct a person in the rudiment or principles of something. According to Tshivenda culture initiation schools have to do with the instruction of the young ones in the rudiments or principles of acceptable behaviour. These principles are of vital importance when they become adults.

There are different initiation schools in Tshivenda. Some of them are: **domba**, **musevhetho**, and **murundu**. Greetings differ according to each initiation school.

People who attend **domba** (snake dance) and **musevhetho** are girls. These are schools which teach girls how to behave as respectable women. Girls greet by way of lying down on their side, hands put together, facing down. Whilst girls are in this position, they are not allowed to take a look at the people who are being greeted. The one who is being greeted, responds by saying:

(34)                   Mashaa!  
                              (Stop, it is enough)

The girls would then rise and go their own way.

On the other hand, boys attend **murundu**. No woman is allowed to enter this place. Early in the morning **mashuvhuru** (initiates) are waken up so that they may go and greet the pole in the middle of the school yard. The following is the example of such a greeting:

(35)                   Ndaa makhulu  
                              (I greet you grandparent)

In the process of greeting, boys are compelled to squat as a symbol of respect. No one is allowed to greet standing otherwise he may get a severe punishment.

### 3.3.7. Greetings at chief's kraal.

According to Stayt (1968;195) the chieftainship is a pie which although carried by one member of the family has the thumbs of four others embedded in it, makhadzi (father's sister), khotsimunene (father's brother), khadzi (sister to the chief) and ndumi (brother to the chief). According to the Tshivenda culture when a chief dies, he is succeeded by his son appointed by the four others, but subject to certain regulations.

In most communities in the far Northern Province where the majority of the Vhavenda reside, chiefs and headmen still play a significant role. They are regarded as the custodians of the culture of the people. In light of this, the rank and file members of the society tend to use special greeting terms for chiefs. And again, when ordinary people meet a chief, they are expected to kneel or squat while the chief is still a few meters away and start rendering greetings or praises even if the chief won't hear them.

The following examples indicate how men greet chiefs and headmen in Tshivenda:

- (36)
- a. Ndau ya nduna  
(Male lion)
  
  - b. Tshidada muhali  
(You are a hero)
  
  - c. Mboloma (Mbilalume)  
(You are a male rock rabbit)

- d. Muelekanyi wa zwothe  
(You are a great wise thinker)
  
- e. Vhane vha mavu  
(The owner of the soil)
  
- f. Iwe une wa ri i fai ra fa  
(The one who say die, we die)
  
- g. Marunga dzi ndevhelaho  
(The one who punishes the aggressors)

The above example (36) shows the love, respect and obedience that should be accorded any chief. People do this as a sign of respect to the chief as a person and his chieftainship status.

According to Tshivenda culture the above greeting is accorded when the chief enters **tshivhambo** (hall). The moment the chief enters, immediately the people inside show a dog-like submission. Everybody bows low, their heads nearly touching the floor and with hands clasped in front, they shout in unison for several minutes, at the same time the chief cupbearer fills the large cups and hand them to the chief. Every movement of the chief is followed by shouts of praise from the people. This happens again when the chief coughs.

The chief as a ruler of a vast region visits his small villages time and again. According to Stayt (1968:204) women who are passed by the chief on the roadside, kneel down and greet him as:

(38)                   Munna wanga.

(My husband)

According to Stayt (1968:205) when the chief appears at the kraal of his pretty chief, people greet him with the high trilling (from women) and praises (from men). At the same time the **tshikona** dance commences. To show positive politeness the chief will say a greeting and beats the big drum.

When men enter the place where the chief is, they are bound to squat and simultaneously uttering honorific words, this is regarded as **u kumela**. Men continue to render **u kumela** until they take their seats. Once this has been done, the chief may respond by saying:

(39)                   Dzula zwau munna or Ndaa

(Sit down man or ndaa)

On the other hand when women enter **khoro** , they are expected to kneel down and greet **khoro** by saying **Aa**. At the same time, they sleep on their sides, hands put together. The chief will answer their greeting by saying **kha vha swike** (get in). They

are not supposed to stand up and walk as is normally done, but they crawl on their knees until they occupy their seats.

When **makhadzi** introduces a new chief to his regents through the removal of the covering cloth after she has rendered the praises, the chief takes the gourd and lift it to his lips. According to Stayt (1968:206) the people will immediately fall on their knees as an attitude of humble adoration. The man burst unanimously into loud shouts greeting the chief with every possible laudatory epithet while the women trill continuously.

Moreover, age does not count when deference is being shown to a chief or headman. Even a very old man is expected to render greetings or praises when meeting or approaching a young chief or headman. By virtue of being a chief, a young person qualifies to be accorded all the respect that is due to a chief or headman.

Failure to greet a chief or headman may result in a fine. This is so because it would be regarded as an insult or a sign of disrespect to the chief and his chieftainship. To atone for this one would be required to pay the fine in a form of a beast or money. Because of the advent of democracy and Western civilization in South Africa, the respect that the chiefs and headman used to command in rural areas is however diminishing day after day. Chiefs are regarded as equal to everybody and are thus not special human beings. The constitution of South Africa (1996) confirms this when it states:



Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

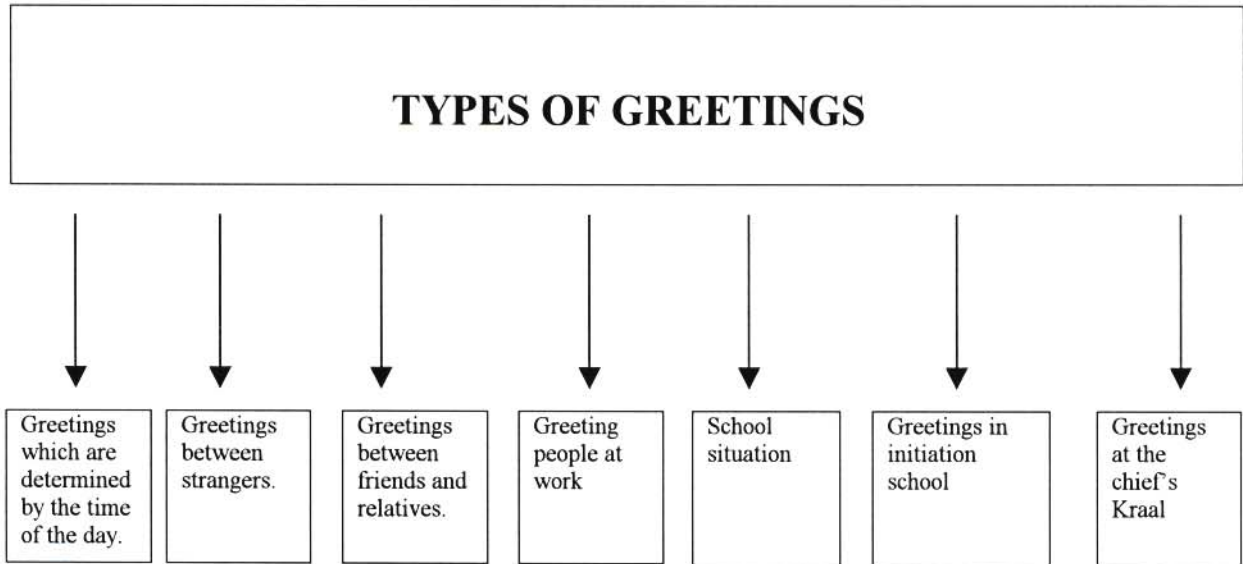
Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.

### **3.4. SUMMARY**

Greeting has been defined as something that one says or does as a symbol of expressing respect among the elderly people or peer group. Among Vhavenḡa, greeting is known as **u losha** or **u lumelisa**. Common terms of greetings are **Ndaa** and **Aa** which are used by men and women respectively.

This chapter has treated several types of greetings. These are: Greetings which are determined by time of the day, greetings between strangers, greetings between friends and relatives, greetings at the work place, greetings at school environment, greetings at initiational schools and greetings at chief's kraal.

## TYPES OF GREETINGS CAN BE ILLUSTRATED IN A FORM OF DIAGRAM



It has been shown that greetings form a very important aspect of Tshivenda culture. Anybody imbued with a sense of respect; humanness and dignity is expected to know what greetings to use, how and when to use them.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4. REQUESTS

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role that requests play in politeness in Tshivenda. In order to achieve this aim; various types of requests in Tshivenda will be examined. It has already been shown that politeness can be divided into negative and positive. It behoves this chapter therefore, to examine which types of requests in Tshivenda can be classified under either of the said politeness.

The following will be the focal aspects of this chapter:

- Definition of requests
- Structure of requests
- Different functions of requests

### 4.2. DEFINITION OF REQUESTS.

According to Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990), a request is:

An act or instance of asking for something.

Hornby (1997:996) defines requests as:

An act of politely asking for something.

Longman (1978) echoes the above scholars' definitions when he describes a request as follows:

Request is an attempt to obtain something by making one's wants or desires known in speech or writing.

According to Brown (1997:1249) a request is:

An expression of desire or the act of something to be granted or done.

Simpson and Weiner (1989:679) concur with Brown's definition because they define a request as follows:

The expression of one's desire or wish directly addressed to the person or persons able to gratify it.

In addition to the above definition Simpson and Weiner (1989:560) continue to say that as far as request is concerned, the speaker

ask or begs the favour or permission to  
be allowed to do something.

Lyons (1977) argues that one can be either polite or impolite in the way in which one makes a request; and an impolite request is not a demand.

From all the above definitions, it is evident that requests go hand in hand with politeness. These features seem like two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable. One cannot exist without the other.

One may add by saying that a request is a concept which expresses politeness because whoever asks for something, would hardly behave arrogantly or in an authoritarian manner. Hence nobody has obligation to do what one asks. A request can either be granted or turned down.

#### **4.3. THE STRUCTURE OF REQUESTS**

In English, requests may be indicated by the employment of the following concepts: please, sorry, may you, excuse me, have you got, I' d like, may I have, can I have, could you, could I have, etc. Although some of these concepts can also be utilised in Tshivenda, Tshivenda however uses its own peculiar concepts to denote politeness. The following concepts indicate the structure of Tshivenda requests.

#### 4.3.1. The subjunctive mood.

The subjunctive mood has already received attention from several scholars such as Du Plessis and Maqadzhe (1999) and Rankhododo (1999). This section will not, therefore, go into detail as far as this mood is concerned. It suffices, however to state that in Tshivenda it is recognized by verbs that end in the morpheme **-e**. The subjunctive is also often utilised to express requests in Tshivenda. The following examples illustrate this point:

- (1) a. **Vha mu tendele** a tshi tuwa.  
(Allow him to go)
- b. Munna o ri **nwana a le**.  
(The man said the child should eat).
- (2) a. **Vha si mu tendele** a tshi tuwa.  
(Do not allow him to go).
- b. Munna o ri **nwana a si le**.  
(The man said that the child must not eat).
- (3) a. Vha bambele nae?  
(May they swim with him?)

- b. Ndi tuwe nae n̄wana?  
(May I go with the child?)
  
- c. Ndi ye nnda?  
(May I go outside?)

The examples (1a) and (1b) above denote the subjunctive mood in positive form. This type of mood in this instance expresses positive politeness.

Examples (2a and 2b) above denote the subjunctive mood in the negative form. This section shows positive politeness though the examples are in the negative form.

Examples (3a), (3b) and (3c) above denote questions. The speaker is asking the listener in order to be given permission so that he or she can perform something. The speaker is denoting positive politeness in his requests.

The conjunctive **uri** as part of the subjunctive mood may also be used to form requests in Tshivenda. The following sentences illustrate this point aptly:

- (4) a. Ndi hambela **uri a de**.  
(May you please come).
  
- b. Ndi hambela **uri a bike**.  
(May you please cook).

The examples (4a-b) above mean that when one makes a request, one makes it out of love and respect. This denotes positive politeness.

According to Poulos (1990: 283) the subjunctive mood is used to express a positive request. Hortative **kha** and **nga** are added and these are called hortative prefixes. The following examples illustrate this point:

- (5)           a.   Kha le vhuswa.  
                  (Please eat porridge)
- b.   Kha vhale bugu.  
                  (Please study your book)
- (6)           a.   Nga vha dzhene.  
                  (Please come in).
- b.   Nga vha lime.  
                  (Please plough)

In the examples (4a-4b) and (5a-5b) above, the speaker is requesting the listeners to perform something e.g. eating, studying, coming in, and ploughing. The listeners are requested in a polite manner.



### 4.3.2. The hortative mood.

The hortative mood in Tshivenda is characterised by the appearances of **kha** or **nga** and verbs ending in **-e**. These **kha** and **nga** are used as variations which convey positive politeness. Lyons (1997) describes the hortative mood as denoting request because it gives the listener the option of refusal to comply with the request. The following examples illustrate this point aptly:

- (6)
- a. Kha vha<sup>h</sup>we ma<sup>h</sup>di.  
(Please drink water).
  - b. Kha vha lime tsimu.  
(Please plough the field).
  - c. Kha dzule fhasi.  
(Please sit down).
- (7)
- a. Nga dzule fhasi.  
(Please sit down)
  - b. Nga dzhene n<sup>h</sup>duni.  
(Please come in)
  - c. Nga tambe na vhana.  
(Please play with children).

The appearance of **kha** and **nga** in the above examples contribute in the creation of positive politeness. One is persuaded to state this because the removal of **kha** and **nga** from the above sentences, change these sentences into commands:

- (8)      a.    Lima tsimu.  
                  (Plough the fields)
- b.    Dzula fhasi.  
                  (Sit down).
- c.    Dzhena ṅuni.  
                  (Get inside).

The sentences in (8a-c) above show clearly that the politeness that is depicted can only be regarded as negative. One might even go further and state that politeness is in fact non-existent.

#### **4.3.3. The imperative mood.**

The imperative mood is a mood which expresses commands (Lombard et al, 1985: 160). According to Du Plessis and Maḡadzhe (1999:103) the imperative mood expresses a variety of meanings and the most common are: command, permission, wish, prohibition, and exemption. This study will focus on command and permission,

as they are associated with requests. Command depends on how one gives it. It may express positive politeness or negative politeness:

- (9)
- a. I ḡani!  
(Please come!)
  
  - b. Tshimbilani!  
(Please walk!)
  
  - c. Iḡani!  
(Please eat!)

The examples (9a-c) above express the speaker as giving command with a sense of respect and love. This will make the listener to carry out the instruction being in a happy mood. The English word “**please**”, evidently shows that commands in this instance are issued with compassion. Therefore the above example express positive politeness. Let us take a look at examples of command:

- (10)
- a. Gidima!  
(Run!)
  
  - b. Iḡa!  
(Come!)

c. Tshimbila!

(Walk!)

In the above examples (10a-c), the speaker is not giving command out of love or respect. The speaker shows no concern and respect to the one who is supposed to carry out the instruction. This situation therefore expresses negative politeness.

#### 4.3.4. The aspect morphemes

Tshivenda comprises several aspect morphemes. But in this case, the section will only concentrate on those that have a bearing on politeness. Tshivenda uses aspect morphemes **dzou** and **dzonu** to express request. Let us take a look at the following examples:

(11) a. I dzou da!  
(Just come!)

b. I dzou edzisa u n'wala!  
(Just try to write!)

c. I dzou mu vhidza!  
(Just call him / her!)

In the above examples (11a—c), the requests denote no respect to the listener. The listener is not encouraged to perform the duty assigned to him. The situation above expresses negative politeness and this is brought about by the appearance of **dzou**.

The situation as outlined in (11a-c) above may be changed into positive politeness if the aspect **dzou** becomes **dzonu**. The following sentences illustrate this point aptly:

- (12)
- a. E dzonu mu vhidza.  
(Please call him / her).
  
  - b. I dzonu nnḍisela maḽi.  
(Please bring water).
  
  - c. I dzonu mbikela vhuswa.  
(Please cook porridge for me).

In the above examples (12a-c) the speaker is making requests out of love and respect. Therefore this situation denotes positive politeness.

#### **4.3.5. Ideophones**

According to Poulos (1990:416) ideophones have been defined by many linguists in terms of their sound input. He continues to say that the name ideophone combines the notion of idea and phone, the word `phone` being the Greek word for `sound`.

Thus many definitions of the ideophone refer to its onomatopoeic nature. Hornby (1997:810) says that onomatopoeic is:

A combination of sounds in a word that resembles or suggests what the word refers to.

The Collins Concise Dictionary (1986:788) defines the ideophone in more or less the same way as Hornby does by stating:

The formation of words whose sound is imitative of the sound of the noise or action designated, such as hiss.

According to Doke (1935:118) the ideophone is:

A vivid representation of an idea in sound.

This section will only concentration on those ideophones that have a bearing on politeness. Hereunder follows some of them:

- (13)        a.    Ni **ńoo**  
                      (Please be quite)

b. Ni **duu**.  
(Please be quite)

c. Ni **hwii**.  
(Please keep quite).

The ideophones **ńoo**, **duu**, and **hwiii** in the above examples (13a-c) have been used in a manner that suggests positive politeness. The subjectival agreement **ni** in the above examples is denoting a person. In this instance the subjectival agreement **ni** is associated with positive politeness. In contrast the following examples show impoliteness:

(14) a. **ńoo!**  
(Quite)

b. **Duu!**  
(Quite)

c. **Hwii**  
(Quite)

In the above examples (14a-c) the subjectival agreement **ni** has been omitted. This has brought about the command, which expresses negative politeness.

It is possible to form requests when one uses aspect morphemes **dzou** and **dzonu** and idephones together. This structure will always show positive politeness or negative politeness:

- (15)
- a. E dzonu gidi!  
(Please rush)
  
  - b. E dzonu tshimbili!  
(Please walk)
  
  - c. E dzonu ñwali!  
(Please write)

In the examples (15a-c) above, the speaker conveys his or her message in a polite manner. On the other hand the following examples will convey messages in an impolite manner:

- (16)
- a. E dzou gidi!  
(Rush)
  
  - b. E dzou tshimbili!  
(Walk)
  
  - c. E dzou ñwali!  
(Walk)



In the examples (16a-c) above the speaker seem to be harsh to the listener, therefore impoliteness is expressed.

#### **4.4. DIFFERENT TYPES OF FUNCTIONS OF REQUESTS.**

This section has been designed to discuss the different types of functions of requests in Tshivenda. The section will also endeavour to show how types of functions of requests are related to positive and negative politeness.

##### **4.4.1. Action**

According to Brown (1997:15) action is:

The state, condition or fact of acting or doing.

The definition above means that the speaker invites the listener to act or perform a certain duty or task assigned to him or her.

Whether a request reflects positive or negative politeness depends on the speaker and the words he or she chooses to use when making a request. The following examples are apt in this regard:

- (17)           a. Kha vha bike vhuswa.  
                  (Please cook porridge)

- b. Kha vha ye vhengeleni.  
(Please go to the store)
  
- c. Kha lime tsimu  
(Plough the field)
  
- d. Kha ye hayani  
(Go home)

In the examples (17a-d) above, the speaker requests the hearer to perform an action. These requests are put forward in an acceptable manner. This means that the speaker is polite, hence positive politeness.

According to Du Plessis and Maḡadzhe (1999:129), when addressing the second person singular without showing respect and courtesy, the speaker may omit subjunctive agreement (AgrS) and the sentences in (17a-c) will look as follows:

- (18) a. Kha bike vhuswa.  
(Cook food)
  
- b. Kha ye vhengeleni.  
(Go to the store).

- c. Kha lime tsimu.  
(Plough the field).
  
- d. Kha ye hayani.  
(Go home).

Again let us take a look at the following examples:

- (19) a. Bika vhuswa!  
(Cook porridge!)
  
- b. Tshimbila vhengeleni!  
(Go to the store!)
  
- c. Lima tsimu!  
(Plough the field!)
  
- d. Ya hayani!  
(Go home!)

The above examples (19a-b) are requests in a form of a command. The hearer is compelled to take an action unwillingly. This type of command has been brought about by the absence of the aspect **kha**. Therefore the given examples in (19a-d) are expressing negative politeness.

#### 4.4.2. Information

Brown (1997:756) defines the concept information as a noun derived from a verb inform which means to communicate knowledge to someone else. According to Longman (1978) information is the knowledge in the form of facts. On the other hand the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) defines information as something told. The following examples are apt in this regard:

- (20)
- a. Ndi nnyi o laho vhuswa?  
(Who ate porridge?)
  - b. Bugu dzanga dzi ngafhi?  
(Where are my books?)
  - c. Nwana o ya ngafhi?  
(Where did the child go?)

In the examples (20a-c) above the speaker is seeking information. In example (20a) the speaker seeks information about the person who ate the porridge; in example (20b) the speaker seeks information about the whereabouts of the speaker's books; whereas in the example (20c) the speaker seeks information about the whereabouts of the child. The impression attached to these examples is a positive one, hence positive politeness.

On the other hand the following expresses negative politeness.

- (21)                    Nwana u ngafhi?  
                          (Where is the child?)

In the examples (21) above the speaker wants to know the whereabouts of the child. The listener in this situation is the one who is answerable for the well-being of the child. It stands to reason that the listener was given responsibility of looking after the child. Now that the child is nowhere to be found, the listener is accountable to the speaker. In this case the example (21) above does not reveal positive politeness.

#### **4.4.3. Meeting.**

Brown (1997:911) defines a meeting as a coming together of people to a place in order to join and perform a particular duty. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) states that a meeting is an assembly of people especially the members of a society, a particular committee, etc, for various purposes. These people have a common goal to achieve. Longman (1978) states that a meeting is the coming together of two or more people by agreement or sometimes, per chance. The following sentences have to do with meeting in one way or another:

- (22)                    a.    Mukegulu vha ri vha khou <sup>u</sup> <sup>ni</sup> <sup>vhona</sup>.  
                          (The old lady says that she wants to see you)

b. Maemu o ni lindela hayani.

(Maemu is waiting for you at home)

The meaning of example (22a) is that the hearer is requested by the old lady to a meeting with her. On the other hand in example (22b) the meaning is that Maemu is going to have a meeting with the hearer. Both examples i.e. (22a and 22b) are denoting positive politeness due to the manner in which they have been expressed.

The following example differs from the above examples because no positive politeness is being expressed:

(23) No lindelwa hayani

(You have been waited for at home.)

In the above example (23), the speaker does not show any respect or patience. The sentence reflects rudeness.

#### **4.4.4. Permission**

The concept permission is a noun, which has been derived from the verb permit, which means to allow somebody to perform or to carry out a particular thing or duty. According to Longman (1978) permission is an agreement or consent, which takes place between two or more people. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) defines permission as an authorization. The following examples denote permission in Tshivenda:

- (24)
- a. Ndi bvele nng̃a naa?  
(May I go outside?)
  - b. Munna a tuwe e ethe?  
(May the man go alone?)
  - c. Vha nga dzhena ofisini?  
(May he enter the office?)
  - d. Ndi nga ya bungani?  
(May I go to the toilet?)

The examples (24a-d) are interrogatives. The speaker is requesting for permission to carry out a particular action. It is done as a sign of respect and cognition of someone's status. Therefore, positive politeness has been expressed.

Again let us take a look at the following examples, which are not interrogatives:

- (25)
- a. Munna a nga tuwa e ethe.  
(The man may go alone)
  - b. Vha nga dzhena ofisini.  
(You may enter the office)

c. Ni nga ya bungani

(You may go to the toilet)

In the examples (25a-c), the connotation is that the permission of what has been requested has been granted, hence positive politeness.

#### 4.4.5. Patience

Brown (1997:1063) contends that patience is the capability of carrying pain, suffering, provocation or other evils. According to Longman (1978) patience is the ability to wait for something calmly for a long period. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) says that patience is the ability to endure hardships, provocation, pain, delay, etc. Patience goes hand in hand with the control of one self's anger.

Let us take a look at the following examples:

(26) a. Kha kondelele naho zwi tshi vhavha.

(May you endure though it hurts)

b. Lindelani naho lo no kovhela.

(Please wait though it is sunset).

In the example (26a) the speaker is bringing to the listener the message of endurance. He or she is doing it in a polite manner. On the other hand, in example (26b) the speaker is bringing the message of hope. What is of most importance is that the



listener must have patience for a certain period. Both speakers in examples (26a-b) have encouraging words though the listeners are in situations which are not conducive. Therefore the appeals that the speakers are making denote positive politeness in a negative situation.

#### 4.4.6. Promise

According to Brown (1997:1163) promise is a verbal or written engagement to do or forbid from doing some specific act. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) defines promise as an assurance that one will or will not undertake a certain action or behaviour. Longman (1978) concurs with the above definitions because to him promise is a statement, which someone wise has the right to believe and depend on, that will or will not do something, give something etc.

Let us take a look at the following examples:

- (27) Arali na fulufhedzisa u phasa mulingo ndi do ni rengela tshiphuga.  
(If you promise to pass the examination I will give you a trophy)

In the above example (27) the speaker is making a request of a promise. A promise may be positive or negative but in the example (27) the speaker expresses love to the listener, hence positive politeness.

- (28) Ndi do tuwa na inwi arali na la vhuswa.  
(I will go with you if you eat porridge)

In the above example (28) positive politeness is also expressed. The speaker is promising the listener to go with him or her if and only if he or she has fulfilled an obligation.

Let us take a look at another example:

- (29)                    Ndi ɔ̀o ni rwa arali na sa n̄wala.  
                              (I will beat you if you do not write)

The above example (29) shows a promise that has negative implication on the side of the listener. This is nothing else but negative politeness.

#### **4.4.7. Confirmation**

The concept confirmation is a noun derived from the verb confirm. Brown (1997:302) defines confirmation as to establish or support the truth or correctness of something. He further says it is to make something valid. This may mean to provide support for truth of something:

- (30)                    Hu na ane a ɔ̀ivha zwa khwiŋe kha uyu mulandu.  
                              (Is there anybody who knows better about this case)

In the above example (30), the speaker is making a request if there is someone who may confirm what he or she is requesting. The manner and the way the speaker is asking for conformation, is acceptable and reveals respect.

Let us take a look at the following example:

- (31)                    Ndi nnyi ane a nga mu thusa?  
                              (Is there anybody who can help him)

In the above examples (31), again the speaker requests if there is somebody who can offer help. This request is being made in order to confirm whether people are willing or not willing to help. This is done out of love and loyalty. Positive politeness is being shown.

#### **4.4.8. Assistance**

Assistance may be defined as to offer help, support or aid to somebody else who is in need of such a help.

The following examples are pertinent:

- (32)                    a.    Ndi de ndi mu limise tsimu?  
                              (May I come and help you to plough the field?)
- b.    Ndi de ndi mu hwalise muhwalo?  
                              (May I come and assist in carrying the load?)

In the examples (32a-b) above, the speaker is required to offer assistance to the people (listeners) who are performing a certain task. In other words the speaker is appreciating what these people are doing in such a way that he or she may offer support to them. This shows the spirit of love, caring and collegiality on the part of the speaker. This denotes positive politeness.

#### **4.4.9. Compliance**

According to Brown (1997:275) compliance is an act of complying, submission, agreement or consent. When one is submissive, one is obedient to a request or command. Longman (1978) defines compliance as a tendency to yield willingly to the wishes of others. Compliance examples exist in Tshivenda:

- (33)
- a. Nwalani mushumo wanu  
(Do your work of writing)
  
  - b. Tshimbilani ni yo tamba.  
(Go and play)

In the above examples (33a) and (33b), the speaker commands the hearer (listener) to act accordingly. The listener is requested to comply with what he or she is commanded to do. He or she does this not out of his or her love because it is a command. A command is associated with negative connotations, hence it expresses negative politeness.

#### 4.5. SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the role that requests play in politeness.

In order to achieve this, the following topics were taken into consideration:

- ❖ Definition of requests
- ❖ The structure of requests
- ❖ Types of requests

Under the subtopic **definitions of requests**, different views of different scholars were considered for discussion. Most scholars have common ideas concerning the meaning of the concept request. The main idea as expressed by several scholars is that request is an act of asking for something or a permission to be provided in order to carry out an action.

In the above discussion, the following structures associated with politeness were discussed in detail: The subjunctive mood, the hortative mood, the imperative mood, the aspect morphemes and idiophones.

In this chapter, types of requests have been grouped according to their functions. The functions that are associated with requests are: Information, action, permission, meeting, promise, patience, conformation, assistance and compliance.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSION

The first chapter of this research deals with background to the problem or statement of the problem or statement of the problem. The problem, it has been discovered, is caused mainly by the influence of Western civilization on Tshivenda both as a language and culture.

Chapter one also concentrates on the definition of politeness under various subtopics. The works of different scholars have been consulted in order to get the real meaning of the concept politeness. Scholars whose works have been utilised in this study, include inter alia, Kasper (1990) Stayt (1968) Leech (1983) Hornby (1998) and many others. Following the views of different scholars, politeness may be summarized as behaving in a manner that is socially correct and shows awareness of and caring for other people's feelings.

Chapter one concludes by discussing of different types of politeness, namely, positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness is the wish to have one's behavior approved by society while negative politeness is the desire to maintain one's independence at all cost.

The second chapter concerns itself with the use of the noun classes in politeness in Tshivenda. The chapter has expressed how noun classes in Tshivenda bring about

positive and negative politeness. Not all 21 noun classes denote positive and negative politeness. There are some noun classes which only denote positive politeness:

<b>Noun class</b>	<b>Class prefix/noun prefix</b>
1	mu-
1a	θ
2	vha-
2a	vho-
9	n-
10	dzin-

The following noun classes denote negative politeness:

<b>Noun class</b>	<b>class prefix/noun prefix</b>
11.	lu-
14.	vhu-
21.	ḡi-

The following noun classes denote both negative and positive politeness in Tshivenda:

<b>Noun class</b>	<b>class prefix/noun prefix</b>
5	ḡi-
6	ma-
7	tshi-
8	zwi-

As the main aim of this research is to focus on people and politeness, there are noun classes, which do not apply in this research because they do not represent people.

<b>Noun class</b>	<b>Class prefix/noun prefix</b>
3	mu-
4	mi-
15	u-
16	fha-
17	ku-
18	mu-

Chapter three deals with how greetings affect politeness in Tshivenda. In this chapter definitions of greetings as given by different authors have been discussed. Greetings may be summarized as something that one says or does as a symbol of expressing respect for the elderly people or peer group. In Tshivenda greetings are associated with **u losha** or **ndumeliso**. The common concepts of greeting in Tshivenda are **Ndaa** and **Aa** and these are used by men and women respectively.

There are several types of greetings, which have been included in chapter three, such as:



## **Greetings which are determined by time of the day**

Ndi matsheloni

(Morning)

Ndi matsheloni a v<sup>h</sup>udi

(Good morning)

Ndi madekwana

(Evening)

Ndi madekwana a v<sup>h</sup>udi

(Good evening)

## **Greetings between strangers**

This type of greeting does not last long because persons who are greeting each other are not familiar with each other:

Ndaa

or

Aa.

## **Greetings between friends and relatives**

This type of greeting may last longer because the people involved are relatives in one way or another:

Ndi matsheloni

(Morning)

Ndi matsheloni avhudi

(Good morning)

Hu ita hani?

(How do you do?)

Ri hone / ro vhuwa

(We are fine)

## **Greeting at the working places**

This type of greeting reveals respect and appreciates to one's work:

Vhashumi

(Workers)

Vhashumi ndi vhano

(We are workers)

### **School situation**

This greeting involves educators and learners when they greet each other in their environment.

Chapter four focuses attention on requests. The views of different authors have been considered in this chapter. The main idea as expressed by several authors is that a request is an act of asking for something or a permission to be provided in order to carry out an action. The study discovered that requests in Tshivenda appear in the following morphological and syntactic structures:

The subjunctive mood

The imperative mood

The hortative mood

The aspect morphemes

Ideophones

This chapter also concentrates on types of functions of request:

Action

Information

Meeting

Permission

Promise

Patience

Confirmation

Assistance

Compliance

From this research it has been deduced that politeness is of utmost importance in Tshivenda culture. Should politeness not be taken seriously, there is great danger that Tshivenda as we know it today, may disappear forever. In order to inculcate politeness among the youth, the research recommends that the following steps be undertaken as a matter of urgency:

- Politeness must be taught in schools as a subject.
- Programmes that reflect politeness must be shown and aired on TV and radio respectively.
- Aspect of politeness as they pertain to other cultures must also be studied.
- Tshivenda as a subject must be introduced to multiracial and independent schools.

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