

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF REQUESTS IN BEMBA

BY

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THESES

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I, Eunice Mukonde, solemnly declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree to this university before or any other.

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Date 12-01-2010

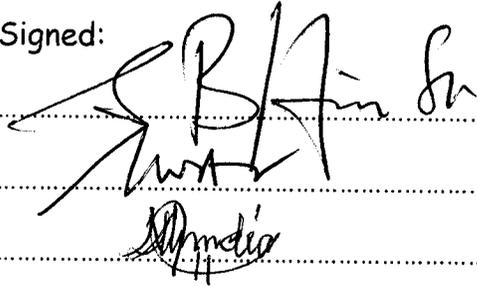
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APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the nature of making requests in Bemba from a pragmatic point of view. It attempts to discuss the various strategies used for making requests in Bemba. Four major aspects of requesting in Bemba were examined: the linguistic forms used, the categories of request strategies based on Blum-Kulka's classification of request strategies, the frequency of these categories of request strategies, and how request strategies in Bemba relate to social parameters such as age, gender, status, social distance, and authority.

The sample consisted of 150 informants. Data in the present survey was collected using the triangulation method. This involved using a variety of methods such as: recording, observation, questionnaire and interviews. The data was studied and analysed following Austin's (1962), and Searle's (1967) concepts of Speech Act Theory, Leech's conversation principles, and Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of politeness and face-threatening acts.

The results of the study show that social distance in relation to age and status, and the relative power of speaker and hearer determines the strategies used for making requests. It is also evident that some requests are understood better and appreciated by people sharing the same social-cultural background. It is recommended that further study be undertaken to identify other factors that may affect the making of requests in Bemba. Also that the information gleaned from this study should be made available to researchers concerned with other speech acts and politeness formulae.

To my husband and son Chongo Mulenga.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 General

This chapter is designed to give an introduction to the chapters that follow on the pragmatic analysis of requests in Bemba. The presentation starts with information on requests. Later the chapter concerns itself with presenting the problem under research, the rationale, the purpose and objectives of the study. In this chapter also, a summarized description of the methodology discussed in Chapter Three is given. The part of the chapter that follows gives the theoretical and conceptual framework. In this section requests are discussed and exemplified in relation to theories on speech acts and applied to the research context, such as speech events, language contexts and domains as well as showing their importance to the present study. The chapter concludes by giving the scope of the study, outlining some of the limitations and giving a summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background

This study explores request-making in Bemba from a pragmatic point of view (that is, the meaning the speaker intends to convey to the hearer in a particular context). Requests are a common occurrence in everyday life. They usually aim to address the listeners' 'positive face.' In pragmatics, 'face' is the person's public image (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This is the emotional and social sense of self that all people have and expect others to recognize. Positive face in this study refers to the need to be accepted and appreciated by others. An attempt will be made in this study to

demonstrate that language as a form of behaviour can be used to get others to do something taking into account the listener's public image.

Bemba is a Bantu language spoken in Zambia. It is one of the seven official Zambian languages and is taught in government schools. It is principally spoken in Luapula, Northern, Copperbelt and some parts of Central Province. The word Bemba is used to cover the regional dialects of the language. The researcher investigated the variant of Bemba spoken by native and non- native speakers on the Copperbelt.

1.2 General Overview

Language is a means of communication. People use language to accomplish many functions. Halliday (1985) has identified three functions of language: interpersonal, ideational and textual. The ideational and interpersonal functions relate to the use of spoken language. The ideational function uses language to express content and to communicate information. The ideational function is a vital aspect of most real life situations whether in study or business or professional contexts. The focus is mainly the transfer of information and not the maintenance of social relations. The interpersonal function is concerned with the social, expressive and conative functions of language. The interpersonal function of language is observed in social conversational exchanges with family, friends or colleagues that speakers participate in everyday. In this sort of verbal interaction, language is used to establish and maintain social relations. Therefore, the use of language should be carried out within a context. The context can be social or interpersonal or textual.

The social context, on the one hand, is foregrounded in studies that focus on sociolinguistic aspects of language. Sociolinguistics deals with features of language use in the social context. It might be defined as, "the study of correlations between linguistic variables and non linguistic variables," (Matthew 2005:345). These linguistic variables are, for example, the phonetic quality of a vowel or the presence or absence of a certain element in the construction whereas the non linguistic variables refer to the social class of speakers, their age, sex and others. For that reason, the study of language in the social context encompasses the investigation of the linguistic material produced within the structure of the society. The social context also focuses on how society affects the structure of change and variation of language spoken, and conversely, on the way in which different attitudes about the variations affect the way people interact in a particular community. The interpersonal context, on the other hand, focuses on the individuals involved in the interaction. These individuals are the interlocutors. The interpersonal context is studied in sub-disciplines such as pragmatics, conversational analysis and discourse analysis. According to Levinson (1983:24), pragmatics is "the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with contexts in which they would be appropriate." Hence, pragmatics is applied to the study of language from the point of view of its *users*, the choices they make, the difficulties they encounter in using the language in social interaction and how their use of language affects other participants in communication. Since language is only meaningful, pragmatically, within a particular context, it follows that there is a sociological interface of pragmatics which is known as sociopragmatics, in other words, the way in which conditions on language

use derive from the social situations. The linguistic end of the spectrum is pragmalinguistics where we consider particular resources which a given language provides for conveying a particular illocution (Leech 1983:10). Pragmatics covers a number of topics including the study of speech acts, how to do things with words.

There are many kinds of acts associated with utterances. People produce utterances in order to communicate intentions. An utterance with such a communicative intention is a speech act. J L Austin is the pioneer of speech acts. In his book How to Do Things with Words (1962), Austin states that utterances perform certain acts, which implies that specific utterances are identified or identifiable with the performance of a specific action. He explored performative utterances and classified them into explicit performatives and implicit performatives. A performative is an utterance by which a speaker does something. His exploration of performatives led him to the conclusion that utterances comprise three simultaneous acts: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts. On the basis of the work by Austin on speech acts with reference to illocutionary acts, J R Searle (1969) developed speech act theory. Speech act theory provides a basis for examining what the speaker means by an utterance.

The notion of speech act theory has motivated a good number of researchers to delve into the relationships between form and meaning. A number of research projects have focused on the study of conversation and include conversational analysis and discourse analysis. Conversational analysis refers to the analysis of natural conversation and its goal is to

discover the linguistic features of conversation. It also determines how conversation is used in everyday life. Discourse analysis refers to the study of how sentences combine to form larger meaningful units such as paragraphs, conversations, interviews, and others.

Conversation, many scholars maintain, (e.g. Grice, 1975) is controlled by a set of maxims and principles. As interlocutors communicate, they tend to follow these maxims. Nevertheless, there are cases where these maxims are violated for one reason or the other. According to Leech (1983:149), conversational principles include the cooperative principle, the politeness principle, the interest principle and the pollyanna principle. The cooperative principle draws on four maxims: quality, quantity, relation and manner. The politeness principle, however, includes seven maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, phatic and sympathy.

Grice (1975) was the first person to propose the notion of the cooperative principle in which utterances are interpreted on the assumption that the speaker is cooperating with the listener in an attempt to exchange meaning by observing or violating a number of maxims. It is assumed that the hearer is able to comprehend the pragmatic meaning of an utterance on the basis of these maxims and general knowledge of the world. These also aid the hearer in discerning what the sender intends to do with his or her words.

In addition to what has been discussed in the preceding paragraphs on speech acts, Searle (ibid.) classified speech acts into the following categories: Representatives, Commissive, Expressives, Directives and

Declarations. Requests fall under directives because their purpose is to get the addressee to do something. Making requests is easy to achieve. Nevertheless, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), requests are inherently face-threatening (that is, a threat to a person's self image) as they may well threaten the addressee's face which is dependent on freedom of action and freedom from imposition. Much as a request may be realized by using linguistic strategies such as 'on record', which are direct and unmitigated, or 'off record', which are hedges or indirectness, a compromise may be struck by the speaker using indirect requests. According to Searle (1975:60), "the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by relying on their mutually shared background information both linguistic and non linguistic together with the powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer". For example:

It is cold in here

This sentence may be a request for the heating system to be turned on. The speaker uses the indirect request to avoid offending the listener (Asher 1994:4131). Brown (1998:84) maintains that in making a request one may 'apologize for the imposition and make it easy for the addressee to refuse to comply... so speakers try to give the most interactional leeway possible.' Thus, to minimize the threat and to avoid the risk of others losing face, in English, the speaker's preference is to be indirect in issuing requests. By being indirect the speaker's motive is to be polite.

The concepts of indirectness and politeness are important to the negotiation of face in the realization of requests. Requests can either be

direct or indirect. Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983) observe that direct requests appear to be intrinsically impolite and face threatening as they intrude on the addressee's territory and these authors also argue that the preference for polite behaviour is indirectness. Politeness is, in that case, the most prominent motivation for making indirect requests. The concept of politeness in relation to social norms varies from culture to culture. Hence, what may be seen as polite behaviour in one culture may not be seen so in another culture.

It is from this perspective that the present study seeks to explore the nature of making requests in Bemba from a pragmatic point of view. The major aspects of requesting that will be examined are: requesting and the effect the act of requesting has on the listener in various situations following Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) concepts of speech act theory as well as Brown and Levinson's (1978) notion of politeness and face-threatening acts.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Although Bemba is spoken widely in Zambia, little is known about the strategies that are used in making requests in Bemba. Cross-cultural studies exploring the differences between the pragmatic principles of English requests and those in other languages such as Argentine Spanish, Hebrew, Canadian French and German (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989) have been done. In these studies, it was observed that there are linguistic and cultural variations in the implicature of speech acts such as requests. However, in Zambia, no studies have been carried out so far to investigate the pragmatics of requests in Bemba. Stated as a question, the

problem that will be investigated is: What strategies do speakers of Bemba deploy in making requests?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

1.4.1 General

The aim of this study is to establish the strategies that are used in making requests in Bemba.

1.4.2 Objectives

The study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) to identify the linguistic forms used to express requests in Bemba
- (ii) to classify the request strategies of Bemba according to the functions they seek to achieve
- (iii) to investigate the frequency with which these categories of request strategies are used in Bemba
- (iv) to establish how the request strategies in Bemba relate to social factors such as: age, gender, status and social distance.
- (v) To discover whether request strategies in Bemba support Searle's and Brown and Levinson's theoretical approaches, which are largely based on an examination of the English language.

1.4.3 Research Questions

This study will attempt to answer the following questions in relation to the objectives mentioned above:

- (i) What linguistic forms are used to express requests in Bemba?
- (ii) What categories of request strategies are used in Bemba?
- (iii) How often do these categories of request strategies occur in Bemba?
- (iv) How do request strategies in Bemba relate with social factors such as: age, gender, status, social distance, and authority?
- (v) Do request strategies in Bemba support Searle's and Brown and Levinson's theoretical approaches?

1.5 Rationale

The significance of this study can be assessed from two perspectives: (i) on the one hand, it can result in further explication of pragmatic theories, thereby validating or invalidating the universality of speech act theory as applied to the act of requesting, and (ii) on the other hand, it can serve a good number of applied purposes such as in teaching, and in translation and interpretation from Bemba into other languages and vice versa. The sociopragmatic aspects of language could be taken account of in language teaching programmes. Language teaching "should effect the transfer from grammatical competence, knowledge of sentences, to what has been called communicative competence, knowledge of how sentences are used in the performance of communicative acts of different kinds." (Widdowson 1979:90)

The study of pragmatics endeavours to explain how meaning is negotiated between interlocutors in different contexts, using pragmatic theories. In this regard many cross-cultural studies have been carried out to explore the nature of speech acts in general and requests in particular. Such

interlanguage studies have been done on request strategies in Japanese (<http://www.acs.ttu.edu/kaoyama/aoyam10pdf> 25.02.2008), in Indonesian by Hassall (1999) as quoted by Felix-Brasdeger, in Mexican Spanish (Felix-Brasdeger 2003), and Spanish and English (Marquez-Reiter, Rosina 2000) and the results revealed that the pragmatic and linguistic resources, and the particular illocutionary force employed to perform a request tend to vary across languages and hence are some reasons for miscommunication. To date, no pragmatic studies on requests have been carried out in Zambia. It is with this background that this study intends to investigate requests in Bemba, the strategies speakers use to realize these requests, and the pragmatic functions the requests are expected to serve.

Mastery of the specific pragmatic functions of the different speech acts in general, and request strategies, in particular, will enable translators to find the most appropriate equivalents in the target language more easily.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Requests

In this study requests will mean the act of asking the other person to do something and thus comply with the speaker's wishes.

1.6.2 Face

This is the person's public or self image. It is the emotional and social sense of self that every person has and expects everyone else to recognize. It is also the desire to be appreciated as well as not to be imposed upon.

1.7 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In this study, it is assumed that the type of strategies employed is dependent on the context in which request making takes place as well as a number of social factors such as age, gender and the social distance between the interlocutors involved. The assumption is guided by two theories: the speech act theory which was developed earlier by Searle (1969) following Austin's (1962) work, and the concept of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987).

Speech act theory is premised on the notion that language is a form of behaviour, which is governed by a set of rules (Searle, 1969). A speech act is an utterance that serves a particular function in communication. Austin (1962: 94) proposed three types of acts:

(i) Locutionary act: this is an act of saying something. For instance, if a person says 'I need water to drink' then she or he has performed a locutionary act.

(ii) Illocutionary act: this is the force that an expression of some specific form will have when it is uttered. For instance, a speaker might say, 'Can you close the door?' This utterance is an interrogative and it is a request to close the door.

Searle (1976: 22) classifies illocutionary acts into five categories: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations.

(a) Assertives or representatives- utterances that may be true or false, they describe a state of affairs such as asserting, concluding and so on.

(b) Directives - utterances which make the listener do something such as requesting and ordering for instance.

(c) Commissives - utterances which commit the speaker to do something such as promising and offering.

(d) Expressives - utterances which express emotional state of the speaker as in apologies and welcoming.

(e) Declarations - utterances change the state of affairs such as baptizing and declaring.

(iii) Perlocutionary act: this is the effect of the act on the listener. For example, as regards the request 'Can you close the door?' the listener might ignore the request or might close the door.

In speech act theory, however, much as Searle spoke of the speaker-hearer relationship and marked the indirectness of a speech act which carries the relation between the actual meaning of words and their implicature, he does not look at other variables such as social status, gender, age and cross-cultural variations on speech acts. These have been accounted for by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their work on politeness theory which focuses on the notion of 'face'. According to this theory, face is a favourable public image with two different kinds of desire or face wants: the desire not to be imposed on and the desire to be approved of. The former is the negative face and the latter is the positive one. The individual's face can be destroyed, maintained or enhanced. Some acts by nature threaten the face of the listener, therefore they require softening. Illocutionary acts such as requests which are most likely to damage another person's face are called

face threatening acts (FTAs). As a result, the strategies that the speaker adopts to save the face of the listener depend on the speaker's assessment of the size of the face-threatening acts. The speaker may work out the size of the face-threatening acts by such parameters as power, distance and the weightiness of the imposition. These influence the speaker's choice of the strategies to be used. Since by virtue of their nature requests are face-threatening, they need to be hedged by employing indirectness and politeness strategies. Pyle (1975) as cited in Thomas (1995:179) argues that people employ the mechanism of being indirect when what they want to say conflicts with the intentions and desires of the listener. This study will apply and test the speech act theories as well as the politeness theory in relation to request strategies in Bemba.

1.8 Research Design

1.8.1 Data Collection

Data was collected through introspection by participants including the researcher, who speak Bemba as their native language. The study was carried out in Kitwe and Chililabombwe. A total of 150 participants were involved in the study, 75 of whom were drawn from Kitwe and 75 from Chililabombwe. The participants were drawn from two different towns to ensure a fair distribution of the survey as much as possible. They were drawn from different social groups in terms of occupation, economic status, age and social status.

Simple random sampling techniques were used to select persons to participate in the study so that whoever was present at the time of

research would have an opportunity to provide the required data. In actual data collection, the instruments that were used are: recordings, observations, interviews and questionnaire.

1.8.1.1 Recordings

Recordings were used in collecting primary data. This was done by recording conversations in places such as homes, markets and bus stations. This instrument is useful because data collected was mostly from conversations in natural settings and in effect unadulterated.

1.8.1.2 Observation

Observation was also used in data collection. The researcher observed the use of request strategies by speakers of Bemba in different domains of language use such as health centres, schools, bus stations, homes and market places. The researcher kept a diary of speech events.

1.8.1.3 Interviews

Both structured and non-structured interviews were used to probe further in order to elicit the required information which may not be captured through other methods as well as to compare with and countercheck the data generated by recordings and observation.

1.8.1.4 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to collect data because the researcher was looking for specific information as regards request strategies in Bemba. The questionnaire used was the Discourse Completion Test. The Discourse

Completion Test consists of scripted dialogues and each part has a brief description of a situation specifying the setting and status of interlocutors involved. The Discourse Completion Test has been used by researchers to elicit a great amount of data as opposed to methods such as recordings. For instance, Faerch and Kasper (1989) used this test to examine request strategies employed by speakers whose mother-tongue was Danish and whose second languages were English and German.

In the present study, the test contained seven situations as follows:

- (i) Pupil asks fellow pupil to help him carry books to staffroom.
- (ii) Pupil asks teacher for extension from teacher on submission of maths assignment.
- (iii) A sibling asks another sibling to take care of the dishes on her behalf.
- (iv) Mother asks children to set the dinner table.
- (v) Wife asks husband to get some sugar on his way home.
- (vi) An employee asks supervisor to for permission to take a child to hospital.
- (vii) Supervisor would like his subordinates to do some work.

The details of the Discourse Completion Test have been given in Chapter Four.

1.8.2 Data Analysis

Data was analysed qualitatively. This began with the arrangement of field notes in line with the specific objectives of the study. It was followed by the explanation of the notes in relation to both the objectives of the study and the relevant aspects of speech act theory and the politeness theories referred to.

1.9 Scope of the Study

A review of the literature shows that a variety of social parameters and linguistic variables which have been investigated by sociolinguists or 'age-set'. A good number of social factors such as culture, ethnicity, and generation are not easy to process and researchers usually avoid them. This study looks at the pragmatic analysis of requests in Bemba. It examines the strategies that are used by speakers of Bemba in getting the listener to do something in various situations and has limited itself to parameters such as age, gender, social status, authority and topic following the concepts of the speech act theory and politeness. The speech act and the politeness theories were developed for English. Therefore, the aim of this study is to discover whether the theories in question could be applied to Bemba.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

One of the difficulties in this investigation was that the field work allowance was not given in good time. The other limitation of this study is related to methods of data collection. Recording for instance, many times the tape would run for some time without recording the expected data on requests. In some cases, the exchanges were short and the recording itself was

unclear and quite noisy. However, the researcher transcribed enough exchanges that she was able to hear from the tape for the purpose of the study.

This type of research needs modern equipment such as a digital recorder for clearer and more effective recording. Nevertheless, what was used was an ordinary micro-cassette recorder which was what could be afforded by the researcher.

1.11 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is composed of five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction to the study and gives background information to the study, states the specific problem under investigation and gives the rationale of this study. The purpose and objectives of the study, the research questions which were investigated as well as a summary of the methodology employed in data collection and analysis, have been presented in this chapter. The chapter also presents the theoretical and conceptual framework within which the study was carried out by explaining and illustrating some important concepts that relate to the research.

The second chapter reviews some of the literature which is available and is directly relevant to the current study so as to put this research within the context of other similar studies and provide justification for it.

The third chapter gives the details of the methodology used to collect data in order to provide answers to the research questions raised in the first chapter. The chapter presents details on the type of research design - introduces subjects of the study, describes the materials used in the study

and justifies the selection of the corpus for the study - the study area and sample size, data collection instruments and procedure and the analysis of data.

The fourth chapter is a discussion of findings on request making in Bemba and strategies used as drawn from the data collected. The presentation has been done according to the research objectives and questions as set out in Chapter One.

The fifth chapter provides a summary of previous chapters. Based on these findings, it also discusses the conclusion of the study on the pragmatic analysis of requests in Bemba and makes some recommendations for further research.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an introduction to the investigation into the pragmatic analysis of request making in Bemba. The presentation started with the information on the functions of language which included request making as well as some details on previous studies. Later, the chapter presented the problem under research, the rationale, the purpose and objectives which addressed objectives of the study. In this chapter also, a summarized description of the study methodology discussed in Chapter Three was given. The part of the chapter that followed outlined the theoretical and conceptual framework. In this section requests were discussed and exemplified in relation to theories on speech acts and applied to the research context, such as speech events, language contexts and domains, as well as showing their importance to the present study. The

chapter concluded by presenting the scope of the study, outlining some of the limitations and giving the structure of the dissertation.

The next chapter presents a review of some of the available literature of studies on languages other than Bemba which is directly relevant to the current study so as to place this research within the context of similar studies, thereby enriching it and allowing comparisons to be made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 General

The previous chapter introduced this research into the pragmatic analysis of making requests in Bemba. The presentation started with the brief background on the functions of language which included request making as well as some details on previous studies. Thereafter, the chapter presented the problem under research, the rationale, the purpose as well as the objectives of the study and also the research questions through which the objectives are addressed. Chapter One also gave a brief description of the methodological framework whose details have been discussed in detail in Chapter Three. In addition the chapter gave the theoretical and conceptual framework for the study. Finally, the chapter concluded with a presentation of the scope of the study and an outline of the structure of the dissertation.

The present chapter provides a review of some of the available literature that is of direct relevance to this study in order to place this investigation within the context of similar research as well as provide a justification for it. The review has been organized under the following sections: Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Pragmatic Failure, Speech Acts, Speech Act Theory, Approaches to the Study of Conversation, Studies on Requests, and the Structure, Categories and Strategies of Requests as well as the Conclusion.

2.1 Introduction

To broaden the understanding of communication in different social contexts with regard to the present study, it is necessary to relate Pragmatics to Sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics deals with features of language use in social contexts. It might be defined as, "the study of correlations between linguistic variables and non linguistic variables" (Matthew 2005:345). These linguistic variables are, for example, the phonetic quality of a vowel or the presence or absence of a certain element in the construction whereas the non linguistic variables refer to the social class of speakers, their age, sex and other factors. Sociolinguistics started to flourish in the 1960s. Its development was partly in reaction to a context-free perspective of language, and towards the view of language in its social context.

2.2 Sociolinguistics

Yule (1997:239) defines sociolinguistics as, "the study of inter-relationships between language and society." Sociolinguistics emphasizes the use of language in an appropriate context. It goes beyond the structural analysis of grammatical systems because it deals with the social aspects of language. In fact, sociolinguistics concentrates on how language is used by groups of people, in geographical regions, and others. This shows that when speakers use language, the intended meaning can only be worked out in an appropriate context. In the present study, the researcher intended to establish how social and cultural contexts in which request making occurs relate to social factors such as: status, sex, age, and social power or distance between the

interlocutors involved. These factors have a fundamental impact on the type of strategies speakers use when making requests.

2.3 Pragmatics

In comparison with other branches of linguistics, pragmatics has only recently become the centre of attention in the field of linguistics. Its use in linguistics dates from the 1970s. Leech (1983:6) defines pragmatics as, "the study of meaning in relation to speech situations," whereas Levinson (1983:1) defines pragmatics as the study of "the relation of signs to interpreters". Nevertheless, pragmatics cannot be explained, without explaining the concept of semiotics. Matthew (2005:336) refers to semiotics as a general science of signs of which linguistics is a part. In semiotics signs and symbols are studied. This term can be applied to the study of artificial signs and gestures or traffic lights as much as to human language. Morris as quoted by Levinson (1983) distinguishes three distinct branches of semiotics as:

- (i) Syntactics or syntax which is the study of formal relation of signs;
- (ii) Semantics which is the study of signs in relation to objects or what they refer to; and
- (iii) Pragmatics which is the study of signs in relation to interpreters or their users.

Pragmatics has come to be applied to the study of language in relation to its users especially of the choices they make, the problems they encounter in social interaction and how their use of language may affect the listeners. According to Levinson (1983:24), pragmatics is the study of the "ability of

language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate." In this case, the boundaries of pragmatics have not been clearly defined. They are between semantics, sociolinguistics and the extra linguistic context. They overlap (Leech 1983:5-7).

Pragmatics has its own inconsistencies. To resolve these issues, some terms have been proposed to classify the varieties of subject matter involved in pragmatics. Leech (1983:11) uses the term "pragma-linguistics" to refer to the study of "the more linguistic end of pragmatics...which a given language provides for particular illocutions". He also uses the term "sociopragmatics" to refer to the "sociological interface of pragmatics". In other words, sociopragmatics is the study of the way in which conditions on language use derive from the social situation.

In brief, pragmatics includes the study of how the interpretation and use of utterances depends on the knowledge of the real world, how the relationship between the speaker and the hearer influences the structure of sentences and how speech acts are used and understood by speakers.

2.4 Pragmatic Failure

In pragmatics, there are instances when the speaker produces wrong communicative effects through the faulty use of speech acts or one of the rules of speaking. This is called pragmatic failure. Thomas (1983) uses the term pragmatic failure to refer to the inability of the individual to understand what is meant by what is said. She makes a distinction between two types of pragmatic failure: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic:

2.4.1 Pragmalinguistic Failure

Pragmalinguistic failure occurs when the learners fail to get their meaning across because the communicative conventions behind the utterances used are different. This happens when learners of a language translate an utterance from their first language into the target language. Pragmalinguistic failure is more linguistic than pragmatic.

2.4.2 Sociopragmatic Failure

Sociopragmatic failure has to do with not knowing what to say, when and whom to say it to. Most of the misunderstandings that occur stem from the diversities of cultures leading to cross-cultural problems. These may include differences in evaluation regarding size of imposition, age, power or social distance.

2.5 Speech Acts

The term "speech act" is used by Crystal (1992:362) to refer to a communicative activity defined with reference to the speaker's intentions as they speak and the effects achieved on the hearer. Speech acts are conditioned by rules of conduct and interpretation. Forms of language perform specific communicative functions. A question can function as a request. For example, the question "*Can you pass the salt?*" which is literally a question about ability when used at dinner table is a request for action. Speech acts are used systematically to accomplish specific purposes in speech. What is known about speech acts today is based upon a series of lectures J. L. Austin prepared to be delivered at Oxford and Harvard. In his

book, How to Do Things with Words(1962) Austin explores performative utterances. Consider the examples below:

I resign

I name this ship Boniface

The nature of these utterances, as Austin argues, is in fact performative rather than constative. A performative is an utterance by which a speaker does something whereas a constative is an utterance by which a speaker expresses a proposition which may be true or false. The meaning of utterances can be identified with the performance of an action. In saying 'I resign' the speaker does in reality resign. In saying 'I name this ship Boniface' the speaker performs an act of giving the ship a name.

Performatives are usually in declarative in form. They are identified with characteristics such as a verb in the present tense, a first person subject, and the possibility of adding the adverb *hereby*. Austin's investigation of performatives made him realize that all utterances partake of the nature of actions which led him later to abandon the distinction between performative and constatives. Austin (1962: 94) proposed three types of speech acts:

- (i) Locutionary act - what is said
- (ii) Illocutionary act - the contextual function of the act
- (iii) Perlocutionary act - the effect of the act on the listener.

2.6 Speech Act Theory

According to the development of speech act theory as presented by Searle (1969), who was Austin's student, language is a form of behaviour governed

by strict rules. The phrase 'speech acts' in practice refers to illocutionary acts. An illocutionary act refers to the force that an expression of some specific form will have when it is uttered. For instance, a mother says to a daughter, "Mary, can you help me?" This would have the illocutionary force of a request for help.

2.6.1 Types of Illocutionary Acts

Searle proposed five types of illocutionary acts that one can perform in speaking. These are:

- (i) Assertives- utterances that may be true or false. They describe a state of affairs such as asserting and concluding;
- (ii) Directives - utterances which make the listener do something such as requesting and ordering;
- (iii) Commissive - utterances which commit the speaker to do something such as promising and offering;
- (iv) Expressives - utterances which express emotional state of the speaker such as apologies and welcoming ; and
- (v) Declarations - utterances which change the status or state of affairs such as baptizing and declaring.

2.6.2 Felicity conditions

Felicity conditions should not be overlooked when describing speech act theory. According to Austin (1962:63), the phrase 'felicity conditions' refers to "the criteria which must be fulfilled if a speech act is to achieve its purpose." These are social conventions which speakers and the listeners should adhere to to achieve the purposes for which any speech act is

intended. For example, the utterance, "I pronounce you man and wife" is successful if the speaker has the authority to solemnize marriages, if it is a marriage ceremony and if the parties involved have agreed to marry.

Felicity conditions are further subdivided into the following:

- (i) Preparatory conditions which relate to whether the person performing a speech act has the authority to do so;
- (ii) Sincerity conditions which relate to the degree of sincerity with which a speech act such as promising is performed ; and
- (iii) Essential conditions which relate to the way the speaker, having performed a speech act, is committed to a certain kind of belief.

There are instances when speakers of a language sometimes fail to fulfil the felicity conditions of an utterance for one reason or another. According to Lyons (1977:157), the utterance "Will you drive?" is inappropriate as a request if the speaker knows that the hearer has not learnt to drive, and the mutual recognition of such inappropriateness would, in turn, lead to an interpretation of a different order, for example, joking, and sarcasm. Austin (1962) refers to such utterances as infelicitous, unless they are deliberately so.

2.7 Approaches to the Study of Conversation

Conversation has been surveyed through various approaches. The most significant of these are conversational analysis and discourse analysis. These approaches focus on factors that enhance conversational coherence (that is, the way in which the content of connected speech or text hangs together). These approaches also involve understanding the sequential organization of

discourse, and how this organization is produced and understood. These two approaches, nevertheless, have their own distinct features.

2.7.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis has been defined as the "study of continuous stretches of language longer than a single sentence" (Crystal, 1992: 106). Discourse analysis investigates the organization of such 'texts' (including speech) as conversation, arguments, narratives, jokes and speeches. It also looks out, in particular, for linguistic features which identify the structure of discourse (Yule 1997). Discourse analysis usually isolates basic categories or units of discourse and formulates a set of rules stated with respect to those categories delimiting well-formed sequences of categories from ill-formed segments (Brown and Yule, 1989).

2.7.2 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis aims at the analysis of natural conversation in order to discover the linguistic characteristics of the phenomenon, and its use in everyday life. Conversation analysis determines how individuals experience, make sense of and report their actions. Conversation analysis includes the study of how speakers decide to speak during a conversation and how the utterances of two or more speakers are related (Mathews 2005). Brown and Yule (1989:3) also state that conversational analysis concerns itself with the use of language to negotiate role relationships, peer solidarity, the exchange of turns in a conversation, the saving of 'face' of both the speaker and hearer.

2.7.3 Conversational Principles

The work on conversational principles is usually credited to H. P. Grice (1975) who was interested in explaining the difference between what is said and what is meant. What is said is what words are at face value and can be explained in truth conditional terms. What is meant, however, is the effect that the speaker intends to produce on the addressee's recognition of the shared background knowledge of the context. The idea behind conversational principles is the assumption that conversation is conducted in accordance with a set of principles and maxims which interlocutors assume are being followed in the utterances of others (Leech 1983). These maxims may be adhered to or flouted by interlocutors for one reason or the other.

2.7.3.1 The Cooperative Principle

The cooperative principle has four sub-principles or maxims:

(i) Maxim of quality: try to make your contribution true

(a) do not say what you believe is false

(b) do not say that for which you lack evidence

(ii) Maxim of quantity:

(a) make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of exchange

(b) do not make your contribution more informative than is required

(iii) Maxim of relation: do make your contribution relevant

(iv) Maxim of manner: be specific and clear

(a) avoid obscurity

(b) avoid ambiguity

(c) be brief

(d) be orderly

The cooperative principle explains how people arrive at or infer meanings which are nowhere expressly stated.

2.7.3.2 The Politeness Principle

Politeness is defined as referring to "proper social conduct and tactful consideration of others. What counts as polite in any given context is socio-culturally and historically determined" (Asher 1994:3206). In linguistic pragmatics, politeness has to do with the ways in which linguistic action is expressed. The linguistic action performed to express politeness can serve to mediate norms of behaviour in terms of ideas such as courtesy, distance and also deference. In the same vein, Yule (1997:134) defines pragmatic politeness as, "showing awareness of another person's face." Since pragmatic politeness is concerned with internal politeness negotiated during speech and that it has to do with the relationship between the speaker and hearer, it should facilitate interaction by lessening potential conflict or confrontation.

Politeness cannot be discussed without referring to the politeness principle. The politeness principle as discussed by Lakoff (1989) and quoted by Asher (1994) addresses relational goals and serves to lessen friction in personal

interaction. Leech (1983) formulated a comprehensive account of the politeness principle and divided it into the following:

(i) Tact maxim

- (a) Minimize cost to other
- (b) Maximize benefit to other

(ii) Generosity maxim

- (a) Minimize benefit to self
- (b) Maximize cost to self

(iii) Approbation maxim

- (a) Minimize dispraise of other
- (b) Maximize praise of other

(iv) Modesty maxim

- (a) Minimize praise of self
- (b) Maximize dispraise of self

(v) Agreement maxim

- (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other
- (b) Maximize agreement between self and other

(vi) Sympathy maxim

- (a) Minimize antipathy between self and other

(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other

The maxims above can be summarized by the following:

- (i) do not impose
- (ii) give options
- (iii) make your receiver feel good

It is claimed that listeners usually assume that maxims are being followed by the speakers when they make utterances. The term politeness suggests the genuine desire to be pleasant to others. Thomas (1995: 158) refers to politeness as "a strategy employed by the speaker to achieve a variety of goals, such as promoting and maintaining harmonious relations." Politeness, as noted above, serves to mediate the norms of social behaviour, in terms of such notions as courtesy, rapport, deference, and distance.

To show politeness, speakers often use indirect speech acts. According to Searle (1979), these are cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly, by way of another. Brown and Levinson (1987) say politeness is the underlying motivation for being indirect in English. For example:

- (i) Are you really going to wear that?

This utterance can either be a threat 'you cannot wear that!' or a suggestion 'you can wear another dress'.

- (ii) Someone has eaten the icing off the cake.

This can either be an accusation 'you are the one who has eaten the icing off the cake' or a polite request 'could you by any chance know the person who has eaten the icing off the cake'.

However, Leech (1983) views politeness as a surface level adherence to social norms. He says politeness does not need to have anything to do with any genuine desire to please the listener. According to Brown and Levinson, the degree of politeness depends on the following factors:

- (i) Social distance (D) (which include age, sex and intimacy)
- (ii) Relative power (P)
- (iii) Size of imposition (R)

These are independent and culturally sensitive variables that subsume all the others. Absolute ranking (R) of impositions in the culture refers to the potential expenditure of goods and service by the hearer. Social distance (D) refers to the distance between the speaker and the hearer. This represents the degree of familiarity and solidarity they share. Relative power (P) refers to the power of the speaker with respect to the hearer. This reflects the degree to which the speaker can impose his/her will on the hearer. Thus R varies depending on the particular speech act while P and D may remain constant across all speech acts for any two interlocutors (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). In other words, power relationships constrain communicative action universally, but actors' assessment of the weight and values of these universal context factors varies substantively cross-culturally (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). These factors have to be

weighed in relation to the cultural norms of the society the interlocutors find themselves in.

For instance, refusals, requests, and apologies might be carried out differentially depending upon changes in relative power (P), social distance (D), and ranking (R). Beebe and Takahashi (1989) discuss how disagreement is expressed in Japanese. They found that the Japanese were more likely to be critical of plans proposed by a person of lower status than were Americans. The research by Beebe and Takahashi (1989) showed that, the responses by Americans sounded indirect while those of the Japanese were more direct with both higher-lower and lower-higher status relationships. The above studies of speech act realization indicate that utterances show sensitivity to status.

2.7.4 The Notion of 'Face'

In any social encounter between people, interlocutors try to communicate a positive impression or image of themselves which reflects the values and beliefs of the interlocutors. This positive image is called face. For Brown and Levinson (1987), face is a favourable public image and has two kinds of desire. These are: the desire not to be impeded in one's action and the desire to be approved of. The desire not to be impeded is referred to as negative face and the desire to be approved of is positive face. Negative politeness strategies are less threatening than positive politeness. Brown and Levinson believe that some acts by nature are face-threatening and hence require moderating. The concept of 'face' is universal, although the

specific manifestations of face-wants may vary from culture to culture with some acts being more threatening in one culture than in other cultures.

2.8 Studies on Requests

Speech acts have been a central concern of pragmatics, especially cross-cultural pragmatics (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper 1989:2). A cross-cultural study was carried out on the differences in principles governing English dialogues between native speakers and Chinese speakers by Zongxin Feng (<http://www.ling.gu.se/konferenser/gotalog2000/FinalP/feng.pdf> 26.02.2008). The findings of the study revealed that there were cultural differences in the use of speech acts such as refusals.

Numerous cross-cultural studies exploring the differences in the pragmatic principles of English requests and other languages such as Argentine Spanish, Hebrew, Canadian French and German have been carried out. (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper 1989) In Japanese research was done by Katsura Aoyama on request strategies with reference to social factors such as age, gender and social distance at a Japanese workplace among workers who were native Japanese speakers. Katsura observed that older employees made more requests than younger ones and female workers tended to use terms of endearment unlike their male counterparts (<http://www.acs.ttu.edu/kaoyama/aoyama10pdf> 25.02.2008). Hassan R. S Abd el-Jawad observes that in Arabic when making requests the speaker creates an emotional appeal to the hearer to influence him or her and the intention is that it is a politeness strategy to save the face of the hearer (2000). In his study of requests strategies in Chinese, Hong (1999) observes

that although the use of imperatives is generally viewed as impolite in English, in Chinese, it is polite (<http://www.lub.lu.se.archive/00019176/01/Gao.pdf>. 12.03.2008). He also observes that the choice of request strategies in Chinese is greatly determined by social- power relations and by the distance between the interlocutors. Politeness studies in Chinese reveal that the concept of face is culture specific. For Chinese, 'face' is oriented towards an ideal social identity because it focuses more on the community one lives in than on an individual (Lin 2005). In Jordanian society, the nature of making invitations and accepting them occurs to maintain good relationships. What they aim to do is to address the positive face of the invitee (Mahmoud A.Al- Khatib 2006). As seen from the studies mentioned above, the concept of speech acts cannot be divorced from the notion of politeness. In the execution of requests, as observed by Wardhaugh (1985:163), the first principle that must be observed is the politeness principle which, according to Leech (1983), can be summarized as follows: minimize the expression of impolite beliefs and maximize the expression of polite beliefs. Therefore, addressee's face should be saved if you want them to do something. Politeness plays a critical role in the negotiation of face during a conversational interaction (Santaemilia 2003) and social factors such as gender, status and age have an influence on the use of politeness strategies. Wouk (1999) observes that in relation to gender, women tend to be more polite than men in Javanese, as in the Japanese society (few@antnov1.auckland.ac.nz 14.03.2008). Gqwede (2005) also observes that politeness in request making is an implicit means of persuading someone to do something in the Xhosa society of South Africa.

The study of indirect speech acts has dealt with requests overwhelmingly. Blum Kulka et al (1989:18) as quoted by Asher (1994) identify some points on the indirectness scale for requests. Direct strategies are used when the speaker is dominant as in:

Direct Strategies

- (i) Imperative- *Clean up that mess.*
- (ii) Performative- *I am asking you to clean up the mess.*
- (iii) Hedged performative- *I would like to ask you move that car.*
- (iv) Obligation statement- *You have to move that car*
- (v) Want statements- *I want you to stop calling me that*

Conventionally Indirect Strategies

- (vi) Suggestory formulas- *How about cleaning up?*
- (vii) Query preparatory- *Could you clean up?*

Nonconventionally Indirect Strategies

- (viii) Strong hint- *You have opened the box.*
- (ix) Mild hint- *You must very be tired, aren't you?*

An indirect request is used to avoid offending the listener. In consequence people have the option to hedge, apologize or give reasons for not complying with the request.

2.9 Requests: their Structure, Strategies and Categories

Blum-Kulka et al (1989) classify requests on a nine point scale of mutually exclusive categories which have proved to be valid across languages. These authors also divide requests into three parts: alerters, head acts and supportive moves.

2.9.1 Structure of Requests

In examining the structure of speech acts, researchers have often analysed requests in terms of discourse sequences: alerters, head acts and supportive moves.

1. Alerters: these include formal or informal attention getters and greetings, terms of endearment and names, for example:

Bwalya, take the books to the library.

Honey, come home after your meeting.

Excuse me, use these boxes to pack your books.

2. The Head Act or the linguistic form of request is the core part of a request. Blum-Kulka et al (1989), refers to head acts as the request proper or the main strategy employed to make the request. For example:

Clean the dishes, will you?

Help me putting these things together, will you?

I really wish you would leave me alone.

3. Supportive Moves are not the request forms. They are the peripheral elements and refer to strategies that accompany the head act. Supportive moves may come before or after the head act. For example:

I missed lectures yesterday; can you lend me your book?

May I borrow your pen? *I have lost mine.*

I really feel bothered; can I use your key? My sister took mine.

2.9.2 Categories of Requests

To account satisfactorily for the structure of requests, request head acts are classified according to a 'directness' continuum. Request head acts can be grouped into three levels of directness which have been "empirically shown to be valid across languages" (ibid: 1989). These three levels are: direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect strategies. The direct category has the following five strategies: mood derivable, explicit performative, hedged performative, locution derivable and want statement. The conventionally indirect category consists of two strategies: the suggestory formula and query preparatory. The nonconventionally indirect category comprises the strong hint and the mild hint.

In addition to the classification of requests, head acts can be analysed according to their internal and external modifications. Internal modifications include mitigators which soften direct requests and consist of lexical (please, think, believe) and syntactic (conditional, imperfect) mitigators. External modifications include supportive moves which modify the head act. These include reasons, preparators (My child is unwell, could you give me permission to take him to hospital?) and disarmers (I know that you take good notes, can I borrow them?)

2.9.3 Request Strategies

There are nine request strategies identified in this research (ibid, 1989). These are:

2.9.3.1 Mood derivable

These are utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals illocutionary force. In this type of utterance imperatives are the grammatical forms of utterances. In most cases in English the imperative signals that the utterance is an order and is only supposed to be used by a speaker who has power over the hearer otherwise it can be regarded as impolite depending on the speaker and hearer relations. In this case, this strategy is the least preferred one in English.

(i) Clean up the kitchen!

(ii) Close the door!

2.9.3.2 Explicit performative

These are utterances where the illocutionary force is explicitly named. Performative verbs are used to convey request intentions.

(i) I am asking you to clean up the mess

2.9.3.3 Hedged performative

In English hedged performatives are used to soften bare requests with performative verbs to show politeness.

(i) I would like you to clean up the kitchen.

2.9.3.4 Obligation statements

These are utterances which state the obligation of the hearer to carry out the act. Such an utterance is usually made by someone of a higher status than the listener.

- (i) You have to clean the bedroom.
- (ii) You should write your homework.

2.9.3.5 Want statements

These utterances state the speaker's desire, need, demand, or wish that the hearer must carry out.

- (i) I really wish you would stop bothering me.
- (ii) I want you to stop making noise

2.9.3.6 Suggestory formulae

In this category, the speaker turns a request into a suggestion usually made in the interest of both the speaker and the listener. This states the speaker's suggestion that the hearer must carry out.

- (i) How about washing the dishes?

2.9.3.7 Query preparatory

This category contains the basic form for the most explicit realization of a request in English in which an interrogative is the central structure.

- (i) Can you bring back the book?

- (ii) Could you clean the kitchen?

2.9.3.8 Strong hint

These utterances are used by the speaker who has authority over the hearer.

- (i) You have left the room in a mess.

2.9.3.9 Mild hint

These utterances are used by the speaker as support for a more direct request.

- (i) You have been busy here, haven't you?

2.10 Summary

The chapter has presented a review of some of the available literature which was considered relevant to the present study in order to place the research within the context of similar studies. It focused on studies in two branches of linguistics: Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics, Pragmatic Failure, Speech Acts, Speech Act Theory, Approaches to the Study of Conversation, Studies on Requests, as well as the structure, categories and strategies of requests.

The next chapter explains the research procedures and techniques adopted in the study in an attempt to find answers to the research questions raised in the first chapter. It builds on that introduction and presents details relating to the type of research approach and research design employed in

the study, the study area and sample size, the data collection instruments and procedures as well as the data analysis process.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 General

The previous chapter provided a review of the available literature considered to be directly relevant to the present study in order to place it within the context of similar research and provide a justification for it. It focused on studies in Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics, Pragmatic Failure, Speech Acts, Speech Act Theory, Approaches to the Study of Conversation, Studies on Requests, as well as the structure, categories and strategies of requests.

The present chapter explains the research procedures and techniques adopted in the study in an attempt to find answers to the research questions raised in the first chapter. This chapter builds on that introduction and presents details relating to the type of research approach and research design employed in the study, the study area and sample size, the data collection instruments and procedures as well as the data analysis process.

This chapter consists of three sections. The first looks at the nature of this research. The second focuses on the research methodology used in the survey. It also presents a detailed explanation of the procedures used in data collection whereas the third gives information on data analysis.

3.1 Definition of Research

Research is the process of collecting data or information in order to establish or identify new phenomena or to verify existing phenomena in new

ways. The Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary (1986:1302) defines research as an "investigation or inquiry in order to gather new information or collate what is already known about a subject..." In this regard, the present study qualifies as a research undertaking because it seeks to gather new information on the strategies used in making requests in Bemba.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.0 General

The research design is the framework within which a given research exercise is to be undertaken and provides the basis for the selection of appropriate research methods to be used in investigating a given phenomenon. Recent developments in research as Patton (1990: 10-11) notes "have led to an increase in use of multiple methods". This indicates that a researcher should not only consider which is the most appropriate method for his or her study, but also what combinations of methods will produce a better understanding of it. This approach of using a variety of techniques in research is known as triangulation.

Triangulation in research refers to the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods, or investigators in the study of a given phenomenon. Using triangulation can capture a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal and reveal the varied dimensions of the given phenomenon. Of the available types of triangulation, the present study used data triangulation (which involved use of a variety of data sources such as introspection, tape recording, the semi-structured interview, questionnaires and observation). It also involved collecting data at different sites and from participants at

different levels in society.

3.2.1 The Qualitative approach

3.2.1.1 Qualitative research

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), as quoted by Punch (2006), qualitative research is the type that produces findings by non-statistical procedures. In qualitative research data may be collected by techniques such as interviews and observation. Mason (1996) says that qualitative research concerns itself with how the world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced. She further states that qualitative research is based on methods of data collection which are flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced. The qualitative approach is inductive in nature because of its flexibility and sensitivity to the social context. This approach starts with specific observations and moves towards the development of a general pattern that emerges from specific cases being studied. The researcher is not expected to impose much of the organising structure; neither does he or she make assumptions about the relationships among the data prior to the observation. The design evolves during the survey and may be adjusted as the study progresses. The inductive nature of qualitative research suggests why data are in words as opposed to numbers and why there is more emphasis on description and discovery and less on testing and verifying the hypothesis.

Aguma (1995:73) observes that qualitative research methods can give valuable insight into the local situation and people's feelings and can help ascertain how local culture and beliefs affect human behaviour patterns."

Since qualitative research assumes the value of context and setting, and it searches for a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon, the use of qualitative research methods was felt to have been the most appropriate for the present study.

3.2.2 Data Collection

3.2.2.1 Sampling

Sampling is a process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting a fact, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group in which one is interested. The basic objective of any sampling design is to minimize, within the limitation of cost, the gap between the values obtained from the sample and those prevalent in the population. Sampling is an important aspect in research because it facilitates the representation of the population from a few participants in the study. It is important to sample because studying the entire population would be very costly and time consuming.

3.2.2.2 Sample size

The target population for this study comprised all language users in each of the study areas at the time of the study. These might have been either residents or visitors, as long as they had the capacity to use the language.

Whereas all scholars would agree that determining an adequate sample size remains one of the most controversial aspects of sampling, all of them admit that given resources, the larger the representative sample used, the better. In most cases, however, researchers do not have the resources in terms of

finances, time and manpower to be able to gather data from large samples. In this regard, it appears to be more realistic when one observes that when it comes to qualitative research, there are no specific rules to determine sample size. Robson (1993:217), says that "sample size in qualitative research is small. The purpose of selecting the case or cases is to develop deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied." It is with this view that the sample for the present investigation of 150 participants from various backgrounds and varying ages was drawn from two study areas, Chililabombwe and Kitwe.

3.2.2.3 Recording

Recordings were used in collecting spoken data also known as primary data. The instrument was useful because it enabled the researcher to collect data from conversations in natural settings and in effect unadulterated. These natural settings included different domains as: markets, bus stations, health centres and homes. Also the audio recordings will be available for replication studies in future.

3.2.2.4 Recording equipment

In order to collect recorded data, the researcher used a micro-cassette recorder which was carried in the pocket of a jacket or in the hand when appropriate.

3.2.2.5 Observation

As an additional data collection method, the researcher directly observed instances of language use in such domains as homes, shops, clinics, markets,

courts and others and kept a diary of requests of interest as she interacted with speakers of Bemba to countercheck further the authenticity of the information gathered through introspection and the semi-structured interview.

3.2.2.6 Questionnaires

The instrument used in this part of collecting data was a 'discourse completion test' which consisted of scripted dialogues that represented socially varied situations as illustrated in the Appendix. Each part was preceded by a short description of the situation specifying the setting and social status of the interlocutors involved. Respondents were asked to give the targeted speech act for each situation.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the arrangement of field notes in line with the specific objectives of the study as follows: linguistic forms used to express requests in Bemba were identified; request strategies of Bemba were classified according to the functions they seek to achieve; the frequency with which these categories of request strategies used in Bemba occur was investigated; how the request strategies in Bemba relate to social factors such as: age, gender, status and social distance was established; as well as the discovery of whether request strategies in Bemba support Searle's and Brown and Levinson's theoretical approaches, which are largely based on an examination of the English language. This analysis was then followed by the explanation of the notes in relation to both the objectives of the study and

the relevant aspects of speech act theory in relation to Blum-Kulka's request strategy types and politeness theories.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has presented the approaches adopted for data collection and analysis for the present study and the basis on which these were selected. It comprised three sections. The first looked at what research is. The second focused on the research methodology used in the survey. It also presented a detailed explanation of the procedures used in data collection and the third gave information on data analysis.

The next chapter provides sample requests for the purpose of exemplifying the linguistic forms used, the categories and strategies used as well as the frequency of these requests in Bemba. This chapter also presents an analysis of the data collected on requests, and a summary of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter consisted of three sections. The first looked at what research is. The second section discussed the research methodology used in this research. It also presented a detailed explanation of the procedures used in data collection and the third gave information on data analysis.

The present chapter provides sample requests for the purpose of exemplifying the linguistic forms used, the categories and strategies used as well as the frequency of these requests in Bemba. This chapter also presents an analysis of the data collected on requests, and a summary of the data obtained.

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Recorded Data

The reason for collecting recorded data was to have primary data-spoken interactions in natural settings such as markets, homes and bus stations. Below is the transcription (detailed framework for transcription has not been presented in this study) of selected recorded information which was relevant to the research from the market and bus station.

Restaurant at Chisokone Market

4.1.1.1 Situation 1a

This involves the interaction between workers and customers at a restaurant.

Customer: Nishinga Fanta?

'How much does Fanta cost?'

Supervisor: Eugene? Eugene talipo apo?

'Eugene! Isn't Eugene there?'

Eugene: Eee

'Yes'

Customer: Namukwata Fanta? Naitalala?

'Do you have Fanta? Is it cold?'

Eugene: Eee

'Yes'

Customer: Nangu Sprite ngemo ili iitalele.

'Or may I have a cold Sprite'

Eugene: Iyi

'Here it is'

4.1.1.2 Situation 1.b

Customer: Ninshi mukwete muno lelo?

'What is on the menu today?'

Waiter: Ubwali ne nkoko, inama ne fishimu.

'Nshima and chicken, beef and caterpillar'

Customer: Mpeniko imbale imo.

'May I have one plate?'

From the situations above, it can be observed that there are questions asked by the speaker before making a request (1.a How much does Fanta cost? 1. b What is on the menu today?). These are referred to as pre-requests. The motivation for employing pre-requests is to allow the speaker to check out whether the request will be successful (Levinson 1983: 357). The second question by the customer in 1.a is an indirect request. By such an utterance the listener is moved to perform an action in response to the request made.

4.1.1.3 Situation 2

This sequence is about vendors selling their merchandise- requesting people to buy.

Vendor 1: Pin iyi mwasenda apa. Face tawelo mwasenda.

'K1, 000. Take one. Face towel take one.'

Vendor 2: 5 pin iyi mwasenda

'K 5000. Take one.'

In this situation the vendors make short statements as requests to passersby to purchase their merchandise. As observed these requests are



not explicitly stated. It takes a hearer who lives in this particular community to arrive at the intended meaning. The speakers in this context have employed indirect request strategies.

4.1.1.4 Situation 3

This is about call boys persuading travellers to get on the bus at a bus station.

Call boys: Abaleya Chingola iyi. Abenda beka iyi.

'Those going to Chingola, this is the bus. If you travel alone, this is the bus.'

Abaleya Lubengele, Town, Kakoso iyi

'Those going to Lubengele, Town, Kakoso this is the bus'

The call boys in this situation are requesting travelers to get on one of the buses. The request strategy used here is not explicit. Since the hearer and the speaker share the knowledge of the content and the context, the hearer will perform the act of getting on the bus. In this way the requestive goal is achieved.

4.1.2 Observations

Observations were also used in data collection. The researcher observed the use of request strategies by speakers of Bemba in different domains of language use such as health centres, schools, bus stations, homes and market places. The researcher kept a diary of speech events.

At a health centre-Clinic No. 4

4.1.2.1 Situation 1

It was a Tuesday afternoon around 13 00hrs when nurses exchange shifts. This is a conversation between colleagues.

Ruth: Ba partner, stethoscope ili kwi?

'Partner where is the stethoscope?'

Betty: Ili pa table mu office.

'It is on the table in the office.'

Ruth: *Kuti mwamfumishako ifi kardi ilyo tamulaya?*

'Could you take out the record cards before you leave?'

Betty: Cisuma

'Alright'

In the above example, Ruth requests Betty to have the patients' record cards ready before she knocks off. Analysed in terms of the features mentioned below, however, her utterance should be considered as an instance of a request.

Ruth's request has served its purpose to get Betty to do something. It can also be observed that the type of linguistic form used is the interrogative. The request strategy used is the query preparatory which falls under the conventionally indirect category. In the query preparatory, the modal verb begins the sentence/question. As seen in the context the social parameter

at work here is that they are of the same status, and in this case their relationship is also at that level.

The conversation below is an interaction between a nurse and a patient who has been admitted to hospital.

Patient in the ward

Nurse: Mwalinda shani? :

'How are you feeling?'

Patient: Panono.

'Much better'

Nurse: *Aleni ikaleniko munwe umuti.*

'Sit up and take medicine'

Although Blum-Kulka states that the conventional indirect strategy is the most frequently used one, it is not always the case in a hospital situation between medical persons and patients. In this situation the nurse uses a direct strategy to the patient because this is what the job demands. What has been used here is what is known as the mood derivable strategy in which an imperative is used.

4.1.2.2 Situation 2

At a Learning Institution - High School

It is a Thursday afternoon at a high school. The following day the school would have a workshop in the staffroom. There are books all over the tables. This is a conversation between the head teacher and the office orderly.

Headteacher: Ba Falanga namumona amabuuku pa table atini?

'Mr. Falanga, have you seen the books on the table?'

Office Orderly: Emukwai.

'Yes sir.'

Headteacher: *Mulonge amabuuku yonse ayali pa table mu staffroom mu locker na mu cibokoshi.*

'You should pack all the books on the table in the staffroom in the locker and box.'

'Alerters' begin with a name. They are preparatory questions preparing the hearer to the request coming later. Since the relationship is that of someone in authority and an ordinary worker, the head teacher is direct and uses an obligatory statement with the word 'should'. The relationship between interlocutors determines the type of request strategies to be used.

There is a meeting of teachers going on in the staffroom, and the office orderly feels uncomfortable going in to get water from the refrigerator. He asks a teacher sitting near the entrance to do a favour for him.

Office Orderly: Ba Sir, nshilefwaya ukucilinganya meeting

kuti mwambulilako amenshi muli container ya white

mu fridge?

'Sir, I do not want to disturb the meeting. *Could you get me a white container of water in the refrigerator?*'

Mr Sinkonde: Naisa

'I am coming'

In the context above, the office orderly is of a lower status than the teachers. Therefore, as he addresses the teacher he says it in a low tone to show humility with his hands clasped, sign of respect and politeness. The use of gestures is also another important aspect in expressing politeness in Bemba as seen in this situation- the clasping of hands. The type of request strategy used is a query preparatory... 'could' translated in Bemba as 'kuti'.

4.1.2.3 Situation 3

A pupil is unwell and would like to get a sick note from the teacher on duty.

Pupil: Ba madam bushe ni mwe muli pa duty?

'Madam are you the one on duty?'

Teacher: Ninebo, nishani?

'I am the one. Why?'

Pupil: Nindwala. *Ndefwaya mumpeleko sick note*

'I am unwell. I would like you to give me a sick note'

Teacher: Ninshi ulwele?

'What is the problem?'

Pupil: Mumala

'Abdominal pains'

Teacher: *Leta peni, nkulembele*

'Bring a pen I will write it for you'

The situation above is an example of how pupils relate to teachers in learning institutions where Bemba is spoken. The pupil in this instance uses an alerter, using the title 'madam' to attract the attention of the teacher, then asks a question or a pre-request to prepare the listener for what is coming in this conversation.

The title 'Ba Madam', shows that there is social distance between the pupil and the teacher. The teacher is of a higher status than the pupil who is asking for a sick note. The type of request strategy used is the hedged performative 'I would like'. The linguistic form used in this type of request making is a statement. The last sentence in this conversation is a request for a pupil to bring a pen.

4.1.2.4 Situation 4

Classroom

It is a Wednesday morning at Lubengele Basic School in a Grade 2 class in Chililabombwe. This is a Bemba lesson on 'Ukutontonkanya' translated

'To think'

Teacher: Tutontonkanisha mwi? :

'Where do we do the thinking from?'

Pupil: Mu mutwe

'In the head'

Teacher: *Njebeniko ifyo muletontokanya.*

'Tell me what you are thinking about'

Pupil 1: Ifyo nalaya mukucita nga nainuka

'What I will do after school.'

Pupil 2: Ifyo nkaba nga nakula

'What I will become when I grow up'.

Teacher: Cinshi ukaba nga wakula?

'What will you be when you grow up?'

Pupil 2: Nkalabomba ku border ku Mpulungu

'I will be working at Mpulungu border post'

(Teacher writes a paragraph on the board about what one school child would like to do when he or she grows up and asks the children to identify some words)

Teacher: *Sonta apali amashiwi Dokota na Naasi*

'Point at the words: 'doctor and nurse'

Pupil: Apa

'Here'

The teacher here is in authority, she simply uses imperatives to make children do what she asks them. For instance, 'Tell me what you are thinking'

4.1.2.5 Situation 5

At home

This situation involves a maid and the sister of the maid's employer. She has a lot of house work to do and the baby is awake. She would like the employer's sister to help her tend the baby as she washes the napkins.

Maid: Ba Maybe *kuti mwambwenako umwana*

'*Maybe can you watch the baby for me?*'

Maybe: *Muleteni. Nomba mwendesheko nalafumapo.*

'*Bring her. Just hurry. I am about to leave.*'

In the situation above, the maid is polite when asking for help, by being polite especially that her boss's sister is older than her; age in this case dictates the type of relationship that occurs between interlocutors. Age creates a social distance and this determines the linguistic form and strategy employed. The use of 'kuti' translated 'can/could' shows that the strategy used is a query preparatory which falls under the conventionally indirect category.

4.1.2.6 Situation 6

The husband returns home from work in the evening and is very hungry .He asks the wife to prepare some food for him.

Husband: Bana Namonje, bushe tapaliko ifyakulya? Nshililepo

Ukutula ilyo mfumine pano.

'Mother of Namonje, isn't there any food? I haven't had any food since I left this morning.'

Wife: Naisa, bashi Namonje

'I will be coming, father of Namonje'

Husband: Endesheniko

'Be quick'

This is an interaction between husband and wife. Because this is an informal setting, the factor of social status is not really considered here, although it is there inherent, as the husband is considered superior to the wife in Bemba culture. The husband addresses the wife by the child's name. To start with, he does this to attract the wife's attention preparing her for the request and it is also an expression of endearment and respect. Instead of telling the wife to bring food he requests indirectly, by asking whether there is some food in the house. Then the wife rushes to the kitchen to prepare a meal. The speaker has achieved the goal of having the listener perform an act as expected. The aspect of relevance is addressed here. The

request is related to the situation or context, and the listener knows what to do.

4.1.2.7 Situation 7

A young man is visiting the in laws. He sits where the mother-in-law had left a book.

Mother in law: Mukwai nga baenda shani?

'How was your trip?'

Son in law: Mukwai, twaenda fye bwiino.

'I travelled well'

Mother in law: Mukwai batata, apopene bekele, nachishapo icitabo,

bushe kuti bampelako?

'I left a book where you are sitting, *would you please*

give it to me?'

Son in law: Emukwai bamayo.

'Yes mother'

As observed in the above context, there is some social distance between the interlocutors because of the relationship between them: mother-in-law and son-in-law. This relationship dictates that the speaker hedges when addressing the listener.

4.1.2.8 Situation 8

The child was told a few minutes before to clear the dinner table but she has not.

Mother: Nauwamyā pa table?

'Have you cleaned the table?'

Daughter: Awe

'No'

Mother: Nkwebele nati fūmya ifipe pa table.

'I asked you to clear the dinner table.'

When such a request is made in Bemba by using the past tense to describe it, it implies anger or impatience on the part of the speaker as illustrated in the mother to daughter context above.

4.1.2.9 Situation 9

The father has just arrived at home. He would like to have some water to drink but he finds his 15 year old son watching his favourite programme (the child's) on T.V. He makes the request below.

Father: Mwape, bushe kuti wampelako amenshi yakunwa?

'Mwape, can you get me some water?'

Son: Emukwai

'Yes sir'

Although the speaker is superior to the hearer, he uses a conventionally indirect request as though it were someone older. In this context the speaker realizes that the listener will comply easily, may not feel disturbed and will feel respected by the speaker. This is an illustration of the speaker's modesty and sincerity.

4.1.2.10 Situation 10

Older male sibling to younger sister- gives a shirt to the sister.

Brother: Mary, nishani ukungwashishako ishati?

'Mary, how about washing the shirt for me?'

Mary: Leteni

'Bring it'

The speaker uses the suggestory formula. Although he is older than the listener, he employs the indirect way of requesting. This makes it easier for the listener to comply.

4.1.2.11 Situation 11

The mother gets home from work at 15 hours and finds that her six year and seven year old daughters have messed up the kitchen.

Mother: Kwena mwalamfya mu kicini.

'You have really messed up the kitchen'

The hearers in this context, the girls, respond by quickly cleaning up the mess. Their response shows that the speech act has been carried out

satisfactorily because both the speaker and the addressees understand its function although the request has not been stated explicitly.

4.1.3 Summary of the conclusions from the situations

As presented in the situations above, requests are issued by young and old subjects. The status of the speakers or hearers affects the strategies used in the making of requests and also the type of strategies which have been used depend on the speaker-hearer relationship. As observed, interlocutors succeed in making requests in these situations because their listeners respond by performing actions.

4.1.4 Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained seven situations which are related to everyday occurrences of the type expected to be familiar to speakers of Bemba. They were asked to write the answers down (see Appendix). The situations are described as follows:

- (i) Pupil asks fellow pupil to help him carry books to the staffroom;
 - (ii) Pupil asks teacher for extension of submission of maths assignment;
 - (iii) A sibling asks another sibling to take care of the dishes on her behalf;
 - (iv) Mother asks children to set the dinner table;
 - (v) Wife asks husband to get some sugar on his way home;
 - (vi) An employee asks supervisor for permission to take a child to hospital;
- and

(vii) Supervisor would like his subordinates to do some work.

4.1.4.1 Responses by subjects

4.1.4.2 Situation 1: Pupil asks fellow pupil to help him carry books to the staffroom.

1. Napapata isa unjafweko ukusenda amabuku yabakafundisha.

'Please come and help me carry the teacher's books'

2. Mune bakafundisha nabantuma ukutwala amabuuku ku staffroom. Bushe kuti tawanjafweko twatwala bonse?

'The teacher has sent me to take these books to the staffroom. Can you help me carry them?'

2. Njafwilishako ukutwala amabuuku ku staffroom.

'Help me carry these books to the staffroom.'

4. Mune bushe kuti wanjafwako ukutwala amabuuku ku staffroom bakafundisha bantuma ukutwala?

'Will you help me carry these books which the teacher has sent me to take to the staffroom?'

5. Mune shingafwako ukutwala amabuuku ku staffroom.

'Please help me take the books to staffroom.'

6. Mune ngafwako ukutwala amabuuku.

'Help me take the books.'

7. Boyi ngafwako ukusenda amabuuku aya ku staffroom.

'My friend, help me carry these books to the staffroom.'

8. Bwalya, nshindikako mukutwala ifitabo ku staffroom.

'Bwalya, escort me while I take the books to the staffroom.'

9. Mune njafwako napapata.

'Help me please.'

4.1.4.3 Situation 2: Pupil asks teacher for extension of submission of maths assignment.

1. Munjeleleko nshapwishishe ukulemba mailo insamushi. Ndelomba ukuti mumpeleko akashita kakuti mpwishe.

'I am sorry I did not complete writing my work yesterday. I am asking for some more time so that I can complete it.'

2. Mukwai ndelombako ukuti bengampako inshita naimbi iyakuti mpwishe ukulemba insamushi mwatupееle ubushiku bwafumineko.

I am asking for some more time so that I can complete writing the work you gave us yesterday.'

3. Mukwai ndelombako inshita pakuti mpwishe ukulemba insamushi mwatupееle.

'I am asking for more time to complete writing the work you gave us.'

4. Mukwai bakafundisha mpeniko inshita yakuti mpwishe insamushi nshapwile ubushiku bwafumineko.

'Teacher please give me some time to complete writing yesterday's work.'

5. Bakafundisha munjeleleko pakukanapwisha ukulemba insamushi ubushiku bwafumineko lelo nimpemko lelo fye lyeka pakutila mpwishe.

'Teacher I am sorry for not completing my work yesterday but please give me just today to complete.'

6. Ndelomba mumpeko akashita mpwishishe ukulemba insamushi.

'I am asking for time so that I can complete my work.'

7. Bakafundisha, mukwai mpeniko inshita naimbi pakuti mpwishe ukulemba insamushi.

'Teacher, please give me some more time so that I complete writing my work.'

4.1.4.4 Situation 3: A sibling asks another sibling to take care of the dishes on her behalf.

1. Mune isa unjafweko ukusamfya imbale naine nkakafwako limbi.

'Come and help me to wash the plates, I will also help you some other time.'

2. Napapata kuti wanjafwako pantu nshakumanishe ukupwa imilimo imbi mu nshita iyo bachinshila.

'Please can you help me because I won't manage to finish the other tasks I was left with to do within the time given.'

3. Ngafwilishako ukusamfya imbale.

'Help me wash the plates.'

4. Nsamfishako imbale pakuti mpwishe ncito munshita.

'Wash the plates for me so that I can finish the work in time.'

5. Boyi njafwako ukusamfya imbale ilyo ndepwishishisha imilimo imbi.

'Help me wash the plates while I finish the other tasks.'

6. Munyinane ndelombako ukuti unjafweko ukusamfya imbale.

'My brother I am asking you to help me wash the plates.'

7. Boyi nsafishako imbale.

'My friend, wash the plates for me.'

4.1.4.5 Situation 4: Mother asks children to set the dinner table.

1. Mwebana shi angufyanyeni ukupekanya itebulo apakulila.

'Children, quickly set the table'.

2. Kwena bane inshita yacakulya yafika kuti mwatendeka ukupekanya apakulila.

'Well people it's now time to eat. You can start preparing the eating place.'

3. Mwe bana pekanyeni apakulila.'

'My dear Children set the table'.

4. Mwe bana pekanyeni itebulo pa kuti tulilepo.

'Children prepare the table so that we have our meal.'

5. Mwe bana shi pekanyeni apakulila umulalilo.

'Children, will you set the table for supper'

6. Mwe bana shipekanyeni apakulila.

'Children, will you set the table?'

7. Bana bandi, pekanyeni apakulila.

'My children set the table.'

4.1.4.6 Situation 5: Wife asks husband to get some sugar on his way home.

1. Shikulu ngacingacitika mwise namutushitilako shuga naipwa.

'My lord, if possible buy some sugar for us on your way back.'

2. Mukwai mwise namutushitilako shuga tatukwete muno ng` anda.

'Please buy us some sugar on your way back we do not have any in the house.'

3. Mukwai mwise namushitako shuga naipwa.

'Please buy some sugar. It has run out.'

4. Shuga naipwa. Bushe teti mwanshitilako pakubwela?

'The sugar has run out. Can't you get us some on your way back?'

5. Shuga tamuli mu ng` anda, nga muli nolupiya kuti mwaisa namutushitilako.

There is no sugar in the house, if you have money you can buy us some.

6. Baashi Mwaka ndelombako mwise namutushitilako shuga.

'Father of Mwaka, I am asking if you can buy us some sugar.'

7. Bashi mwana, mwise namushitako shuga mukwai.

'Please buy some sugar.'

4.1.4.7 Situation 6: An employee asks supervisor for permission to take child to hospital.

1. Ndelombako ulusa ngacakuti kuti mwansuminisha ukutwala umwana ku cipatala nalwala.

'I am asking for permission if you can allow me to take my child to hospital.'

2. Ndelombako ulusa mukwai ndefwaya ukutwala umwana kucipatala mûlwele.

I am asking for permission please. I would like to take my child to hospital for he is sick.

3. Ndelombako ulusa ndefwaya ukutwala umwana ku cipatala nalwala.

'I am asking for permission, I want to take my child to hospital he is sick.'

4. Mukwai umwana nalwala bushe kuti bampeelako ulusa mutwaleko kucipatala.

'My child is sick, can you give me permission to take him to the hospital.'

5. Umwana nakaba umubili icinecine eico naisa ukuti mwingampako ulusa lwakumutwala ku cipatala.

'My child's body temperature seems to be very high so I have come to ask for permission to take him to hospital.'

6. Ba Sir umwana nalwala naisa mukulomba ulusa ningamutwalako kucipatala.

'Sir my child is sick. I have come to ask for permission to take him to hospital.'

7. Mukwai ndelombako ulusa lwa kutwala umwana kucipatala.

'I am asking for permission to take my child to hospital.'

4.1.3.8 Situation 7: Supervisor would like his subordinates to do some work.

1. Aleni bane iseni mupwishe ukubomba napa bwangu bwangu.

'My friends come and quickly finish working here also.'

2. Bane kuli umulimo uyu uulekabila ukubombapo.

'My friends, there is work that needs to be done.'

3. Mubombe uyu mulimo.

'You should do this work.'

4. Kutikeni kuno uyu emulimo mwalabomba nombamba.

'Listen, this is the work you will do now.'

5. Ukukalipila abakalamba tacawama mukwai mubombe uyu mulimo pakuti paba ubuyantashi.

'Shouting at adults is not good, do this work so that there is progress.'

6. Ba Falanga ka wamyeni mu toilet.

'Mr. Falanga, go and clean the toilet.'

7. Mwe babomfi bandi bombeni uyu mulimo.

'My workers do this work'.

4.2 Linguistic forms used to make requests in Bemba

From the data collected, it was observed that the linguistic forms used in making requests in Bemba are imperatives, interrogatives with or without modals as well as statements as the data below shows.

4.2.1 Imperatives

(i) *Bombeni uyu umulimo!*

'Do this work!'

4.2.2.1 Interrogative with modal

(ii) *Shuga naipwa. Bushe kuti mwanshitilako pakubwela?*

'Sugar has run out. Could you buy some for me on your way back?'

4.2.2.2 Interrogative without modal

(iii) *Nishani ukungwashishako ishati?*

'How about washing the shirt for me?'

4.2.3 Statements

(iv) *Musamfye imbale nga mwalya.*

'You should wash the dishes after eating.'

4.3 Categories of request strategies used in Bemba and how often they occur

4.3.1 Direct Strategies

Direct strategies are usually used by those of a higher status as 4.3.4.4 (3) the example of a parent asking children to set the dinner table:

Mwe bana , pekanyeni apakulila

`My dear children set the table!`

In Bemba the direct strategy is usually made when the speaker is of a higher social status than the listener or the speaker and the listener are of equal status and are very close or are friends or equals. Another example is of the teacher and her pupils as well as the nurse and her patient as shown below.

Teacher: Sonta apali badokota

'Point at the doctor'

The nurse and her patient:

Nurse: Ikaleniko apa munwe umuti

'Sit up here and drink your medicine'

The situation determines the type of strategy employed as illustrated in the data above. If the speaker is of equal status or superior to the hearer there is a tendency to use the direct strategy, the mood derivable.

4.3.2 Conventional indirectness

This strategy type is rarely used by speakers of the same social status as observed in 4.3.4.1 (4) of the questionnaire. Conventional indirectness is used to enhance the positive face of the listener that he is the one who is able to do that activity. Of the responses collected only 10% used the query preparatory as the example below illustrates:

Mune bushe kuti wangafwako ukutwala amabuuku ku staffroom bakafundisha nabantuma.

'My dear I have been sent to take books to the staffroom, could you help me?

Conventional indirectness is frequently used by speakers whose social status is inferior to that of the hearer as seen in the following situation 4.3.4.6 (4):

Mukwai mwana nalwala bushe kuti bampeelako ulusa mutwale ku cipatala?

'My child is unwell; could you give me permission to take him to hospital?

Not only is the conventional indirect strategy used mostly when inferiors address superiors but also by interlocutors with the same social status and are not close. It is also used by equals as an expression of politeness and respect. Conventional indirectness is used to enhance the positive face of the listener that he is the one who is able to do that activity as seen below:

Kuti mwamfumishako ifikardi ilyo tamulaya?

'Could you get me the patients record cards before you go?

4.3.3 Nonconventional Indirectness

In the current study, it was observed that this strategy is rarely used in Bemba. Speakers prefer the use of the direct strategy when addressing hearers who are inferior to them to using the strong hint. However, below is an example of the use of a strong hint, a nonconventional indirect strategy type:

A mother gets home from work at 15 hours and finds that her six year and seven year old daughters have messed up the kitchen.

Mother: Kwena mwalamfya mu kicini.

'You have really messed up the kitchen'.

The hearers in this context who are the girls respond by quickly cleaning up the mess. Their response shows that the speech act has been carried out satisfactorily because both the speaker and addressees understand its function.

4.4 The influence of social factors on request strategies in Bemba

The degree to which a request is regarded as socially appropriate in a given culture in a specific situation is influenced by several factors. Some of the factors which influence the production of requests are: the status (that is, a person's social position in relation to others in a particular context) of the hearer, familiarity, age, the sex of the participants and social power (that is, authority a person has in relation to others by virtue of the position he or

she holds in that society). Other than the factors stated above the level of education, that is, the speaker's competence in English also influences request making in Bemba as observed in 4.1.2.10.

Blum-Kulka (1991) has stated that the source of a request is the requestive goal, which speakers strive to achieve with effectiveness and politeness. To achieve this goal, speakers match pragmalinguistic knowledge with an evaluation of the most relevant situational factors, which include context-external and context-internal factors. The former has to do with the degree of social power and familiarity of the medium of communication and the latter covers factors such as the participants' rights and obligations, likelihood of hearer's compliance, and difficulty of carrying out the request (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989).

4.4.1 Age

It was discovered that the direct, conventionally indirect and nonconventionally indirect strategies of requests were used among interlocutors. Age seemed to be an important factor related to the request strategies observed in this study. Mostly older ones request more than younger ones. Direct strategies were uttered by older persons to younger ones or those in authority to subordinates as an example in 4.3.4.7 (3). The hearer is obliged to carry out the speech act because of age.

Mubombe uyu umulimo.

'You should do the work'

4.4.2 Status

In this study, there were three status distinctions: interlocutors of equal social status, speaker inferior to listener, and speaker superior to listener. The data were analysed with the speakers' and listeners' status in mind. It was observed that when the speaker was inferior to the addressee they tended to be deferential and indirect in their request making. These are illustrated below:

(i) Equal social status

Ngafwilishako ukutwala amabuku ku staffroom

'Help me take the books to the staffroom'

(ii) Speaker inferior to hearer

Mukwai umwana nalwala, bushe kuti bampeelako ulusa mutwaleko ku
cipatala?

'Sir, my child is unwell, could you give me permission to take him to
hospital?'

(iii) Speaker superior to hearer

Bombeni uyu umulimo

'Do this work'

4.4.3 Gender

Another factor examined was gender. Taking all the data gathered subjects mainly used conventionally indirect strategies in their requests indicating that cultural behaviour maybe a stronger factor than gender in this aspect of formulating requests. Different patterns of request strategy were found to be related to interlocutors' gender. Females tend to use more of the terms of endearment than males as observed below:

The words below were uttered by a mother to her children.

Mwe baana, pekanyeni apakuliila.

'My dear children, set the table'

The words below were uttered by a father to his children in the same situation as above.

Pekanyeni apakuliila.

'Set the table'

It was also observed that in homes, females made requests frequently unlike men especially where there were younger children.

4.5 How request strategies in Bemba relate to Searle's and Brown's and Levinson's theoretical approaches

According to Searle, the speech act theory is based on the assumption that language is a form of behaviour and it is governed by a set of rules (Searle, 1969). A speech act is an utterance that serves a particular function in communication. In his work on the theory, Searle spoke of the how indirect

speech acts can be and that they carry the literal meaning of the words as well as the implied function. Searle also says that what the speaker communicates to the hearer is more than what he actually says, by relying on their mutually shared background information both linguistic and non-linguistic. These words support the example below from Bemba:

Kwena mwalamfya mu kicini.

'You have really messed up the kitchen'

This utterance is a statement whose implied meaning as it was used in this corpus is a directive to have the kitchen cleaned since the hearers involved had made it dirty. The hearers responded by performing an action of cleaning. In this way the speech act was successful because the hearers did the job as requested.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), 'face' refers to a person's favourable public image. To lessen the threat and to avoid the risk of others losing face, the speaker prefers to be indirect in issuing requests. By being indirect the speaker's motive is to be polite since showing awareness of another person's face is what politeness is. In this study it was observed that indirect strategies were used when the speaker was inferior to the hearer, when the speaker had the same status as the hearer and in some cases where the speaker was superior to the listener to save the speaker's face.

(i) Equal social status

Mune bushe kuti wangafwako ukutwala amabuuku ku staffroom?

'My friend, could you help me taking these books to staffroom?'

(ii) Speaker inferior to hearer

Bayama, peeni naipwa.

'Uncle, my pen has run out of ink'.

(iii) Speaker superior to hearer

Bana Sandra, namupwa ukuwasha? Kuti mwayashitako tomato?

'Mother of Sandra, have you finished washing? Can you go and buy tomato?'

According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), the level of directness of a request correlates strongly with the expectations of rights and obligations between the interlocutors. If the right of the speaker to ask is as great as the right of the hearer to comply, then the motivation for the use of indirectness is less. Therefore, it can be noted that the description of rights and obligations fits well in the situation of the employer and employee. The employer has the right to request the employee to do a given job and the employee has the obligation to comply. In this instance, face saving strategies are not required as shown in 4.3.1.7.9(6)

Ba Falanga, kawamyeni mu toilet.

'Mr Falanga, go and clean the toilet'.

The concept of dominance which affects indirectness parallels the effect of obligation: the greater the speaker's dominance in relation to the addressee,

the lower the use of indirectness expected as seen above. Similar to Blum-Kulka's results, in the employer's request, the speaker's social status is higher than that of the hearer in that case they have the right to make a request of the addressee. The choice of strategy tends to move towards directness. In the situations where the speaker's status is lower or equal to the addressee's, requests in the two situations are basically asking for a favour from the addressee. Therefore, choosing appropriate face-saving strategies could save face of the hearers and leave the addressees space to comply since politeness is a strategy employed by the speaker to promote and maintain harmonious relations as stated by Brown and Levinson (1987).

In the data collected for this investigation, it was also observed that a request is often preceded by a pre-request. Levinson (1983), states that a pre-request can be used to check the possibility of compliance and to check the need to make an explicit request.

Customer: Ninshi mukwete muno lelo?

'What is on the menu today?'

Waiter: Ubwali ne nkoko, inama ne fishimu.

'Nshima and chicken, beef and caterpillars'

Customer: Mpeniko imbale imo.

'May I have one plate?'

Because the conventionally indirect strategy can serve as a prerequisite and a request proper, the speaker can save face in case the hearer refuses the

request (Blum-Kulka, 1991). A similar line of explanation can be found in Clark (1979). Clark mentions that the literal meaning of conventionally indirect strategies allows speakers more freedom to back out of admitting a requestive intent, and hearers to avoid a requestive interpretation (Blum-Kulka, 1991:132). Therefore in all three cases, the conventionally indirect strategy is the preferred one.

In conclusion, the analysis has shown that although the speech act theory was developed based on English, it can be said its concepts do apply to Bemba. Speaker-hearer communication is dependent on shared background information if a speech act is to be successful. As for the politeness theory, it was observed that speakers are indirect in issuing requests to show that they are aware of the listener's face. Searle's and Brown and Levinson's theoretical approaches apply to Bemba as well to English. The analysis also showed that request making had been anglicized to some extent especially by those speakers who use English as a second language as seen in the following example:

Brother: Mary, nishani ukungwashishako ishati?

'Mary, how about washing the shirt for me?

The type of anglicization that has occurred is structural. The first word (nishani 'how about') of the interrogative part in the Bemba request does not immediately follow verbals (ukungwashishako 'to wash for me') in Bemba generally.

4.6 Summary

The present chapter provided sample requests for the purpose of exemplifying the linguistic forms used, the categories and strategies used as well as the frequency of these requests in Bemba. This chapter also presented an analysis of the data collected on requests, and a summary of the data obtained.

The next chapter provides a summary of the other chapters and discusses the conclusions of the study. It also provides some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 General

The previous chapter provided sample requests for the purpose of exemplifying the linguistic forms used, the categories and strategies used as well as the frequency of these requests in Bemba. This chapter also presented an analysis of the data collected on requests, and a summary of the data obtained.

The present chapter provides a summary of chapters. Based on the findings, it also discusses the conclusion of the study on the pragmatic analysis of requests in Bemba and makes some recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of chapters

The first chapter provided an introduction to the study and gave background information to the study, stated the specific problem under investigation and gave the rationale of this study. The purpose and objectives of the study, the research questions which were investigated as well as a summary of the methodology employed in data collection and analysis were presented in Chapter One. The chapter also presented the theoretical and conceptual framework within which the study was carried out by explaining and illustrating some important concepts that relate to the research.

The second chapter reviewed some of the literature which was available and directly relevant to the current study so as to put this research within the

context of other similar studies and provide justification for it. The presentation was organized under the following sections: Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Speech Act Theory, Approaches to the Study of Conversation, Studies on Requests, and the Structure, Categories and Strategies of requests.

The third chapter gave the details of the methodology used to collect data in order to provide answers to the research questions raised in the first chapter. The chapter presented details on the type of research design - introduced subjects of the study, described the materials used in the study and justified the selection of the corpus for the study - the study area and sample size, data collection instruments and procedure and the analysis of data.

The fourth chapter was a discussion of findings on request-making in Bemba and strategies used, as drawn from the data collected. The presentation was set out according to the research objectives and questions as set out in Chapter One.

5.2 Conclusion

In Chapter One, a number of research questions in relation to the objectives were raised as the focus of the study. The present study had the following objectives to achieve: to investigate the linguistic forms used to express requests in Bemba, classify the request strategies according to their functions, investigate the frequency with which these categories of request strategies are used, and establish how request strategies in Bemba relate to social factors such as: age, gender, status and social distance, as well as

discovering whether request strategies in Bemba support Searle's and Brown's and Levinson's theoretical approaches, which are based on an examination of the English language.

In this study, it was observed that the linguistic forms used in making requests in Bemba are imperatives (e.g. Ba Falanga, kawamyeni mu toilet. 'Mr. Falanga go and clean the toilet!'), interrogatives with the Bemba word 'kuti' translated as a modal 'can/could' (e.g. Bushe kuti wangafwako ukutwala amabuuku? 'Can you help me carrying books?') and statements (e.g. Mwendesheko. 'You should hurry').

As seen in this research, the three levels of request strategies of English also apply to Bemba. The three levels were the direct, conventional indirect and nonconventionally indirect strategies. The direct strategy is usually made by a speaker of a higher social status than the listener as in employee to employer situation, or the speaker and the listener are of equal status and are very close or simply friends or equals as in the pupil to pupil situation. The other observation made was that, in Bemba, not all the nine direct strategies are used in this data, as in English. Conventional indirectness is frequently used by speakers whose social status is inferior to that of the hearer. This strategy is used to enhance the positive face of the listener, that he is the one who is able to do that activity. The conventional indirect strategy is used by interlocutors of the same social status and who are not close. It is also used by equals as an expression of politeness and respect. As for the nonconventionally indirect strategy, it was observed that it is rarely used in Bemba except in the expression of anger or sarcasm or

irony (i.e. Kwena mwalamfya mucikini, 'You have really smessed up the kitchen) Speakers prefer using the direct strategy when addressing hearers inferior to them rather than using the strong hint.

It was discovered that all three levels of request strategies were used among interlocutors of different ages. It was observed that age has an effect on the use of request strategies. Older people seemed to request more than younger ones. Direct strategies were uttered by older persons to younger ones or those in authority to subordinates as for example in 4.3.4.7 (3). The hearer was obliged to carry out the speech act because of being younger in relation to the speaker and the speaker had authority over the hearer.

Another factor examined was gender. Taking all the data gathered subjects mainly used conventionally indirect strategies in their requests indicating that cultural behaviour maybe a stronger factor than gender in this aspect of formulating requests. Different patterns of request strategy were found to be related to the interlocutors' gender.

In this study, there were three status distinctions: interlocutors of equal social status, speaker inferior to listener, and speaker superior to listener. The data were analysed in relation to the speakers' and listeners' status. It was observed that when the speaker was inferior to the addressee, she or he tended to be deferential and indirect in their request making. In some cases request making was accompanied by non-linguistic features such as gestures if the speaker was inferior to the hearer. In terms of the influence of social status, the analysis of the distribution of the main

request strategy types in the situations under survey revealed that conventional indirectness was clearly the preferred strategy type for the situation in which both interlocutors have equal social status, and in a request situation when the speaker's social status is inferior to the hearer's. Finally, in the requests where the speaker is superior to the hearer, impositives dominate.

Data analysis revealed in general that Searle's speech act theory as well as Brown's and Levinson's politeness theories, although they were developed based on English, also apply to Bemba.

5.3 Recommendations

In conclusion, it is recommended that further study be undertaken to identify other factors that may affect request making in Bemba. Also to disseminate the information gleaned from this study to researchers investigating other speech acts and politeness formulae.

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APPENDIX

1. Questionnaire

Instruments: The Discourse-Completion Test (DCT)

Respondents were asked to complete the dialogue, thereby providing the speech act targeted.

The questionnaire contains situations which are related to everyday occurrences of the type expected to be familiar to speakers of Bemba. Seven situations are described as follows:

Instructions: Answer the following questions as directed.

1. You are a pupil, and then your teacher asks you to take books to the staffroom. You want your fellow pupil to help you. What would you say?
2. You are a pupil and you were given an assignment in maths the previous day but you did not finish. You want your teacher to give you an extension to submit your work. What would you say?
3. Your parents left you some work to do at home and you discover that you will not finish in time. You want your brother to wash the dishes. What would you say?
4. You are a mother and you want your children to set the dinner table. What would you say?
5. Sugar has run out. You want your husband to buy some for you on his way back home. What would you say?
6. Your child is unwell and needs to be taken to hospital. You want to get permission from your supervisor. What would you say?
7. You are the supervisor and you would like your subordinates to do some work.

Pwishisheni umushele ukulingana na ifilelanshanishiwapo:

Uwakubalilapo : Uli mwana we sukulu lyene bakafundisha bakutuma ukutwala amabuuku ku staffroom. Ulefwaya umunobe ukukwafwako. Kuti wati shani?

Uwabubili : Uli mwana wesukulu lelo tawapwishishe ukulemba insamushi bamupeelee ubushiku bwafumineko. Ulefwaya ulombe bakafundisha bakupeleko inshita na imbi pakuti upwishe ukulemba. Kuti walomba shani?

Uwabutatu : Abafyashi bacikushila ukubomba imilimo pa ng'anda nomba wasanga ifyo tawakumanishe ukupwa munshita. Ulefwaya munonko akusamfisheko imbale. Walamweba shani?

Uwabune : Ni mwe banyina nomba mulefwaya abaana bapekanye apakuliila. Mukasosa shani?

Uwabusano : Shuga naipwa nomba mulefwaya bashimwana beese na bamushitilako. Mwalabeba shani?

Uwamutanda : Umwana nalwala nomba mulefwaya ukumutwala kucipatala. Kuti mwalomba shani uluusa ku bakalamba bancito?

Uwacinelubali : Muli bakalamba bancito mulefwaya ababomfi benu babombe umulimo umo.

2. Observations

Below are some of the situations not included in the data analysis.

(i) Employer: Bana Sandra, namupwa ukuwasha? Kuti mwayashitako tomato?
'Mother of Sandra, have you finished washing? Can you go and buy tomato?'

Maid: Emukwai

'Yes madam'

(ii) Aunt: Sophia

Sophia: Mukwai

'Madam'

Aunt: Ala naabuca. Imeeni.

'It is morning. Wake up'

(iii) Niece: Bayama, amafuta yakwipikila nayapwa.

'Uncle, cooking oil has run out'.