

DECLARATION

I, Kapawa Yamboto, do hereby solemnly declare that this dissertation presents my own work and that it had never been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other University.

Signed:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, Bo Teresia Ndui Silishebo and her siblings dead and alive, that is, Bo Maria Namwaka Mabebo, Bo Kenneth Mbangweta Mukumba (RIP), Bo Ma-Siyanga Namatama Silishebo (RIP) and Bo Ma-Mubita Iñutu Makwambi(RIP) for giving me confidence in my academic journey.

APPROVAL

This dissertation by Kapawa Yamboto is/is not approved as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of Master of Arts in Linguistic Science of the University of Zambia.

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Contents

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
APPROVAL	iii
© KAPAWA YAMBOTO 2015.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	ix
CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	3
1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	3
1.2.1 Aim.....	3
1.2.2 Specific Objectives.....	3
1.2.3 Research Questions	4
1.3 RATIONALE.....	4
1.4 THE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY	6
1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THIS STUDY	6
1.6 Summary.....	8
CHAPTER 2:	10
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL / CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	10
2.0 INTRODUCTION	10
2.2 THEORETICAL / CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	12
2.2.2. <i>SPEECH ACT THEORY</i>	16
2.3.2.1 Indirect speech acts.....	17
2.2.2.2 The concept of ‘face’	18
2.2.2.3 Face-threatening acts.....	18
2.2.2.4 Positive Persuasive politeness	20
2.2.2.5 Persuasive politeness at the sentence level	20
2.2.2.6 Persuasive politeness on discourse level	21
2.3 Summary	21
3.1 Study area and Sample Size.....	22
3.2 Sampling Techniques.....	22
3.3 Data Collection	23
3.3.1 Data collection methods.....	23
3.3.2.1 Introspection	23
3.3.2.2 Field Notes	24

3.3.2.3 Participant observation	24
3.4 Data Collection Procedures.....	27
3.5 Data Analysis	28
3.5.1 'Move' as the unit of analysis	29
3.6 Analysis of the results according to FTA	30
3.7 Summary.....	32
CHAPTER 4	33
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	33
4.1 Negative politeness strategies (Category A).....	34
4.1.1 Hedges.....	34
4.1.1.1 Lexical hedges	35
4.1.1.2 Syntactic hedges.....	37
4.1.1.3 Sentence-final expressions	39
4.1.2 Showing deference	48
4.1.3 Use of Formal Address forms	49
4.1.4 Indirect strategies.....	50
4.1.5 Contextual factors and negative politeness strategies.....	52
4.1.5.1 The Socio-cultural context.....	52
4.1.5.2 The Situational context	53
4.1.5.3 The Local context (previous utterances).....	54
4.2 Bald-on-record Strategies (Category B)	54
4.2.1 Disagreement.....	55
4.2.2 Suggestions and advice	59
4.2.3 Request; warning and threatening	61
4.2.4 Contextual factors and bald-on-record strategies.....	63
4.2.4.1 The Situational context	63
4.2.4.2 The Socio-cultural context.....	64
4.3 Positive Politeness (Category C)	65
4.3.1 Showing concern, interest	66
4.3.2 Promise, guarantee.....	71
4.3.3 Solidarity/in-group talk.....	73
Salesperson: Musike mwa bulelela batu ni kamieza hande.	73
4.3.4 Compliment	74
4.3.5 Joke, humour	76

4.3.6 Contextual factors and positive politeness strategies	77
4.3.6.1 The Social context	77
4.3.6.2 The Cultural context	78
4.3.6.3 The Situational context	79
4.4 Summary	81
CHAPTER 5	85
CONCLUSION.....	85
5.1 Summary	85
5.2 Limitations of the study	90
5.3 Implications and contribution to the study of linguistics.....	92

ABSTRACT

The current study is concerned with the linguistic realizations of persuasion strategies and how they are influenced by contextual factors in persuasive discourse by salespersons in selected markets and shops in Mongu town which is the capital of Western Province in Zambia. According to the 2010 National Census, its population was 179,585. The town also serves as the administrative headquarters of Mongu District. Mongu town is situated on the eastern edge of the 30-kilometre-wide Barotse Floodplain of the Zambezi River that runs from north to south. The markets in this area are not well structured in terms of infrastructure. A wide variety of commodities are found in these markets and they range from secondhand clothes, commonly referred to as '*Salaula*', *new clothes*, food stuffs like rice, mealie meal, cassava, bread, fish and vegetables, kitchen utensils, building materials like poles, reed mats and grass. There are salons, barber shops and restaurants. This makes them very crowded throughout the day. They attract customers from all walks of life especially the middle and low class. There is only one chain store- Shoprite.

Given this background information and the nature of the study, the concept of 'total-context' is proposed to serve as a solution. Total-context refers to an integrated approach to the notion of context that incorporates the socio-cultural and situational factors as frames of reference for interpreting utterances, at the same time acknowledging the dynamic role of context as it is shaped by the ongoing interaction.

An innovative data collection method, Natural Data Elicitation Technique, was introduced. Based on Quotes from the naturally-occurring speech data collected

from salespersons in Mongu town, a qualitative analysis of the data was conducted to examine the linguistic devices that salespersons utilize to accomplish multiple and competing communication tasks in persuasive discourse. The results of the analysis show that the salespersons employed a variety of politeness strategies to persuade buyers, in which negative politeness was used more frequently than the other two, namely, bald-on-record and positive politeness strategies. Using hedges, including lexical items, syntactic structures and particles, and showing deference, are the most common negative politeness strategies used for persuasion purposes. The major bald-on-record strategies include disagreement and giving advice. The acts of showing concern, making promises and guarantees, and in-group language use, are the most frequent positive persuasive politeness strategies. The collectivist-oriented culture of the Malozi people, which values positive face over negative face, was reflected in the salespersons' employment of positive politeness as a way of persuading their would-be customers. Social factors such as gender, social status and age are found to influence the use of polite persuasion strategies. Situational factors, namely the persuasive discourse and the on-going interactions, also affect the employment of politeness strategies. The study concludes that any theory that aims for universal value needs to take into account all the contextual factors by including a 'total-context' component in the model. To this end, a pragmatic approach is not only important, but also essential in analyzing a context-dependent notion such as persuasion.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The current study is concerned with the linguistic realizations of persuasion strategies in sales talk and their contextual factors in persuasive discourse among sales persons in selected markets and shops in Mongu town.

The study being a pragmatic one calls for the definition of pragmatics. Levinson (1983) states that “pragmatics is the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate.” Mey (1993) notes that “pragmatics is the study of the conditions of human language uses as these are determined by the context of society.” Blum-Kulka (1997) sums it up by stating that in the broadest sense, “pragmatics is the study of linguistic communication in context.”

In the three definitions of pragmatics highlighted above, the term ‘context’ is common. Context has two aspects: social context, which has to do with language and society as a whole, and interpersonal context, which looks at how each speaker’s choice of language is affected by the other. From the viewpoint of speech act theory, context essentially focuses on the situational conditions for the performance and interpretation of single verbal acts. In conversation analysis (CA), context seems to be restricted to that which precedes and follows a turn at talk (Goodwin and Duranti, 1992). The interpretation of the information closely depends on the ongoing conversation or interaction.

Persuasion is a phenomenon connected to the relationship between language and social reality. According to Levinson (1983), the social context is important in

studies that focus on sociolinguistic aspects of language while the interpersonal context should be studied in such sub-disciplines as pragmatics, conversation analysis and discourse analysis. In the present study, the interpersonal context plays a critical role in that each speaker has to communicate effectively. In the process of communication the speakers of a language are expected to be in possession of two sets of capabilities: they should have knowledge of the forms of language they use and they must also know how to use this knowledge in negotiating meaning. In daily communication activities, context is constantly taken into consideration both in production and in comprehension. Any communicative function needs to be carried out within a context, which may either be interpersonal (between two people) or social (acceptable in a given society). Context is particularly important in pragmatics. Context has been the focus of pragmatics research since its beginning. According to Leech (1983), context is “any background knowledge assumed to be shared by the speaker and the hearer, and which contributes to the hearer’s interpretation of what the speaker means by a given utterance.” An utterance may be used to accomplish such speech acts as ordering, promising, arguing and persuading.

The current study investigated the persuading aspect of language use. It is concerned with the linguistic realizations of persuasion (meaning in context.) strategies and their contextual factors in sales talk. It examined the use of persuasive speech by sales persons in some selected markets and shops in Mongu town. The data collected for this study are secondary data as they

comprise transcribed utterances and actions from persuasive sales talk. Meaning is understood in context.

In sum, this study has a goal that is based on Quotes from the naturally-occurring speech data collected in some selected markets in Mongu town.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the quest to sell their products in a competitive marketplace, salespersons deploy different persuasive strategies to entice their potential customers to buy from them. These strategies include verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources used to persuade their customers. However, there has never been a study specifically designed to research on the various persuasive strategies salespersons use in their attempt to sell their products and in particular among salespersons of Mongu town in western province of Zambia. It is for this reason that this study has been mooted to investigate the verbal persuasive strategies that salespersons in the selected markets and shops in Mongu town use.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 Aim

The study aims to demonstrate the critical need for incorporating the concept of 'total-context' into pragmatic research such as the study of persuasion, from the pragmatic point of view.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

To obtain data on the topic under study, the researcher outlined the following objectives.

- a) to identify persuasion strategies used in sales talk;
- b) to classify the persuasive strategies according to the different categories of strategies;
- c) to establish whether or not the identified strategies are related to social factors such as gender, status and age on the part of both the seller and the customers;
- d) to determine how the situational context affects the speaker's choice of persuasion strategies.

1.2.3 Research Questions

- a) What are the persuasion strategies that are used in sales talk among the marketeers in selected markets in Mongu town?
- b) Given the different categories of persuasion, to what category does each strategy in (a) belong?
- c) In what ways are these persuasion strategies influenced by social factors such as gender, status and age?
- d) What is the effect of the situational context on the speaker's choice of persuasion strategies?

1.3 RATIONALE

The present investigation's intention to explore persuasive sales talk by some marketeers and sales persons in some markets and shops in Mongu town is not only original but also experimental. It is hoped this study will contribute to different domains of pragmatics.

Because many research projects have focused on the written aspects of language, counterbalancing research is needed to explicate the nature of spoken

language, and its different forms and functions. This study does not presume to describe how customers actually react to the sales talks and which selling strategies are most successful in changing customers' product preferences or buying decisions. The focus is on the choice of persuasion strategies in persuasive speech and the contextual factors that affect those strategies, which can be expressed verbally via the syntax, lexicon, and phonology. The data used for this study is from real-life contexts, and not only provides interactions in sequences, but also has more credibility in terms of the authenticity of the data. The situational context of persuasion will contribute to our understanding of different aspects of interaction.

In sum, this study is based on Quotes from the naturally-occurring speech data collected in Mongu town, and aims to demonstrate the critical need for incorporating the concept of 'total-context' into pragmatic research such as the study of persuasion. This study intends to discover the verbal devices that marketeers and shop keepers utilize in order to accomplish communication tasks by integrating the demands for politeness, with the clarity and powerful language common to persuasive speech; hence it hopes to serve as a resource for further investigation. The study further hopes to contribute to different domains of pragmatics in that it will provide information on the choice of persuasion strategies contribute to our understanding of different aspects of interaction and add to the already existing studies by other researchers.

This study endeavours to contribute to the understanding of language usage through the examination of persuasion strategies as used in markets and shops

among the people of Western Zambia. The study also examines the use of persuasive devices by salespersons in Mongu town. The data collected for this study is naturally-occurring data from persuasive sales talk, representative of natural speech and behaviour, because the salespersons' utterances and actions, which are the focal point of this study, were natural and un-rehearsed.

1.4 THE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

The present study limits itself to parameters such as the age, gender and social status of the seller and the buyer as well as the environment of the seller. The environment of the seller refers to whether he or she is by himself/herself or among others but selling different products or selling similar items. The availability of the product on the market also matters.

The current study examines the relationship between the realization/interpretation of persuasion strategies and their context in sales talk by salespersons in Mongu.

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THIS STUDY

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 consists of the Introduction, Statement of the Problem, and Purpose of the Study, which covers the Aims, Specific Objectives and Research Questions, Significance, The Scope and Organization of the Study.

Chapter 2 comprises the Literature Review which will also review Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, as well as the theoretical background that

inspires their conceptual framework, namely the speech act theory and Grice's Cooperative Principle and conversational implicature (Grice 1975).

Chapter 3 presents the methodology and procedures in data collection and analysis used in this study. Since data collection methods in empirical research are critical to the validity of the results, the chapter begins with an overview of some of the techniques used. Also provided is a brief introduction to the linguistic and geographical setting where the data was collected. The rationale for conducting a qualitative analysis, making use of such variables as age, gender and social status, is presented, along with the procedures for the encoding of the new data.

Chapter 4 presents the findings. Crucial to the discussion are Quotes that emerge from the data analysis. The researcher adopts a combined socio-pragmatic/pragmalinguistic approach to explain, analyze, and interpret the data. According to Rose and Kasper (2001), pragmalinguistics is the study of the linguistic resources available for conveying communicative acts and performing pragmatic functions. The resources "include pragmatic strategies such as directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts" (Rose and Kasper: 2001). In other words, pragmalinguistics focuses on the intersection of pragmatics and linguistic forms and comprises the knowledge and ability for the use of conventions of meanings (e.g. the strategies for realizing speech acts) and conventions of forms (e.g. linguistic forms implementing speech act strategies). Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, is the interface of sociology and pragmatics and refers to "the

social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action" (Rose and Kasper: 2001). Sociopragmatics encompasses the knowledge of the relationships between communicative action and power, social distance, imposition, and the social conditions and consequences of what you do, when, and to whom. Furthermore, how independent variables, such as age and social status, affect the choice of persuasion strategies, and what the role is of positive politeness in persuasive discourse will be examined. For negative politeness, the researcher examines the linguistic devices showing deference and linguistic mitigations.

In chapter 5, the researcher summarizes the findings by providing answers to the research questions. The implications of this study for the field of linguistic pragmatics, especially the study of persuasion, are presented. The researcher also discusses this study's contribution to pragmatic research

Finally, the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are made.

1.6 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the content of the study. The study has been introduced as one investigating the persuasive aspect of sales talk. The statement of the problem points out the fact that there is competition in selling at a marketplace and persuasive strategies are a must. Furthermore, the four specific objectives guiding the study and the research questions the study sought to answer have been spelt out. The rationale alludes to the fact that the study is based on quotes from naturally-occurring speech data collected from salespersons in selected markets and shops in Mongu town. The chapter

outlines the chapters that make up the study, that is, Introduction, Literature and Conceptual/ Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Data Analysis and Discussion and Conclusion.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL / CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter looks at some of the empirical studies that have been carried out in the field of persuasion in relation to sales talk. It further reviews and summarizes the theoretical frameworks that are related to the current study, namely, speech act theory and politeness theory. These theories not only serve as a central concept in pragmatic research, but also inspire and contribute directly to Brown and Levinson's and Austin's politeness and speech act models respectively, which will be examined in detail in this chapter.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Various studies have been published on this subject, ranging from different theories of persuasion to persuasive strategies and their message structures. The current study, however, is only concerned with the pragmatic aspect of persuasive talk, and not the reasoning and logic of the speech. Lakoff. (1982) defines persuasive discourse as the non-reciprocal "attempt or intention of one party to change the behaviour, feelings, intentions, or viewpoint of another by communicative means." Persuasion is a phenomenon connected to the relationship between language and social reality. In speech act terms, persuasion is a perlocutionary act (the actual effect achieved by saying something; (Austin, 1962). It is an end result which implies the consequences of an act performed by means of saying something; getting someone to believe that something is so; persuading someone to do something. In addition, it is a

process that has already taken place and is attested by the fact that the target has taken the desired action or admitted to a change of attitude.

Traditional Chinese grammar refers to the sentence-final particles as *yuqi ci* 'mood words'; this term aptly suggests that the function of these sentence-final expressions is to relate the conversational context in various ways to the utterance to which they are attached and to indicate how this utterance is to be taken by the hearer." (Lim & Bowers, 1991)

These particles are expressions with neutral tones that are added to the end of a sentence to signal the speaker's 'propositional attitude' such as certainty, surprise, agreement, disapproval, etc.

From the analysis of empirical data, Lee-Wong (1998) has proposed to treat the Chinese particles *ba*, *a/ya* and *ne* as mitigators because they help to reduce the illocutionary force of direct requests. The researcher too has found in her data that several sentence final particles (expressions) were used by the salespersons as hedges in their persuasive sales talks to the customers. However, the actual utterance meanings of these expressions may be different from what has been proposed before due to different contextual factors.

To the best of my knowledge, little or no research has been done so far on the verbal and non - verbal realizations of persuasive sales talk in Zambia. It is for this reason, therefore, that this study examines the verbal strategies that are used by marketeers in getting people to buy from them and limits itself to parameters such as age, gender and the social status of the seller in relation to that of the buyer, as well as the environment of the seller. The environment of the

seller here refers to whether he or she is by himself/herself or among others but selling different products, or selling similar items. The availability of the product on the market also matters.

2.2 THEORETICAL / CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section reviews and summarizes the theoretical framework that the current study uses, namely, speech act and politeness theories. These theories not only serve as a central concept in pragmatic research, but also inspire and contribute directly to Brown and Levinson's and Austin's politeness and speech act models respectively, which will be examined in detail in this chapter.

2.2.1 POLITENESS THEORY

Politeness theory works in relation to the concept of 'face'. Brown and Levinson (1978) define face as "the public self-image that every member wants for himself" and divide it into two types: negative and positive. Negative face refers to the desire of every competent adult member of a culture that his/her actions be unimpeded by others, whereas positive face involves the desire of every member of a culture that his/her wants be desirable to at least some others. In other words, positive face can be thought of as "the positive and consistent image people have of themselves, and their desire for approval", while negative face, on the other hand, is "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, and rights to non-distraction" (Brown and Levinson: 1978). Another important element in understanding how face and politeness are connected involves what Brown and Levinson call a *face-threatening act* (FTA). This occurs in social interactions which intrinsically threaten the face of the hearer (H), such as when one makes a

request, disagrees, gives advice, etc. The potential severity of a FTA is determined by various factors, which include the following: the social distance (D) of the S and the H; the relative power (P) of S and H; and the absolute ranking (R) of imposition in a particular culture. Consequently, strategies to save face are chosen according to the gravity of the FTA.

Politeness thus arises through mitigation of an action that can threaten either negative face (e.g., a request) or positive face (e.g., a refusal). The satisfying of positive face is called positive politeness and is expressed by indicating similarities amongst interactants and by expressing appreciation of the interlocutor's self-image, whereas negative politeness can be expressed by satisfying negative face in terms of indicating respect for the addressee's right not to be imposed on. These politeness strategies are closely linked to the context of the conversation.

Although there is a consensus that the notion "context" is indispensable in pragmatics research, what the actual content of context is has not been agreed upon. From all the different definitions of pragmatics given by different scholars, it is evident that pragmatics has to do with context. From the viewpoint of speech act theory, context essentially focuses on the situational conditions for the performance and interpretation of single verbal acts.

In a normal day, different activities take place. During these activities, people interact and use language where they produce utterances that perform actions. These are referred to as Speech Acts. The Speech Act theory was proposed by Austin (1962) who at the time proposed the concept of 'performatives', which

states that an utterance is the performing of an action. Such actions need to meet certain contextual conditions called 'felicity' conditions which were later formalized by Searle (1969). These are the conditions that must be in place and the criteria that must be satisfied for a speech act to achieve its purpose. Several kinds of felicity conditions have been identified, including:

- 1) *essential conditions* (whether a speaker intends that an utterance be acted upon by the addressee);
- 2) *sincerity conditions* (whether the speech act is being performed seriously and sincerely).
- 3) *preparatory conditions* (whether the authority of the speaker and the circumstances of the speech act are appropriate to its being performed successfully).

Related to the '*essential conditions*' is the aspect of persuasion. Many social psychologists refer to "persuasion" as a cognitive *process* during which a person's attitudes and/or behaviour are changed as a result of stimuli (Cacioppo, Harkins, & Petty, 1981). In the discipline of communication, Bostrom (1983) holds that persuasion is *purposive* communicative behaviour, designed to change the response of the receiver. Bettinghaus and Cody (1987) state that a persuasive communication situation "must involve a *conscious* attempt by one individual to change the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour of another individual or a group of individuals through the transmission of some message." The concept of treating persuasion as a process involving purposive and conscious actions aiming to change others' attitude/behaviour is also reflected in other definitions of

persuasion (Reardon, 1991; Gass & Seiter, 1999). Reardon (1991) also notes that persuasion is considered to have occurred even if the persuader does not think that his/her goal of changing the behaviour of another has been accomplished. She argues that persuasion is often an incremental activity and rarely a one-shot effort because different strategies/acts can be, and are usually, used during persuasion. In addition to the nature of persuasion, the entire process of persuasion is considered to be a potentially face-threatening event because speech acts that are often used in persuasion - such as requests, orders, suggestions, warnings, offers, etc. - are all face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Hardin, 2001). Therefore, persuaders often use politeness to counterbalance their competing desires to be clear about what they want and to support the other party's 'face' which refers to the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the role others assume he has taken during a particular interaction (Goffman, 1976).

Persuasion may take a number of forms. Advertisement, as one of the most accessible sources of written persuasive discourse, has '*persuaded*' many researchers (e.g. Geis, 1982; Hardin, 2001; Lakoff, 1982; Schmidt, et al. 1995) to carry out studies with respect to the special culture and society of use. Print advertisements or commercials as verbal interactions are categorized as persuasive discourse.

Persuasive discourse, according to Reardon (1991), can be divided into three types, ranging from interpersonal persuasion, and organizational persuasionsuch as political speech and negotiation, to the most commonly-used one, mass

media persuasion such as advertisement. The term 'interpersonal persuasion' has often been used interchangeably with 'compliance-gaining' which usually refers to a form of communication designed to shape or regulate the *behaviour* of others. (Sheer 1995). Compliance-gaining often is examined in supervisor-subordinate relationships, such as in teacher-student, doctor-patient and manager-employee situations. Persuasion, on the other hand, can occur between two equal- status parties or even unequal-status parties. According to Kirkpatrick (1995), in societies where hierarchical relationships are important, such as among the Chinese, persuasion has often been employed by an inferior to a superior. In sum, in compliance-gaining and persuasion, individuals often pursue multiple, conflicting goals as they seek compliance.

2.2.2. SPEECH ACT THEORY

One important approach in pragmatics is the notion of speech acts. The essential insight of speech act theory is that language performs communicative acts. The founding father of speech act theory, British philosopher John Austin (1962), proposed the concept of "performatives", which states that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action. Austin (1962) distinguished 'performatives' from 'constatives', i.e. declarative statements whose truth or falsity can be judged. Sentences such as "I do" (as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony), and "I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth" (as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stern) are Quotes of performatives.

According to Austin (1962), the utterance that a speaker produces conveys three interrelated layers of meaning: the literal meaning of the utterance produced by

the speaker(locutionary acts), the speaker's intention conveyed in the utterance(illocutionary acts), and the effect that the utterance has on the hearer(perlocutionary acts). (Austin: 1962). For Quote, when someone refers to the tomato they are selling and says '*Ye ibuzwize*' meaning 'this is ripe', he does not just utter the words 'This', 'is' and 'ripe', which subsume the locutionary act, but he also performs an illocutionary act, namely, that of urging, advising, or persuading someone not to buy unripe tomatoes when there are ripe ones. If, as a consequence of this utterance, a customer buys the ripe tomatoes, the perlocution is that the speaker has convinced his or her customer to buy ripe tomatoes.

Of the three acts, Austin considered the illocutionary act to be the central component of language function, since an illocutionary act is the actual performance of the speaker's purpose in speaking. It is also the illocutionary act that has received the most attention in speech act studies. The term 'speech act' is now used exclusively to refer to the illocutionary act (Levinson, 1983). John Searle (1969) built upon Austin's work and proposed a systematic framework and categorization by which to incorporate speech acts, or more specifically, illocutionary acts, into linguistic theory. Any speech act should be situation-dependent and dynamic as proposed by Geis (1995).

2.3.2.1 Indirect speech acts

According to Searle (1975), direct speech acts are defined as utterances in which the propositional content (sentence meaning) of the utterance is consistent with what the speaker intends to accomplish (speaker meaning). For indirect speech

acts, such a relation need not exist. As a result, sentence meaning and speaker meaning may be different. For Quote, a vegetable seller may ask a customer “*Ona wo mukayo kwana?*” ‘Is this enough for everyone?’ and mean it not merely as a question but as a suggestion that the customer should buy more.

According to Searle (1979), the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually-shared background knowledge, both verbal and non-verbal, together with the general power of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer. The speaker does this, conscious of the ‘face’ of the speaker.

2.2.2.2 The concept of ‘face’

Brown and Levinson (1987) present a coherent and comprehensive theory of politeness in which the concept of ‘face’ is central. Goffman(1976) defines ‘face’ as the “positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. For Brown and Levinson, ‘face’ is something that is “emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction”.

The concept of ‘face’ has a direct bearing on persuasion in that the customer must be made to feel important.

There are two basic rules of social interaction: be considerate and be respectful, both of which exist for the maintenance of face.

2.2.2.3 Face-threatening acts

Acts that appear to impede the addressees’ independence of movement and freedom of action threaten their negative face(the need to be independent, to

have freedom of action and not to be imposed on by others), whereas acts that appear as disapproving of their wants threaten their positive face (the need to be accepted, even liked by others, to be treated as a member of a given group, and to know that one's wants are shared by others. (Brown and Levinson: 1987).

Quotes of acts that threaten the addressee's negative face include orders, requests, suggestions, advice, threats, warnings, offers, and so forth. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), acts that threaten the addressee's positive face include expressions of disapproval or disagreement, criticism, and the mentioning of taboo topics.

According to Brown & Levinson (1987) the degree of this risk or weight of face-threatening is determined by the cumulative effect of three universal social variables (1987):

D: the social 'distance' between the participants;

P: the relative 'power' between them;

R: the absolute 'ranking' of imposition in the particular culture.

Redressive action is not necessary because such strategies are either performed by interactants who are on intimate terms or because other demands for efficiency override face concerns. An Quote of bald-on-record usage occurs not because other demands override face issues but because the speaker wants to alleviate H's anxieties about impinging on S's face. According to Brown and Levinson(1978), bald on record strategy is a direct way of saying things, without any minimization to the imposition, in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way, as for Quote "Do X!".

2.2.2.4 Positive Persuasive politeness

From their cross-cultural research, Brown and Levinson have identified fifteen strategies that communicators use to convey approval of their hearer's wants and to convey that their own wants are similar. These strategies fall into three general types: (a) the speaker can claim common ground with the hearer (strategies 1 to 4 below); (b) the speaker can claim the speaker and hearer are cooperators (strategies 5 to 7 below); and (c) the speaker can fulfill the hearer's want for some X (strategy 8 below). These three types of positive redress are conveyed through these eight different strategies (Brown and Levinson: 1987):

- 1) Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods);
- 2) Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H);
- 3) Intensify interest to H;
- 4) Joke;
- 5) Offer, promise;
- 6) Be optimistic;
- 7) Give (or ask for) reasons;
- 8) Give gifts to H (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation).

2.2.2.5 Persuasive politeness at the sentence level

This has to do with directness, and directness may be neither face-threatening nor imposing. Rather, it serves to signal in-group solidarity. The social parameters used by Brown and Levinson – P (power), D (distance) and R (ranking) - have been shown to be not only relevant, but also influential, in affecting persuasion strategy types. The findings also reveal age-linked

differences: older respondents (40-60) use a higher percentage of direct bald on-record strategies than the younger age group (20-29), which prefers conventionally indirect persuasion. There are also gender differences. Males demonstrate a preference for forms of mitigation that attempt to redress H's negative face, whereas females tend to choose forms which redress H's positive face.

2.2.2.6 Persuasive politeness on discourse level

Zhu *et al.* (2000) argue that any linguistic choice that a conversation participant makes can potentially be a politeness strategy. They propose that an understanding of the organization of the event requires an understanding of the broader social norms and values of the culture in question.

2.3 Summary

This chapter, confirms that the examination of politeness studies indicates that the concept of 'face' is central to politeness and may be culturally specific. Furthermore, the study has shown that in studying politeness, there is need to apply 'total-context' not just in the realization of persuasion strategies, but also in deciding whether a specific speech act is face-threatening or not.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines, in detail, the study area, sample size, data collection methods and procedures as well as data analysis techniques and procedure.

The research took a qualitative approach.

3.1 Study area and Sample Size

The data for this study were collected in Mongu town, located in Western province in Zambia. Mongu is the capital as well as the economic and cultural centre of Western Province. While the town is home to many languages, most people in Mongu use Silozi in their daily life, including at marketplaces.

The sample size for the study was dependent upon the number of people who came to the market to buy one thing or the other during the period of research. These markets consisted of people selling new and second-hand clothes, groceries, vegetables, charcoal, fish and other assorted food stuffs. The markets under review here were: The station market, Mongu central market (commonly known as the Black market), the Limulunga market, Imwiko market and the surrounding shops.

3.2 Sampling Techniques

The participants were drawn from among the people that came to buy one thing or the other from the selected markets and shops in Mongu district in Western province. Simple sampling techniques were used to select persons to participate

in the study such that whoever was present at the time of research would have an opportunity to provide the required data. Convenience sampling was also used. This is a method based on using people whom the researcher meets haphazardly or accidentally. These are the people who happen to be at the scene of the research at the time it is being conducted.

3.3 Data Collection

The qualitative data is presented in form of actual words as provided by the respondents and some informants. Some data appeared a number of times used by different salespersons. Such data was obtained and used to give a general view.

3.3.1 Data collection methods

Introspection and field notes, participant observation, which entails the researcher taking part as one of the customers, as well as simple observations, where the researcher observes from a distance without taking part in the buying and selling, were employed. As many participants as possible were involved. These participants were drawn from about four markets in Mongu town and Limulunga to ensure a maximum distribution of the survey. They were drawn spontaneously from different social groups in terms of gender, age and social status, as the researcher came across them.

3.3.2.1 Introspection

The researcher used her knowledge of the languages spoken in the area to generate information.

3.3.2.2 Field Notes

Field notes were used as a means of collecting primary data. These were later used to authenticate the findings. These were natural speech and actions because the salespersons were not aware, as the researcher secretly wrote down the conversations, and the conversations between the salespersons and their customers were spontaneous and genuine. This instrument was used without the knowledge of the participants so as to get natural data.

The target areas for the collection of this primary data were about three markets from Mongu town and one from Limulunga.

3.3.2.3 Participant observation

The researcher took part in some of the transactions in these places, observed and took notes of the linguistic and non-linguistic items that the marketeers used in trying to persuade her to buy from them.

In fact, in pragmatics studies, data collection methods are generally of two types – observation and elicitation. The methods used to collect actual verbal interaction data through observation are concerned primarily with an ethnographic or naturalistic approach and often involve field-notes or tape-recordings. This approach, which has its origin in anthropology, focuses on the behaviors of the members of a particular community by studying them in naturally-occurring and ongoing settings. Natural speech data have the advantage of being authentic and close to life. Researchers in both anthropological and linguistic studies have advocated the use of natural data. Wolfson (1986) states that “it is only through an ethnographic approach that

reliable data can be gathered.” He further lists the advantages of naturally-occurring data as follows:

- 1) The data are spontaneous.
- 2) The data reflect what the speakers say rather than what they think they would say.
- 3) The speakers are reacting to a natural situation rather than to a contrived and possibly unfamiliar situation.
- 4) The communicative event has real-world consequences.
- 5) The event may be a source of rich pragmatic structures. (Wolfson: 1986)

The data-collecting situation should be one in which speakers can talk freely and spontaneously without being aware that their talk is the object of study. To ensure this, the researcher, took time to secretly write down the conversation between the salesperson and the customer soon after it had taken place. In other words, there should be a “high level of research control over the situation in which speakers say what they say, but there should be no control over what speakers say and how they say it” (Turnbull 2001). He calls this kind of research method Experimental Elicitation Technique, (hereafter referred to as EET). In this technique, the researcher has to find an environment in which the speech act(s) under study occur naturally and with some frequency. This environment was provided by the marketplaces and shops in this study. The researcher ensured that there was no suspicion about her presence, hence, allowed the conversations between the customers and salesperson to flow naturally.

Turnbull's Experimental Elicitation Technique, which combines the advantages of DCTs and observation techniques, allows researchers to collect data in a natural and efficient way. If there is no "best-for-all" data collection method, the most appropriate technique should be the one best suited to the particular research question under study. For empirical research in pragmatics, naturally-occurring data are not only important but also essential, because they are the only type of data that come with a real-life context.

The researcher grew up in Western Province and lived there for over thirty years. As a member of this speech community, the researcher was able to collect and examine the data from an insider's perspective. Not only did the researcher have easy access to the community, her presence did not affect the normal behaviour of the community under study. Also, she was able to use her native intuitions and socio-cultural background knowledge as sources of interpretation. The researcher was helped by two assistants in collecting data.

Qualitative methods permit the researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry. Goffman (1976). He also points out that qualitative methods typically "produce a wealth of detailed information about a smaller number of people and cases... increase understanding of the cases and situations studied but reduce generalizability."

Qualitative methods are appropriate when the phenomena under study are complex and social in nature, and do not lend themselves to quantification. The

analysis of this study primarily focuses on how context affects the choice of persuasion strategies.

Given the nature of this study and the type of data collected, therefore, qualitative research methods were used.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The goal was to observe and write down sales-related persuasive speeches, that is, utterances of salespersons trying to persuade customers to buy their products or services. With the help of two other female research assistants, the researcher went to different locations, including night markets, retail stores and street vendors to collect the data. Most of the time, the researcher went to the stores/vendors whose products the researcher actually needed or was interested in. The researcher observed, and secretly and quickly moved out of sight to take notes, soon after the conversations between the customers and the salespersons the researcher encountered, who tried to sell their products or services. There were usually other customers around while the conversations were taking place. In order to get more utterances from each salesperson, frequently the other two members of the research team took turns at different times to be the customer so that two sets of conversations could be recorded from each salesperson. The researcher also tried to elicit as many utterances as she could by asking questions such as 'Why is this X better than the other X?' or 'Will you be able to give me a better deal?' Since all the conversations happened in public places and there were always other people around when the observations were taking place, this technique is considered the type of situation that would be ethical. A lot of

salespersons' conversations with customers were secretly written down soon after the event. The salespersons were both male and female.

The notes written down are *representative* of natural speech because the salespersons' utterances, which are the focal point of this study, were natural and un-rehearsed.

This technique is also *efficient* because most of the data recorded are what the researcher intends to record and can be used for analysis.

The data collection exercise from the sites was undertaken over a period of three months in each of the selected markets and shops. The researcher collected data by conducting observations of actual scenarios of selling and buying. Information concerning observations was noted and analyzed thereafter. In case of participant observation, the researcher collected information through direct participation and observation of would be buyers. The researcher studied the facial expressions and gestures of both the sellers and the buyers. This helped the researcher to become aware of how contexts or situations contribute meaning through persuasion strategies. The researcher finally sought clarifications from the assistant researchers on any persuasion strategies that she knew as to whether they were still effective.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data in this study are analyzed using the qualitative approach. They are analyzed in line with the themes of the speech act theory by Austin and the politeness theory of 'face' by Brown and Levinson. The data were divided into three categories, namely, negative politeness strategies, bald-on-record

strategies, and positive politeness strategies. The next task was to scrutinize each category and subcategorize it. Quotations of significant portions of utterances obtained were used to depict the persuasion strategies in the actual words. Finally, a summary and conclusions were drawn.

3.5.1 'Move' as the unit of analysis

Goffman (1976: 272) describes a 'move' as:

Any full stretch of talk or of its substitutes which has a distinctive unitary bearing on some set or other of the circumstances in which participants find themselves, such as a communication system, ritual constraints, economic negotiating, character contests, 'teaching cycles', or whatever.

A 'move' is the structural category into which a turn can be divided, and which identifies a new function in the discourse of the speaker. A move does not equal a turn. Sometimes, two or more moves can be found in one turn.

As Geis (1995) points out,

the fundamental unit of investigation for speech act theory should be naturally-occurring conversational sequences, not the individual, constructed utterances, isolated from actual or even explicitly imagined conversational contexts that traditional speech act theory has been based on.

To better and more accurately categorize the politeness strategies in the data, the researcher uses 'move' as the unit of analysis in this study. The following Quote comes from a store salesperson in my data: (The salesperson was trying

to sell a briefcase/laptop case to the customer, who was buying a gift for her friend who was graduating from a Teacher's College. The customer indicated that her friend did not have a laptop computer.)

Salesperson :*Mane, mukotana wo ha ki wa kushimbela feela malaputopu wa kona kuitusisa wona kwa kushimbela libuka kwa musebezi. Hape mwendi kwapili ukaluwa laputopu. // Uswanela kuitukiseza onafa ili kuli asike afumana butaata kwapili.*

(In fact our briefcase is not for laptop computers, only she can use it for carrying books when going for work. Besides, she might have one in the future. // She should prepare for it now so that she won't have to worry about it.)

In this Quote, there are two moves in one turn. The first move was a disagreement where the salesperson told the customer that the briefcase was not only for laptop computers. The second move was a suggestion that the customer should buy the briefcase now because it might come in handy when her friend needs it in the future. For purposes of clarity in this Quote, two slashes are placed in the English translation to separate the two moves.

3.6 Analysis of the results according to FTA

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed five strategies from which an individual may choose when attempting to conduct a Face Threatening Act: 1) bald-on-record without redressive action; 2) positive politeness; 3) negative politeness; 4) off-record; and 5) do not do the Face Threatening Act. Obviously, the last strategy is irrelevant here because all the sales persons in the recordings did choose to perform Face Threatening Acts. According to Brown and Levinson

(1987), an act is done 'off-record' if it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act. In all the conversations observed for this study, the intentions of the salespersons' acts were clearly unambiguous because the customers were well aware that the salespersons' goals were to sell their products. Thus the fourth strategy 'off-record' is also not applicable to this study.

The first step in analyzing the data was to categorize each move as one of the three strategies, namely, negative politeness, positive politeness and bald-on-record.

The researcher had to use her communicative competence as a native speaker of Silozi and as a member of the speech community to understand and interpret the utterances. The researcher made inferences based on the linguistic form used and on the 'total-context' in which the form occurred.

The researcher applied Brown and Levinson's politeness theory to her data by incorporating the 'total context' into the model. She labelled negative politeness strategies (Face Threatening Acts with redressive features) as Category A, bald-on-record strategies (Face Threatening Acts without any redressive features) as Category B, and positive politeness strategies (compliments, showing interest to the customers, making promises, etc.) as Category C. The second step was to look at each category and code similar strategies as subcategories.

Category A: Negative Politeness

- hedges (lexical, syntactic, particles, prosody);
- show deference;

- indirect strategies;

Category B: Bald on record

- disagreement (criticism), question;
- suggestion, advice;
- request;
- warning, threatening.

Category C: Positive Politeness

- show concern, interest;
- promise, guarantee;
- solidarity/in-group talk;
- compliment;
- joke, humour.

3.7 Summary

This chapter reviews the methodology undertaken for the study. The study area has been revealed as being Mongu town of Western Province in Zambia. The study was carried out in some markets and shops selling assorted goods. The chapter states that study employed the qualitative approach. Under scrutiny were actual words of the salespersons and the customers. The chapter further reveals field notes and participant observation as some of the data collection methods used. The data collection procedure and the mode of analyzing data have been stated. The three categories under which data would be classified have been highlighted as; negative politeness, positive politeness and bald-on-record. The categories are listed alongside their subcategories.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a qualitative, micro-analysis of the data in order to examine how contextual factors affect the salespeople's choices of politeness strategies. The linguistic realizations of the politeness strategies will also be presented and discussed.

As stated in Chapter 3, the findings will be organized into three categories – negative politeness, bald-on-record and positive politeness strategies respectively.

The data analysis in this study is both sociopragmatic, a study that focuses on the choice of strategies across different situations, examining the way in which pragmatic performance is subjected to social and cultural conditions, and pragmalinguistic, which is a study that focuses on the examination of linguistic realizations in a particular language for conveying a specific pragmatic function.

In terms of social factors, two independent variables, namely gender and social status, will be included whenever each is relevant. The discourse type, which is persuasive sales talk, will be used as the situational context in this study.

In line with the theme of this study, the discussions will be focused on how context affects the politeness strategies and their linguistic realizations in persuasive sales talk. Selected portions of the conversations from the data under discussion are used as Quotes.

4.1 Negative politeness strategies (Category A)

Negative politeness is the redressive action directed to the addressee's negative face. It is specific, focused and performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA causes.

The most common negative politeness strategies used by the salespersons were using hedges to soften the effect of the tone of voice.

4.1.1 Hedges

The use of hedges seems to correspond with another pragmatic concept that of mitigation, defined as a strategy for softening or reducing the strength of a speech act whose effects are unwelcome to the hearer (Fraser 1980; Holmes 1984) 1. Both Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategies and the notion of mitigation centre around hedges, which are the most common devices used to soften the tone of speech. 2. Brown and Levinson (1987) give the following definition of hedges:

"In the literature, a 'hedge' is a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is *partial*, or true only in certain respects, or that it is *more* true and complete than perhaps might be expected." (1987) Brown and Levinson (1987) also point out that the semantic operation of hedging can be realized in numerous surface forms such as prosodics (e.g. intonation + stress), particles, lexical items, full adverbial clauses, etc. In the following section, I will discuss the hedges that are realized in lexical items in the data.

4.1.1.1 Lexical hedges

This section discusses the lexical hedges used by the salespersons in the data. It was found that hedges for showing deference, such as *mu*, were used in more face-threatening situations where the social status of the customer caused a greater power differential between the salesperson and the customer as would be seen in some excerpts below. Other lexical hedges that were employed to soften the tone of speech, such as *Mane* 'in fact'; *kubulela feela niti* 'to tell you the truth'; *ni bulele feela niti* 'let me be frank' were mostly found in the speech acts of requests and suggestions.

This group of expressions is found to be the most common type of hedge used by the salespeople. Almost half of them used one of these phrases in their talk to the customers.

These expressions are considered hedges because they were often used at the beginning of an utterance when the salespersons tried to suggest something or make a request. They were sometimes used to disagree with the customers' comments. In other words, they moderate *suggestions* and *disagreements* as Face Threatening Acts. These expressions do not really change or contribute to the meaning of a sentence, but only 'mitigate' the force of the illocutionary acts as is seen from the following quotes:

Quote 1:

The salesperson was trying to sell a pot to the customer who showed interest in it. The salesperson proposed that the customer buy an even bigger pot because he had a lot in stock.

Customer: **Kaniti** mupika wo ubonahala kutiya.

'**Honestly**, this looks strong.'

Salesperson: **Kono** neikaba hande hanemuka leka womutuna wo kwana lubasi.

'**But** it would be better to buy one that is big enough for a big family.'

Salesperson: **Mane**, ni na ni yemituna mwa libulukelo.

'**In fact**, I also have bigger sizes in the store room.'

Quote 2:

The customer was thinking about putting the stereo he was about to buy in the bedroom but the salesperson was of an opposing opinion.

Salesperson: **Mane**, ni bona kuli kambe muibeya mwa ndandulo.

'**In fact**, I can recommend you to put it in the living-room.'

Quote 3:

The customer complained about the high price of the fish. which the salesperson justified, saying that it was actually not expensive.

Salesperson: **Kubulela feela niti** litapi ze halituli.

'**To be honest**, this fish is not expensive.'

In the above Quotes, a sense of hesitation and reservation was shown because of the expression *kubelela feela niti*. For instance, in Quote 3, the utterances would sound blunt and direct without *kubulela feela niti*. From a discourse perspective, these hedges were often used by the salespersons to further persuade their customers after the customers showed uninterest in or dissatisfaction with the products.

It was found that most of the customers in the conversations did not show much interest in the products at the beginning of the conversations. The salespersons had to be persistent and sometimes even seem a little imposing.

4.1.1.2 Syntactic hedges

There are two major types of strategies under this sub-category.

4.1.1.2.1 Quality hedges

The first type is what Brown and Levinson (1987) call 'Quality hedges' which suggest that the speaker is not taking full responsibility for the truth of his utterance. These quality hedges are often found in embedded sentences starting with 'I think...', 'I believe...', or 'I am not sure if...' as in the following:

Quote 4:

The salesperson in a shop selling body cream points out that the customer has serious acne problems. The customer tries to explain why, but the salesperson disagrees by giving his opinion.

Customer: *Kikabaka la mafula anenitolile sunda yefelile.*

'This is because of the lotion I applied last week.'

Salesperson: ***Ni hupula kuli**,kwandaa mafula anemutolile, muna ni zekola mwa mubili.*

'**I think**, besides using the lotion, there's some toxin in your body.'

In this excerpt, the salesperson did not want to take responsibility of what she was proposing, hence the use of **I think**.

Quote 5:

The customer was wondering which type of fish she should get. The salesperson offered to help her decide by first finding out for what time/ meal, so she could recommend slow or fast cooking.

Salesperson: **Kana** mubata bwa kuca musihali kapa manzibwani?

'Is it for the afternoon or evening that you want?'

In this excerpt, the marketer was working on the mind of the customer to try and persuade him to buy from him because, presumably, what he was selling would cook fast enough.

In persuading the customers to buy something, a salesperson needs to be tactical and use hedges only to soften the severity of face-threatening acts, but not in recommending and presenting his/her products. The fact that these syntactic hedges were only found in face-threatening acts indicates that the use of these hedges were strategic. The salespersons seemed to be aware of the fact that using hedges would make their speech less powerful and less persuasive. From a discourse perspective, these hedges not only weakened the illocutionary force of specific speech acts but made the customer sympathise with the marketer. They were often used when the salesperson tried to defend themselves.

4.1.1.2.2 Conventionally Indirect Strategies

The second type of syntactic hedge is what Brown and Levinson call 'conventionally indirect' strategies, which are "the use of phrases and sentences that have contextually unambiguous meanings which are different from their

literal meanings” (1987). An Quote of conventional indirect strategy would be ‘Can you pass the salt?’ which is used as an indirect request and not a question about the addressee’s potential abilities.

In my data, however, only a handful of salespersons used this type of strategy.

The following quote is an indication of this type of strategy:

Quote 6:

The salesperson was trying to persuade the customer, who showed interest in buying dry fish from a neighboring stand, to buy semi-dry fish from her. The customer came to the market after 17.00hrs.

Kuli zeomile libuzwa kapili kufita maonyena?

‘Does dry fish cook faster than semi dry fish?’

In the above Quote, the literal meaning of the marketeer’s question is whether dry fish can cook faster than semi-dry fish. This is an indirect speech act for the implied request ‘Come and buy from me because mine will cook faster than what you want to buy.’

4.1.1.3 Sentence-final expressions

As indicated by Brown and Levinson (1987), the operation of hedging can be achieved in indefinite numbers of surface forms, including phrases. Sentence-final expressions (SFEs) flourish in natural conversations in Silozi. They are an integral part of colloquial speech, especially in informal contexts.

Final expressions in Silozi do not have a clear grammatical function because often their omission does not make the sentence ungrammatical. Their semantic and pragmatic functions are also elusive. Based on the analysis of this data, the

following SFEs stand out in terms of frequency, namely *mukainyaza* ‘you will regret’, *hamusikaleka* ...‘you have not bought ...’and *nitiisa niti* ‘I am telling you the truth’.The researcher will discuss these expressions in this section, followed by a discussion on the analysis of gender and particles.

Mukainyaza signals a friendly warning ‘you will regret having left this because you might not find it when you want it’. *Hamusika leka....*: friendly reminding/warning ‘I want to warn/remind you that you have not bought...., you’d better do something right away’. *Nitiisa niti* is also a warning with a message like ‘Let me warn you or tell you truthfully’. This pragmatic function of *mukainyaza* was found on several occasions in this data as illustrated in the following:

Quote 7:

The salesperson noticed that the customer was checking out the shoes in the store. To try to convince the customer, the salesperson assured her that she would regret leaving them.

Salesperson: *Mubata kuleka makatulo a? **Mukainyaza** haiba muasiya. Ona a ki ona abatina basizani mazazi a!*

‘Do you want to buy this pair of shoes? **You will regret** if you leave it. These are the type of shoes ladies wear these days.’

In Quote 7, *mukainyaza* implied a reminder that those shoes are ‘hot’ and the customer should buy them now.

Quote 8:

The salesperson asked if the customer had decided to buy the cassava after she had spent some time trying to sell it to her. Seeing how indecisive the customer

was, the salesperson persuaded her by warning her about how much demand there was for the cassava.

Salesperson: *Ni mife mushelukela ufi?*

'Which container should I give you?'

Customer: *Ni saikupula.*

'I'm still thinking about it.'

Salesperson: *Mukute haiba mwaubata kakuli **nitiisa niti** mwanja wo baupupula.*

'Come back if you want it because **to tell you the truth** this cassava is selling fast.'

In Quote 8, the particle *nitiisa niti* implied a warning that could be interpreted as 'The cassava might be sold out when you come back.' The salespersons in Quotes 7 and 8 were both using those expressions to remind the customers of the value of the products.

Quote 9:

The customer was complaining that the heaps of tomato were too small. The salesperson reminded the customer that they had become expensive because they were scarce in their area so that they depended on tomatoes brought from another district.

Salesperson: *Hakuna butaata ni ka mibeela mbasela.*

'OK, I'll give you some for free.'

Customer: *Oooo ...*

'Well...'

Salesperson: ***Ni mi hupulisa** kuli tomato mazazi a yatula kakuli izwa kwa Kaoma.*

‘**Let me remind you** that tomatoes are expensive nowadays because they come from Kaoma.’

In this excerpt, the marketer offered a friendly reminder to the customer about the fact that the commodity was kind of imported from another district as such ought to be expensive.

Quote 10:

The customer was checking out the secondhand schoolbags the salesperson had recommended. The customer asked a question that called for reassurance and that reassurance was given by the salesperson.

Customers: *Yona mikotana ye imi itiile?*

‘Are these bags strong?’

Salesperson: ***Oti ni mibulelele**, Mikotana ya salaula I tiile hahulu kufita ye minca ya mwa sintolo.*

‘**Let me tell you** Secondhand bags are very strong as compared to new ones from the shops.’

This excerpt served as a remind of how durable secondhand bags are as compared to new ones. The customer was being persuaded by being reminded of the benefits or rather the quality of the bags.

The reason these expressions are considered negative politeness hedges here is because of their subtlety in sending out a warning or a reminding message such as ‘You will regret...’ or ‘Let me remind you ...’ in those conversations. The

reason for these reminders was to request that the customers buy the products. In a different context where the speaker is not trying to persuade the hearer to buy his/her product, these expressions could be considered positive politeness markers because they add a friendly and caring tone to the utterance. For Quote, one might remind his/her friend that it is raining outside by saying *Pula isweli ya nela!* 'It's raining now!' The expression *isweli ya nela* in this sentence signals a friendly reminder for the friend to bring an umbrella. In the persuasive sales talk the researcher collected, however, such expressions' primary function is to signal a warning in a hedged tone, and thus mitigate a face-threatening illocutionary act.

Na mibulelela..., *cwale munyangufe mi muikupule kabubebe*: indicates a tone of assuring and urging "I tell you" or 'I can assure you' that..., so hurry up and make up your mind quickly!'. As is shown in the next four quotes:

Quote 11:

The salesperson had spent some time persuading the customer to buy groundnuts from him. He warns the customer about waiting to buy from the new harvest saying it will not be that cheap.

Salesperson: ***Kanako ye*** *icipile kakuli ki ya ñohola, lubata kuifeza lusika kutula kale ya unomwaha.*

'**Right now** they are cheap because we want to clear them before we harvest this year's.'

Customer: *Oooo....*

'Well....'

Salesperson: *Hamuna kufumana yecipile cwana, **na mibulelela.***

'You will not find any this cheap, **I'm telling you.**'

In the quote above, the salesperson persuaded the customer by assuring her that there would be no better deal than what he was offering.

Quote 12:

The salesperson told the customer that the poles were selling at K30 each. Upon showing surprise that they were expensive, the salesperson justifies by indicating that they were very strong poles.

Customer: K30?

'K30?'

Salesperson: *Misumo ye itiile hahulu, **na mibulelela.** Haiswani ni yemiñwi mi ilekiwa hahulu mane ituha ifela.*

'These poles are very strong, **I'm telling you.** They are selling so fast that we are almost out of stock.'

In the excerpt above, the salesperson was offering a friendly warning to the customer that the poles were worthy buying for their quality. It was a quality assurance kind of persuasion.

Quote 13:

The salesperson had spent a lot of time persuading the customer to buy roasted cassava and roasted groundnuts rather than buying scones, by equating them to the staple food which is nshima and relish.

Customer: *Ooo! Haluboneni pili ni saikupula.*

'Ok! Let me think about it.'

Salesperson: *Busunso ni buhobe likwanile hamufeza kuca muyonwa feela mezi.*
Na mibulelela.

‘This is nshima and relish. All you need is to drink water after eating. **I’m telling you.**’

The salesperson in this excerpt is using hyperbole in a friendly manner to show the quality of the commodity.

Quote 14:

The saleswoman had spent some time persuading the customer to buy the pearl necklace, but the customer had not made up her mind yet. The salesperson assured the customer that what she was about to buy was not a common pearl and she would be the only person with such a necklace.

Salesperson: *Oti ni mibulelele, se sifaha ki sesinde luli hape ikaba mina feela,ni mibulelela niti.*

‘Let me tell you, this necklace is very beautiful and you will be the only one, **I assure you.**’

In Quote 14, the salesperson also concluded her sales talk with ‘I am telling you... you will be the only one’. The expression *you will be the only one* reinforced the tone of assuring and urging the customer to buy. Without the use of *you will be the only one*, the salespersons would have to use sentences like ‘Don’t hesitate anymore!’ or ‘You should buy it now’, which are bald-on-record face-threatening acts.

The expressions under discussion here were found to imply warning, impatience and urging in the sales talks. The use of these expressions allows the

salespersons to perform the speech acts needed in persuading the customers to buy the products and attend to the customers' negative face wants at the same time.

For whatever reason, the female salespersons used almost four times as many SFEs as the male salespersons. Probably, because women tend to be more experienced in what they are selling.

The SFEs under discussion here were used as hedges to mitigate the face-threatening illocutionary force in the salespersons' persuasion to the customers.

The utterances that were produced with the *begging* style were in relatively heavy-weight FTA circumstances due to power differences, and/or the high ranking of the customer. In the researcher's data, there were salespersons that used begging in one or two utterances in their sales talks, as may be observed in the next two quotes:

Quote 15:

The female salesperson had been observing her would be customer bypassing her, and decided to try and persuade him to buy her fritters by making him realize that he had a responsibility for the children in his community according to Lozi culture (i.e. once a child is born, he or she becomes a responsibility of the entire community).

Salesperson: *Bo muluti, mwabona moni ishondezi? Ni komokile kuli kiñi bondate habasatalimi kwa matumbuwa aka. Hamusaleki bana bamina habana kuleka liñoliso za kwa sikolo. **Muna ni kuninjombolola***

‘Teacher, can you see how pitiful I am? I am wondering why my father does not look at my fritters. If you do not buy, ‘your children’(used to imply that those children belong to every member of society as in the culture of the Lozis) will not be able to buy pens for school! **You have to help me alleviate my burden’**

Customer: *Kanti? Kulukile nataha.*

‘Is that so? All right, I am coming.’

In Quote 15, the female salesperson was speaking with a normal tone of voice in persuading the male customer to buy the fritters until in the last line, when she seemed to run out of things to say and was basically begging the customer to consider buying her product.

Although it has certain persuasive power, the *begging* style might weaken the customers’ trust and interest in the products due to the salespersons’ choice of using this strategy over other persuasive strategies because it shows that even the salesperson has no confidence in the value of what he or she is selling.

Quote 16:

The saleslady selling herbal medicine described what she had in store for the customer who had once passed there. The customer had indicated that he would buy next time he passed there. So, the salesperson challenged him to fulfill his promise.

Salesperson: *Muuna-muhulu milyani ye mubona fa ki yeminde. Kuna ni yekenisa mali ni yelatisa kuca. Mina mubata kai?Kacenu muna ni kuleka **sina monemusepiselize!***

‘Old man, the herbs you see here are very good. There is one for purifying blood and one for appetite. Which one do you want? Today you have to buy **as you promised!**’

Like in excerpt 15, the salesperson seemed to run out of what to say, hence, emphasis was on the promise that was made some time back and not on the quality of the products.

4.1.2 Showing deference

Mu ‘you’ (honorific form)

In Silozi etiquette, a person often uses the honorific second person singular pronoun *mu* when he/she speaks to someone who is superior in age or professional status.

In this data, most salespersons used this honorific pronoun when addressing their customers.

In general, *mu* was used in sentences containing face-threatening acts, such as interrogatives, requests or suggestions.

Quote 17:

The salesperson was trying to persuade the customer who showed ignorance of how to operate the radio to buy it, and offered to show him how to operate it. The salesperson used the honorific *mu* even when the customer was younger than him.

Salesperson: ***Musike mwa bilaela ni kamibonisa moisebezisezwa.***

‘(You) Don’t worry, I will show you how it works.’

Customer: *Ni kayo bona mwa masintolo amañwi.*

'I will go check out other shops.'

Salesperson: *Kana **muna** ni nako? Na kona kumibonisa moisebeleza onafa.*

'Do **you** have time right now? I can show **you** how it works right away'

Customer: *Fa ni bata kumatela kwa sipatela kuyolekula.*

'I want to rush and visit at the hospital.'

Salesperson: *Cwale **ukayokuta** nako mañi?*

'So, what time are **you** going to be back?'

In this conversation, the salesperson used *mu* when he first addressed the customer and kept using it until in the last sentence when he strongly disagreed with the customer's comments and thus switched to *u*, the default second person pronoun. This switch may also be influenced by the possibility that the salesperson felt a little closer to the customer in terms of social distance after a few turns of the conversation and decided that it was no longer necessary to show deference.

4.1.3 Use of Formal Address forms

Although there are many different address forms in Silozi depending on the addressee's gender, age or profession (for example: *Ima* 'Mum', *Bo Muluti* 'Teacher', *Musali-muhulu* 'old woman'), most of the salespersons in my data did not use any address forms when talking to their customers. They used the second person pronoun *u* or the polite form *mu*. The only exception was when the customer was a person well-known to the salesperson and where the salesperson wished to maintain the social distance.

Using address forms makes the utterances more formal and polite in Silozi. These salespersons used address forms instead of the pronoun *u* because of the teacher' social status. In Silozi, it has always been considered rude to use the pronoun *u* when talking to someone who has a relatively high social status.

4.1.4 Indirect strategies

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), "a communicative act is done off record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act." The utterances that were noted down under this category would be considered as 'Off record' strategies as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) if we only take into account their literal meanings. However, the situational context, i.e., persuasive sales talk, as well as the mutual knowledge of the customers and the salespersons adds up to only one possible interpretation of these acts. Whether it's a metaphor, a hint or a rhetorical question, the intentions of the salespersons in performing these acts were transparent to the customers. These metaphors or hints were used and interpreted as requests, disagreements or suggestions in indirect speech acts.

The indirect strategies were done in a way that the customers were supposed to make some inference to recover what was in fact intended by the salesperson if the sentences were taken out of the context. The researcher, therefore, categorizes them as indirect strategies under negative politeness.

Quote 18:

The saleswoman was talking about the rice she was selling in comparison to other salespersons' rice. He indirectly stated that his rice was cheaper and of a better quality because he was not a second or third party seller.

Salesperson: *Luna lulekisa laisi ye lulima, haki ya mwa nyutilishini. Ni kucokola izwa fa ku bo Shebo.*

'Us we sell what we grow, it is not from 'Nutrition' (A non-governmental organization specialized in selling and polishing rice and selling of other farm products and inputs). Even polishing was done from Mr Shebo's mill.'

In Quote 18, the salesperson indicated that the rice he was selling was of a higher quality.

While this comment could be interpreted as the speaker's personal statement in a different context, the hearer (customer) here would only interpret that as an indirect way of telling him that it was a better deal to buy the rice because it was a better quality and would be cheaper than that sold by the third party.

Quote 19:

The salesperson was trying to sell some assorted solar panels to a customer and indirectly tells him that to get a durable solar panel, you must be ready to pay a bit more.

Salesperson: *Luna ni masola panelu ni mambatili ni zende za kilisimasi ze cipile.*

'We have solar panels and batteries and nice things for Christmas that are cheap.'

Customer: *Litiile cwañi?*

'How durable are they?'

Salespersons: *Kuitingile fa teko ye mukaketa*.

'It depends on the price you choose.'

In Quote 19, the customer was complaining about the questionable durability of the solar panel. Instead of objecting directly, the salesperson used a common idiomatic phrase *Kuitingile fa teko ye mukaketa* 'It depends on what price you choose'. Because of the situational context, however, this statement would only be interpreted as persuasive sales talk in telling the customer that their solar panels are superior to the comparable model in terms of quality, because it is believed that the cheaper things are not as durable as compared to the expensive items.

4.1.5 Contextual factors and negative politeness strategies

Although a negative politeness strategy is supposed to be specific and performs the function of minimizing the imposition that a particular FTA causes, the analysis in this chapter has shown that the appropriate interpretation and study of the negative politeness strategy needs to take into account the global context, i.e. socio-cultural and situational, as well as the local context, namely the previous utterances in the discourse or the conversation sequences. In the following paragraphs, I will summarize and discuss how these contextual factors affect the use of negative politeness strategies.

4.1.5.1 The Socio-cultural context

As Cicourel (1992) points out, the appropriate understanding of a conversational exchange requires background knowledge that extends far beyond the local talk

and its immediate setting. All verbal interactions are socially constructed and culture-specific in the sense that an event such as persuasive sales talk in the Silozi culture may be different from that in American culture. In terms of the socio-cultural context of the conversations in the data, we need to consider the Silozi cultural and linguistic background. For Quote, the frequent use of sentence-final expressions *kaniti* 'for sure', *ni mibulelele* 'let me tell you' and *kubulela feela niti* 'to say the truth' shows the indispensability of such expressions in any sales pitch in Silozi. It was also found that the use of these expressions was influenced by the local dialect of Silozi. In terms of social factors, the results demonstrated how gender was associated with the frequency distribution of sentence-final expressions. The customers' social status was found to be the deciding factor in the salespersons' choice of using deference as negative politeness strategies.

4.1.5.2 The Situational context

The discourse type, which also serves as the general situational context and the main component of the speech events in my data, is that of persuasive sales talk. The characteristics of a persuasion and the inherent face-threatening force of a persuasive discourse need to be taken into account while studying the linguistic devices used for politeness strategies. The analysis in this section has shown that the interpretation of the sentence-final expressions and the understanding of the pragmatic functions of the indirect speech acts used by the salespersons all depend on examining the data against the background of persuasive sales talk.

For Quote, the expression *ni mibulelele feela niti* could be functioning as a friendly reminder in a discourse type other than persuasion.

4.1.5.3 The Local context (previous utterances)

To study persuasion in interaction, it is important to uncover how the ongoing discourse itself constitutes, maintains, and alters the participants' attitudes towards and understanding of each other. Therefore, the examination of conversational sequences was essential when it came to determining the type of speech act a move was in the data. For instance, some of the lexical hedges, such as *mane* 'in fact' and *kubulelela feela niti* 'honestly speaking' would not be analyzed as negative politeness strategies if the previous utterances were ignored. A sentence that starts with *Ni hupula kuli* 'I think that...' could be treated as an announcement or a suggestion in isolation while it was actually a disagreement with a syntactic hedge in my data. The interpretation was revealed only by taking into account the previous utterances by the customer.

4.2 Bald-on-record Strategies (Category B)

Brown and Levinson (1987) treat the bald-on-record strategy as speaking in conformity with Grice's Maxims (Grice 1975) because bald-on-record acts are direct, clear, unambiguous and concise.

At first glance, it might be hard to imagine why the salespersons would use bald-on-record FTAs in persuading their customers, with whom they were trying to ingratiate themselves. According to Brown and Levinson (1997), the prime reason that bald-on-record strategies are used is when the speaker wants to

perform the FTA with maximum efficiency, more than he wants to pay attention to the hearer's 'face'.

A careful examination of the data, taking the total-context into consideration, reveals that the usages of bald-on-record acts were considered not only acceptable by the customers, but also helpful in performing powerful persuasion. Nevertheless, compared with negative politeness or positive politeness strategies, the bald-on-record strategy was not used frequently by the salespersons. Some of the bald-on-record strategies that were used, as would be seen in the excerpts below, included:

- Disagreement (criticism);
- Question;
- Suggestion, advice;
- Request;
- Warning, threatening.

4.2.1 Disagreement

The most common bald-on-record strategy used by the salespersons was disagreement. Being hesitant is an appropriate politeness strategy in other speech acts, but hesitating when disagreeing could seriously affect the outcome of persuasion, especially when the customers question the high price or the quality of the products. A direct and powerful disagreement is not only necessary but sometimes expected by the customers. Some of the disagreements even sounded like criticizing the customers in order to highlight the problem he/she

had. It is conceivable that the reason that the salesperson did this was to show the urgency of buying/using the product. As in the following Quote:

Quote 20:

The salesperson pointed out to the customer who wanted to buy only ripe tomatoes, from the neighbouring salesperson who was not around at the time, that she needed to buy not only ripe tomatoes but ripe and slightly ripe tomatoes so that she would not have to buy tomatoes the next day because the slightly ripe ones would be ripe then.

Customer: *Ni bata tomato yebuzwize kakuli ha ni na ya kuapehisa kacenu.*

'I need ripe tomatoes because I have nothing to use today.'

Salesperson: *Hamubone buñata bwa yona! Ki yetuna mi ibuzwize hahulu. Ikayo bola feela kambe muunga ye yekopani ni ye sika buzweleza.*

'Look at how big the heap is! They are so huge and so ripe. They will just rot. Maybe you should get this one which is very ripe and not very ripe ones.'

Customer: *Ohoo...*

'Well...'

In this excerpt, the customer did not think she could buy more tomatoes than she needed for that day and was not interested in buying a huge heap comprising very ripe and semi ripe tomatoes. The salesperson disagreed with her and described her choice in an exaggerated and almost disgusted way in order to make the customer feel the importance of going by the salesperson's suggestion. The customer, however, did not seem bothered by the salesperson's bald comments at all.

In most market places, very often the customer will try to say something bad to put down the product in order to elicit some positive confirmation from the salespersons. There is a mutual understanding on both sides that here the relevance of 'face' demands may be suspended in the interests of persuasion efficiency. The following excerpt is an Quote of this type of negotiation.

Quote 21:

The salesperson is trying to sell a Chinese brand cell phone to the customer who started by looking down on the product. The salesperson counteracted every criticism from the customer and eventually convinced her.

Customer: *Hanilati mafooni a sichinese.*

'I don't like Chinese-made phones.'

Salesperson: *Fo mufosize. Mazazi a mafooni a Sichinese a tiile kufita a amutwaezi a cwale ka Nokia ni Motorola.*

'Well, you are wrong. Nowadays, the Chinese cell phones are stronger than the ones you are used to such as Nokia and Motorola.'

Customer: *Haki yetuna hahulu ye?*

'Isn't this too big?'

Salesperson: *Mazazi a mafooni amatuna kiona a tumile. A manyinyani baatoyezi litaku kusabonahala hande bakeñisa busisani.*

'Now the big ones are popular. Small ones are not liked because of the tiny writing that is difficult to read.'

Customer: *Ibonahala inge ya siina!*

'It looks like a man's.'

Salesperson: *liketile. Ye ikona kuitusiswa ki baana ni basali. Mafooni haana shutano ya kuli ye ki ya baana kapa ye ki ya basali.*

'It's all OK. This is uni-sex. There is no difference between men's and women's cell phones.'

Customer: *Hape ha ni sika zamaya ni masheleñi.*

'But I have not come with money.'

Salesperson: *Kulukile haiba hamusika zamaya ni masheleñi na kona kumibulukela yona nakonyana. Hamukaliyeha ni kailekisa. Hamuboni batu baaleka hahulu bakeñisa kucipa. Mane afelile kusiyezi feela ona a amabeli.*

'It's OK if you have not come with money. I can keep it briefly for you. Should you take long I will sell it. Can't you see they are selling very fast because they are also cheap. Actually there are only two left.'

Customer: *Mina ba lipisinisi kona momubulelelanga ona cwalo.*

'You business people all talk like that.'

Salesperson: *Batili, haku cwalo, fo mwafosa. Mafoni a alekwa hahulu. Mabani ni lekisize a malaalu a mufuta ona o.*

'No, it is not like that. There you are wrong. This is really in demand. I sold two or three like this one yesterday.'

As demonstrated in this excerpt, the customer kept pointing out the problems he had with the cellphone. The salesperson, in response, used bald-on-record disagreement to minimize all the problems as in excerpts 20 and 21. As mentioned earlier, the customer not only accepted this kind of bald response, he actually seemed to expect the sales person to 'fight back' in a certain and

confident way. Without the usage of bald-on-record strategy in a situation like this, it would seem that either the salesperson was not interested in selling the products or he agreed with the customer's complaints and criticisms of the product. Any kind of negative politeness, such as hedges, would weaken the salesperson's credibility in his responses.

4.2.2 Suggestions and advice

Second to disagreement, the other bald-on-record strategy used by quite a few salespersons in the data was the giving of advice or suggestions. Within Brown and Levinson's framework (1987), "advice" was in general placed among those dangerous acts that threaten the negative 'face' of the hearer and need to be softened with redressive action. However, they also distinguish a specific type of "sympathetic advice" (Brown and Levinson: 1987), which is primarily in the hearer's interest and given to convey the speaker's care about the hearer and therefore about the hearer's positive 'face'. The researcher has found both types of advice-giving in the data and will discuss the "sympathetic advice" in the section on positive politeness. What the researcher has categorized under the bald-on-record strategy were suggestions or advice that was directly related to the purchasing of the products. The following excerpts are Quotes of this type of strategy.

Quote 22:

The salesperson is trying to sell a village chicken to the neighbour's child who was sent to buy relish. When the customer tried to protest that that was not what

he was asked to buy, he was given advice by the salesperson stating the benefits of buying a village chicken.

Customer: *Mwendi bakayo ni omany hani kaleka kuhu ya mwa hae kakuli banilumile kuto leka ya sikuwa.*

'Maybe I will be reprimanded if I buy a village chicken since I was sent to buy a broiler.'

Salesperson: *Esi mane kuhu ya mwa hae ibuzwa kabubebe kufita litapi kapa nama. Likuhu zateñi linunile halitokwi mafula. **Uswanela** kuyo bataluseza kuliki na yakuelezize kuli uleke kakuli ki zetuna zeli hamuiapehile ha muna kubilaela za busunso bwa manzibwana.*

'In fact a village chicken cooks faster than fish or beef. The chicken is fat and won't need oil. **You should** tell them that I advised you to buy because they are quite big so that when you cook it you won't have to worry about supper.'

In this excerpt, the salesperson opted to give the boy advice as to what the benefits of buying a village chicken would be. The sales person also accepted the blame for defying his parents' directive to buy a broiler by saying "You should tell them I advised you...."

Like excerpt 22, the next excerpt also shows the use of suggestions and advice as strategies of persuasion in sales talk.

Quote 23:

The salesperson for secondhand shoes is trying to persuade the customer to purchase shoes. The customer hesitates but is advised to buy just then as the price was still low.

Salesperson: *Ima makatulo a miswanela kia. Saizi ya mina ni yona ya fumaneha. Musaasiya feela hakuna ko muka afumana hape.*

‘Mum, here are pairs of shoes that suit you. Even your size is available. Once you leave them you’ll never find them again.’

Customer: *Cwale aleka buhai ona ao? Esi nakoye aleka mutu!*

‘So, how much do they cost? They are probably very expensive!’

Ku hande kuli muleke onafa lusika ekeza kale.

‘**You would better** buy now before we hike the prices.’

The advice-giving act in the above Quote is indirectly suggesting the customer buys the product using phrases ‘*ku hande kuli mu....*’ ‘You would better...’ Although they are considered bald-on-record strategy, advice-giving acts are less face-threatening than the other two types of strategies, i.e., requests and warning/threatening. We might even consider advice-giving to be a ‘polite’ way of performing imperatives because the speaker is obviously taking the hearer’s negative face into consideration when he/she chooses to use “advice” instead of a blunt demand such as “Buy this now!”

4.2.3 Request; warning and threatening

The other two strategies, i.e., request and warning/threatening were not used by many salespersons in the data. When they were used, they usually appeared at the end of the discourse as in the following Quotes:

Quote 24:

The salesperson was trying to force a customer to buy cassava meal from her. The customer wants to check with other salespersons. The salesperson discourages her saying she will just waste time.

Salesperson: *Bupi bwa mwanja bobusweu ki bo.*

'Here is white cassava meal.'

Customer: *Pili ni bone kwa pata.*

'Let me first check ahead.'

Salesperson: *Hamutahe mutoleka, musinya feela nako.*

'Just come and buy, you are wasting time.'

Quote 25:

The salesperson had tried to persuade the customer to buy an umbrella for her child by threatening that they will soon run out.

Customer: *Oo, ni kataha hande pili ni leke busunso.*

'OK, I will come back later first let me buy relish.'

Salesperson: *Haiba musaleki kwa tukuku to, mukainyaza maswe.*

'If you don't buy one of these umbrellas, you will really regret it.'

In Quote 24, the salesperson used an imperative to ask the customer not to hesitate anymore while in Quote 25, the salesperson was almost threatening the customer by telling him that he would regret it if he didn't buy the umbrella today. It was obvious that the sales persons felt that a more powerful speech style, i.e., no redressive features, was needed towards the end of the sales talk, when the customers were still not showing any interest in buying the products.

4.2.4 Contextual factors and bald-on-record strategies

Although the bald-on-record strategies discussed so far are speech acts without any hedges or redressive features, none of the salespersons who used these bald-on-record strategies was rated 'rude' or even 'not polite' by the customers. There were reasons why these so-called FTAs were used and why they were acceptable. These are discussed them in terms of two aspects of global context, that is, situational and socio-cultural.

4.2.4.1 The Situational context

An effective persuasion very often involves the use of powerful speech style, which depicts very few redressive features such as hedges (Gass and Seiter, 1999). It is natural that non-redressive FTAs are found in powerful persuasive speeches. The customers had the understanding that the salespersons were using the FTAs as a strong persuasive strategy. One can say that the nature of the speech event here helps to permit the use of the bald-on-record strategy. This also corresponds to what Fukushima (2000) called "situational reasonableness".

In addition to persuasion, however, the salespersons also needed to attend to their customers' face wants. Their communicative goal, i.e., persuading the customers to buy the products, would not be reached if they were found rude by the customers. As a result, the salespersons had to compromise and employ politeness strategies in their requests and only used bald-on-record FTAs when the situations called for it. As the Quotes showed, the bald-on-record acts were mostly used in disagreement and advice-giving.

The salespersons only chose to employ the bald-on-record strategy when the customers questioned their products or hesitated to buy. In other words, the choice of using bald-on-record strategy was not a constant choice, but discourse- as well as situation- dependent.

Given the persuasion-oriented nature of the discourse, many of the bald-on-record acts discussed in this section were accepted and perhaps even expected by the customers during the sales talks. These bald-on-record speech acts might produce a higher degree of imposition in other situations. The salespersons used them to persuade and, most importantly, to ease the concern and refute the criticisms the customers had of the products.

4.2.4.2 The Socio-cultural context

In Brown and Levinson's formula for assessing the seriousness of FTA, the 'power' factor refers to an asymmetric relationship between the speaker and the hearer, in which one of them has the power or the legitimate right to control the other to some extent. The components of power generally include factors such as social status, gender, wealth, and physical strength. In the Lozi culture, a sense of hierarchy of age and seniority plays an important role in the choice of politeness strategies. Though negative politeness strategies are commonly used whenever a face-threatening act is involved in the Lozi culture; it is actually not common for an elderly person to use negative politeness strategies with a younger person even in a face threatening situation. The age hierarchy proves to be an important factor in the choice of politeness strategy based on the analysis of the bald-on-record strategy.

The timing of occurrence of the bald-on-record strategy in a discourse, is also interesting. The researcher found that it also related to the local context, i.e. the conversational sequences in the particular discourse. While the socio-cultural context might remain stable throughout the discourse, the local context, which was affected by the familiarity aspect in the context of social distance was found to be dynamic and could change as the conversation carried on. Since this issue involves the use of positive politeness strategies, the researcher will discuss it in the next section.

4.3 Positive Politeness (Category C)

Unlike negative politeness, where the scope of redress is restricted to the imposition of a specific FTA, positive politeness applies to the addressee's positive face wants in general. Brown and Levinson (1987) have pointed out that positive politeness utterances are used as a kind of "metaphorical extension of intimacy", to imply common ground or sharing of wants even between strangers. It is this association with intimate language usage that gives the linguistics of positive politeness its redressive force (Brown and Levinson: 1987). In the data that the researcher collected, the majority of salespersons used some kind of positive politeness strategy in their persuasive sales talk. This section, will first look at the linguistic realizations as well as the strategies of positive politeness used by the salespersons, followed by a discussion on the factors contributing to the prevalence of the occurrence of positive politeness strategies in the data. The positive politeness strategies used by the salespersons can be sorted into the following five sub-categories:

- show concern, interest;
- promise, guarantee;
- solidarity, in-group talk;
- compliment;
- humour, joke.

The strategy of showing concern for and interest in the customers was used most frequently, followed by the speech acts of 'promise' and 'guarantee'. Some salespersons also used in-group identity markers or language to enhance solidarity. The speech act of compliment was the fourth while using jokes or humor was the least frequent positive politeness strategy used by the salespersons in the data.

4.3.1 Showing concern, interest

This sub-category 'show concern, interest' was the most common positive politeness strategy used by the salespersons. Several different speech acts were noted under this category, but they all indicated the salespersons' caring for the customers. One of the strategies was to point out possible questions/concerns that the customer might have, that is, to let the customer know that he or she was thinking from their perspective as in the following Quote:

Quote 26:

The salesperson was trying to sell chitenges to the customer by agreeing with the customer that the chitenges were expensive but he went further to justify why they were that expensive.

Salesperson: ***Mukaswana mwaikutwa kuli*** ki kusinya, mutu ukona kulekelañi litenge zetula cwalo inge kuna ni ze cipile, kono muswanela kuziba kuli za shutana kwa kutiya. Eeni, ***mukaswana mwaikutwa kuli*** za tula kono se hamusilekile ki kuya kuile.

'**You may feel that** this is a waste, wondering how anyone can buy such expensive chitenges when there are cheaper ones, but, you should know that they are different. Well, **you may feel that** they are expensive but once you buy this one, it is for life.'

In the above Quote, the salesperson used *mukaswana mwaikutwa kuli* 'you may feel that' twice to show that he knew and cared about the customer's concerns.

Another common strategy under this sub-category was repetition, that is, repeating part of or the entire utterance the customer had just made. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), repeating is often used to stress "emotional agreement" with the customer. This is illustrated below:

Quote 27:

The salesperson recommended a type of mushroom to the customer who did not like that type of mushroom. She repeated the customer's sentiments to show emotional agreement.

Customer: *Kono hanilati ndwindwi ni lata liluwe.*

'But I don't like *ndwindwi* (the red mushroom) I prefer *liluwe* (the brown mushroom).'

Salesperson: *Hamulati ndwindwi. Nji?Hakuna butaata.*

'You don't like *ndwindwi*. Is that right? It doesn't matter.'

In the excerpt above, the saleslady repeated the customer's sentiments as a way of showing emotional agreement.

In trying to keep the customer engaged while looking for her preferred product, the salesperson, repeats part of the customer's utterance as shown in the next excerpt.

Quote 28:

The customer indicated that she wanted to buy a broom made of grass. The salesperson kept repeating whatever the customer mentioned to show understanding of the customer's need.

Salesperson: *Mubata lwa kufiyelisa mwandu kapa fande?*

'Do you want one for sweeping inside the house or for sweeping outside?'

Customer: *Mwandu.*

'Inside.'

Salesperson: *Mwandu... cwale mubata lwa mwange kapa lwa munya?*

'Inside... so do you want one made of *mwange* or *munya*?' *Mwange* and *munya* are types of grass used for making brooms.

Customer: *Hamunife lwa munya.*

'Give me one made of munya.'

Salesperson: *Lwa munya....*

'One made of munya....'

In the above Quotes, the salespersons were repeating the customers' utterances while trying to look for a product that would match their needs. Repeating the

utterances not only showed that one has heard correctly what has just been said, but also seems to display a sense of respect to his/her interlocutors.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) typical Quote of showing interest and concern is noticing people's changes in appearance or behavior, which is a common politeness strategy between intimates. The interlocutors in this study were strangers before they had the conversations. Therefore, the positive politeness strategies used between these strangers would be different from those used by acquaintances. In other words, the discourse participants' background and their relationship also affect what kind of positive politeness strategy is to be used. The typical Quote of showing concern by noticing people's changes in appearance was not found in the data, where the participants were strangers.

The third type of strategy used by the salespersons as a way of showing concern to the customers was advice-giving or suggestions. This categorization is contrary to that of Brown and Levinson's (1987), which places the speech act of advice-giving as a FTA because it disregards the other's freedom of action and sometimes exhibits a certain superiority of the speaker in ordinary English conversation.

From a Lozi native speaker's point of view, however, the data reveals many instances where advice-giving was used to enhance solidarity. The following were Quotes of this strategy.

Quote 29:

The salesperson was trying to sell children's clothes to a customer who had definite wants by advising her what else was available in the shop.

Customer: *Muna ni feela mandelezi a basizani?*

'You only have dresses for girls?'

Salesperson: *Luna ni malukwe, likoci ni likipa. Kono tusizana tuswanelwa hahulu mwa mandelezi a aminganja.*

'We have pairs of trousers, skirts and T-shirts. But small girls look good in these pleated dresses.'

Quote 30:

The salesperson was trying to sell a dress to a customer, who was buying it for his seven year old daughter. The salesperson offered to help by choosing a dress that suited the requirement.

Customer: *Mwananawa lilimo ze 7 ukona kukwana mwa ndelezi ifi?*

'Which dress can fit a 7 year old?'

Salesperson: *Wa lilimo ze 7 ukona kukwana kuye.*

'A 7 year old would fit in this one.'

In both extracts, the salesperson told the customers what they thought would look good on the customers. It should be noted that these suggestions and advice were not direct sales pitches because they were not suggesting that the customers buy dresses. Furthermore, these suggestions are often found in conversations between close friends and family members. In other words, the salespersons were using the advice-giving strategy to shorten the social distance between themselves and the customers because this advice indicated a sense of caring and solidarity.

Not all speech acts of advice-giving were labeled as positive politeness strategy in the data. As discussed earlier, the speech act of advice-giving was categorized as bald-on-record FTA when it was used as a direct sales pitch, for Quote ‘You should definitely buy this today’. This type of advice not only aimed to tell the customer what to do and therefore threatened his/her negative face; it was also openly performed for the salesperson’s benefit. The speech act of advice-giving is viewed as an FTA in western culture, but within Lozi culture, it can also be used and interpreted as either an FTA or a positive politeness strategy depending on the actual situation and context. The distinctions in advice-giving explained above show that the relation between the speech act and politeness strategy is not only culture-dependent but also situation-dependent.

4.3.2 Promise, guarantee

Given the situational context of the data as representing persuasive sales speech, it was no surprise that the speech acts of promise and guarantee were commonly used as positive politeness strategies by the salespersons. Very often, this strategy is used with phrases like *hakuna butaata* ‘no problems’ and *namisepisa* ‘rest assured’, as the following excerpts demonstrate.

Quote 31:

The salesperson was trying to sell a metal container (bucket like) to the customer who wanted a bucket in which she could put 25kg mealie meal. The customer was guaranteed that that bucket was the right size.

Salesperson: *Nemubuza kapa 25kg ya bupi ya felela mo.Hakuna butaata. Mane hasitali.*

‘You were asking whether a 25 kg of mealie meal can fit here. It’s no problem. It won’t even be full.’

Quote 32:

The salesperson was trying to sell gold jewelry to the customer. Upon asking whether the jewelry was real gold, the customer was assured that it was.

Customer: *Kana ye ki gauda luli?*

‘Are these pure gold?’

Salesperson: *Eeni. Musike mwa bilaela. Na ni lekisanga lifaha za gauda luli.*

‘Yes. Do not worry. I usually sell pure gold.’

The salesperson in Quote 31 guaranteed the customer that the container can hold more than 25kg of mealie meal. In answering the customer’s question, the salesperson in Quote 32 told the customers not to worry because her products were definitely high quality.

Although the customers may not necessarily believe all the promises or take them seriously, it is always important that the salesperson offers some kind of guarantee or promise to the customer because it shows the salesperson’s effort and willingness to sell. A salesperson’s sales talk would seem weak and not persuasive when he/she did not provide any kind of guarantee. Employing guarantees and promises as positive politeness, however, may not be common in other persuasive discourse.

4.3.3 Solidarity/in-group talk

What the researcher placed under this sub-category were utterances that made the customers feel that there was a special bond between them and the salespersons. Quotes include offering a special discount or some kind of free gift.

Quote 33:

The customer was asking the salesperson to give her a bargain on a bucket of dry cassava. The salesperson offered to give her a discount and buy a carrier bag for her.

Salesperson: *Musike mwa bulelela batu ni kamieza hande.*

'Don't tell other people. I will give you at a cheaper price'

Customer: *Sishimbelo bo?*

'How about a carrier bag?'

Salesperson: *Na kona kumilekela saka.*

'I can buy you a sack for carrying in.'

Salesperson: *Na micipiseza ... ni mieza inge bo mulikani.*

'I am selling you cheaply...I'm treating you as a friend.'

The salesperson in Quote 33 not only told the customer that he was giving her a special discount, he also bought her the sack. At the end of the conversation, he mentioned that they were now friends.

In order to make the customers feel good, the salespersons often have to come up with a special offer and that he/she is giving a special discount to this customer only.

This relationship building is an important feature for a smooth business transaction. Whether the customer truly wanted to be friends with the sales person or not, the social distance seemed to be shortened as they were no longer complete strangers. Since social distance is one of the three values in calculating the weight of a FTA, the overall face-threatening force of persuasion performed by the sales person was also reduced by this positive politeness strategy.

4.3.4 Compliment

The researcher also found compliments being used by several salespersons as a way of showing their friendliness to the customers. Although paying compliments is not normally used as a strategy in persuasive discourse, it is employed by the salespersons here as a positive politeness strategy because it targets the customers' positive face wants by making them feel good as below:

Quote 34:

The salesperson tried to sell vegetables to the customer. The customer indicated that she did not need any of those vegetables. The salesperson tried to make the customer feel important to the salesperson.

Customer: *Nilekile kale tomato. Ne ni lekile nyanisi malobaale mi isaliteñi.*

'I have already bought tomatoes. I bought onions two days ago and they are still there.'

Salesperson: *Ni sa mibona feela se ni ziba kuli cwale bato ni njombolola.*

'As soon as I saw you, I knew that now my mother is going to help buy from me.'

Quote 35:

The salesperson noticed that a customer was checking out for semi-dry fish. He tried to make the boy feel good by calling him 'handsome'.

Salesperson: *Mucaha yo munde! Ubata litapi zeomile?*

'Handsome boy! Are you looking for dry fish?'

Customer: *Za maonyena ki lifi?*

'Which one is semi dry?'

The salesperson in Quote 34 complimented the customer as her mother, which is considered a well-respected virtue in the Lozi culture. In Quote 35, the salesperson addressed the customer as *mucaha yo munde* 'handsome boy', which is a term referring to a young man who looks handsome. Although these compliments were not directly related to sales, they played the role of softening the face-threatening force of persuasion. This pragmatic function of compliments was confirmed by Johnson (1992) in her study of an empirical analysis of the forms, strategies and functions of compliments in peer-review texts written in an academic setting.

Just as in the peer-review texts in Johnson's study, the communication goals of the salespersons in the data were face-threatening because they were persuasive in nature. The compliments in the above excerpts were used as positive politeness to mitigate the FTAs.

Something interesting about these compliments was the customers' responses to them. The customers in my data, however, chose not to acknowledge the compliments. This might be because the customers knew that the compliments were used by the salespersons only as a 'strategy' to achieve the real

communication goal – persuading the customers to buy. There seemed to be a mutual understanding that the compliments were not ‘sincere’ but used only to mitigate the overall FTA, i.e., persuasion. The same speech acts of compliments, when used in a situation other than persuasive sales talks might receive a different response.

4.3.5 Joke, humour

The last positive politeness strategy to be discussed here is joking or using humour.

Joking is a basic positive politeness technique, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), because it puts the hearer ‘at ease’ and it is often based on mutual shared background knowledge and values. Although some researchers note that humor and joking can be used as a negative politeness strategy or might even be face-threatening (Holmes, 2000), such functions of humor were not found in the data. For the most part, the salespersons were using humor when exaggerating the quality or efficiency of their products.

Quote 36:

The salesperson tried to sell bread rolls to the customers. The salesperson illustrated his sense of humour by over exaggeration.

Customer: *Esi a konji kuca amabeli kapa amalaalu mutu kona aikutwa kuli ucile.*

‘For these, one has to eat two or three to feel that you have eaten something.’

Salesperson: *Batili. A, haucile feela silisiñwi kakusasani, lizazi likayo likela cwalo usakusi.*

‘No. These, once you eat one in the morning, you will remain satisfied even by sunset.’

Quote 37:

The salesperson was selling small fish in a small bowl and was trying to convince the customer that the bowl was actually big enough for a sizeable family. The salesperson further likened someone who could finish the fish in one serving to a pig.

Salesperson: *Hamukoni kufeza mukeke ulimuñwi mwa mucelo ulimuñwi konji hamuca sina kulube.*

‘You can’t finish one bowl in one serving unless you eat like pigs.’

The salesperson in Quote 36 was bragging about the size of the bread rolls when he joked that once you eat one, it will fill you up the whole day. In Quote 37, the salesperson was praising the size of his measuring bowl, he was jokingly reminding the customers that their eating habits were not like those of pigs. These humorous statements not only minimized the social distance between the salespersons and their customers, they were also used to expose and sometimes emphasize the efficiency of the products. It is a smart “kill two birds with one stone” strategy.

4.3.6 Contextual factors and positive politeness strategies

4.3.6.1 The Social context

Most salespersons chose to use positive politeness to shorten the social distance between themselves and the customers. In fact, it would be considered rude in

the Lozi culture when one even attempts to show intimacy or claim solidarity with someone who is not only older but of a much higher social status. This result shows that certain kinds of positive politeness are not always welcome because there are situations when people, especially those of a higher social status, prefer to receive certain 'deference' from others.

4.3.6.2 The Cultural context

Since face-threatening discourse such as persuasion does not really require the use of positive politeness, one might consider the occurrence of positive politeness in the researcher's data as pervasive or even unusual. To explain this phenomenon, we need to take into account the socio-cultural background of these conversations. As Zhu *et al.* (2000) point out, an understanding of the organization of a communicative event requires an understanding of the broader social norms and values of the culture in question. While 'communication' is often seen as an expression of 'self' in Western cultures, Chinese cultures treat 'communication' as a means of maintaining existing relationships, social harmony and status differentials (Gao, *et al.*, 1996; Chang 2001). That Lozi is likewise a collectivist-oriented culture, which values social harmony and relationships more than personal space, is reflected in the sales talk the researcher collected. In fact, a salesperson who employs only negative politeness in his/her sales talk may seem cold or unfriendly.

To show concern for the customers or to engage in some type of 'in-group' talk is an essential part of persuasive sales talk.

4.3.6.3 The Situational context

In the researcher's findings, it has been observed that based on the analysis of the linguistic realizations, the main function of positive politeness in the conversations was to shorten the social distance, i.e., enhance the familiarity between the salesperson and the customer. It also came out that, in most conversations where the bald-on-record strategies were used, the salesperson had employed some type of positive politeness before the use of bald-on-record acts. Take the following conversation as an example:

Quote 38:

The salesperson was encouraging the customer to buy chitenges. The customer seemed not to like the kind of chitenge at first but later gave in after the salesperson used some positive politeness by making her feel that her need was shared by the salesperson.

Salesperson: *Licolocolo! Ubata sitenge?*

'Beautiful lady! Are you checking out these chitenges?'

Customer: *Ki lifi zenca?*

'Which ones are latest?'

Salesperson: *Zenca ki ze za malesu(a chitenge-like wrapper) ya kwa Malawi.*

'The latest are the *malesu* from Malawi.'

Customer: *Ha ni lati malesu ya kwa Malawi.*

'I don't like the *malesu* from Malawi.'

Salesperson: *Fo mubushize. Mazazi a batu balata hahulu malesu ya kwa Malawi kufita ya kwa Congo.*

'Well, you are wrong. Nowadays, people prefer the Malawian malesu to the one from Congo.'

Customer: *Esi ze halilukiwi misisi* (*musisi* is a traditional attire for the malozi women)?

'These can't be used for *musisi*?'

Salesperson: *Ze mane kona zende kakufitisisa ni haiba kwa kuluka liziba.*

'These are actually the best even for *liziba* (Traditional attire for the malozi men).'

The salesperson started the conversation with positive politeness by calling the customer *licolocolo* 'beautiful lady'. As a result of the positive politeness strategy, the social distance between them was reduced and the bald-on-record utterances in the subsequent utterances seemed less threatening. As Johnson (1992) points out, positive politeness strategies such as compliments were often used to redress the *global* FTAs at the discourse level in order to establish, or maintain, rapport.

The employment of positive politeness thus allowed the salespersons to use the bald-on-record acts, which were more powerful and necessary for effective persuasion, with a less face-threatening force than they would have had without the use of the positive politeness. Therefore, the researcher will argue that negative and positive politeness do share functional 'sameness' in some sense. While negative politeness mitigates the force caused by a single FTA, positive politeness mitigates face-threatening force throughout the entire discourse.

The analysis of the function of positive politeness also leads us to a very important aspect of conversational interaction. The social attribute of 'distance' is

itself constituted by, and subject to, change in on-going interactions. This dynamic nature of context is reflected in the conversations in the data. While the social distance was changed by the use of positive politeness, the weight of the face-threatening force of persuasion performed by the salesperson was also altered.

4.4 Summary

The data analysis presented in this chapter has revealed some interesting findings regarding politeness in persuasive sales talk in Mongu. In terms of the use of the three strategies, namely negative politeness, bald-on-record, and positive politeness, the salespersons employed negative politeness more frequently than they did the other two. Bald-on-record was the least used strategy. In regard to negative politeness strategies, using hedges was the most common strategy, followed by showing deference and indirect speech acts. The linguistic forms of the hedges found in the data include lexical items, such as *mane* 'in fact'; syntactic structures such as *ni hupula kuli* 'I think that...', sentence-final expressions *kubulela feela niti* 'to be honest', *ni mibulelele niti* 'to you the truth' and *niti feela ki kuli* 'the truth is'. These hedges were used to lessen face-threatening acts such as requests, advice, warnings, etc., in the persuasive sales talk.

Although strong persuasion usually calls for a powerful speech style, i.e. utterances without any mitigation or hedges, some of the salespersons, nevertheless, chose to employ such 'bald-on-record' speech style in their persuasive sales talk. The majority of these acts were 'disagreement' and 'giving

advice'. Although they were bald statements without any redressive features, the customers did not find these utterances rude based on their rating of the salespersons' politeness. As the analysis indicates, the customers seemed to be inferring some type of assurance about the products from the salespersons' strong disagreement (with the customer's negative comments) and advice. While these bald-on-record acts were considered pure 'sales talk' and seemed to be accepted by the customers in the data, they could be very face threatening and considered rude in other situations. In other words, the discourse type enabled the use of these utterances, and 'situational reasonableness' was proposed to be the motivation for these bald-on-record acts.

The two conflicting goals of achieving powerful persuasion and showing respect to the customers at the same time resulted in the high frequency of the use of positive politeness, which can be considered a solution to the salespersons' predicament. It was found that the acts of showing concern, making promises and guarantees, and in-group language use, were the most frequent positive politeness strategies employed by the salespersons. They relied on positive politeness to shorten the social distance and to build 'relations' with the customer. While negative politeness weakened the persuasive power of their sales talk, the use of positive politeness helped to win the customers' trust and faith in the products. In this way, the positive politeness strengthened the sales talk by using solidarity to compensate for the hedged force of persuasion inherent in negative politeness. If negative politeness is considered a strategy to mitigate the face-threatening force of a single act, positive politeness can be

seen as a strategy to mitigate the overall face-threatening force of a persuasive discourse.

With regard to the contextual factors, the analysis in this study includes both the global context, that is, cultural, social and situational, and the local discourse context, that is, previous utterances in the on-going sequences of a conversation. The cultural context of this study is that of the Lozis, which is collectivist-oriented and values social harmony more than personal space.

In terms of social context, social status (an aspect of power relationships) was found to affect the use of strategies indicating deference in negative politeness. The power factor, including social status and age, also influenced the use of bald-on-record strategies. Finally, the social context of power seemed to control the use of positive politeness, especially those indicating solidarity and in-group identity. The salespersons were found to hesitate in their use of positive politeness to customers that had a higher social status.

Although many other factors can be labeled under the situational context, this study focuses only on the discourse type, which is persuasive sales talk. It was found that the study of the pragmatic functions of the SFEs needed to take into account the discourse type of the utterances since the SFEs could have different pragmatic functions under different contexts. The typical powerful speech style of persuasion also helped to explain the use of the bald-on-record strategies, such as disagreement and giving advice.

The importance of previous utterances in the discourse proved to be critical in investigating the politeness strategies in this study. Analyzing the utterances in

isolation would not provide an accurate interpretation of the strategies because many of the Quotes we have seen would be viewed differently if they were considered out of their sequential contexts. Previous utterances helped to illuminate the pragmatic functions of some of the hedges in negative politeness, such as *mane* 'in fact' and the SFE *a*. Many of the bald-on-record acts would seem face-threatening without considering the use of the positive politeness in the previous utterance, which enhanced the familiarity between the customer and the salesperson. Finally, a very important feature of the local context, which sets it apart from other contextual factors, is that it may not be stable. As Zhu *et al.* (2000) point out, a speaker's contribution to an on-going sequence of conversational action is both 'context-shaped', in that it can be understood only with reference to the context in which it participates, and 'context-renewing', i.e. it creates a new context for the action that follows it. While the global context, i.e. cultural, social and situational, might be stable throughout the discourse, the local context is definitely dynamic and keeps changing as the conversation proceeds.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study concerns the relationship between context and the choice of politeness strategies in persuasive sales talk. To define the functional parameters of context in this study, the concept of 'total-context' was proposed at the outset. Based on Quotes from the naturally-occurring speech data collected in Mongu, two specific purposes were described. The first was to demonstrate the critical need for incorporating the concept of total-context into the study of politeness. The second was to discover the linguistic devices that salespersons in Mongu use in performing politeness strategies in persuasive discourse. This chapter will present the summary of the findings and the implications of this study, followed by a discussion on the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research.

5.1 Summary

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study by stating the statement of the problem as well as the purpose of the study. The purpose outlined the aim of the study, the specific objectives and the research questions. The rationale, scope and organization of the study have been explained in detail.

Chapter 2 first reviewed in detail the theoretical framework for this study, namely, speech act theory as proposed by Austin and the politeness model developed by Brown and Levinson. The concept of 'total-context' was proposed to be employed as a filter for Brown and Levinson's model. Total-context refers to an

integrated approach to the notion of context that not only incorporates the socio-cultural and situational factors as frames of reference for interpreting utterances, but also acknowledges the dynamic role of context as it is shaped by the on-going interaction.

Since the speech data for this study come from persuasive sales talk, the researcher also reviewed studies of persuasive discourse in Chapter 2. A considerable amount of research indicates that using the so-called 'powerless' speech style, such as hesitations, hedges, tag questions etc., can prevent a person from being persuasive. However, many of these powerless forms of speech are also common politeness strategies and are used as such in persuasive discourse. The literature review of linguistic studies of persuasion also shows that very few studies have focused on the interface of persuasion and politeness strategies. Research on the pragmatics of persuasive discourse among the people of Mongu district is almost non-existent.

Chapter 3, discussed some of the most common data collecting techniques in empirical research in order to find the most suitable data collection method for this study.

The speech community chosen for the data collection was the selected markets and shops in Mongu district because of the author's familiarity with the community. The naturally-occurring speech data were written down from salespersons at different markets and shops. In analyzing the data, the researcher employed the categories of politeness strategies identified by Brown and Levinson, i.e., negative politeness, bald-on-record, and positive politeness

strategies. The researcher also employed a 'move' as the unit of analysis of the data, instead of using a single sentence, which was shown to be one of the problems with speech act theory and the politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson. When analyzing the data, the researcher did not look at a single move in isolation either. The researcher applied the 'total-context' concept by taking into account the sociocultural context, the situational context, and the sequential utterances in order to decide whether a 'move' was face-threatening or not and what type of politeness strategy was employed. An overall result of the data analysis was presented in the end of Chapter 3.

Chapter 4, examined the sub-categories of the three politeness strategies, namely negative politeness, bald-on-record and positive politeness, and the linguistic devices for each strategy. The researcher also discussed the contextual factors that influenced the choice and the interpretation of those strategies. The results of the data analysis showed that the salespersons employed negative politeness more frequently than they did the other two. The bald-on-record strategy was the least frequently used. With regard to negative politeness strategies, using hedges was the most common strategy, followed by showing deference and indirect speech acts. Hedges, which come in different forms including lexical items, syntactic structures and sentence-final expressions, were used to redress face-threatening acts such as requests, advice, warnings, etc., in the persuasive sales talk. For bald-on-record strategies, a few salespersons chose to employ a 'bald-on-record' speech style in their persuasive sales talk. The majority of these acts were 'disagreement' and 'giving advice'.

The analysis indicated that the customers seemed to be inferring some type of assurance about the products from the salespersons' strong disagreement (with the customer's negative comments) and advice. With regards to positive politeness strategies, the acts of showing concern and making promises/guarantees were the most frequent strategies, followed by in-group solidarity talk and the use of humor and jokes. The salespersons relied on the use of positive politeness to shorten the social distance and build 'relations' with the customer. If negative politeness is considered a strategy to mitigate the face threatening force of a single act, positive politeness can be seen as a strategy to mitigate the overall face-threatening force of a persuasive discourse.

This cultural aspect was reflected in the salespersons' employment of a large number of positive politeness strategies, which enhanced solidarity, in their sales talk. In addition, some utterances such as advice-giving, were characterized by Brown and Levinson as face-threatening acts based on their evaluation of face. In the context of the Lozi culture, however, it is possible to interpret them as positive politeness strategies.

With regard to social context, gender was found to influence the use of sentence-final particles (SFEs) in negative politeness. The female salespersons used these negative politeness strategies much more often than the male salespersons. Since SFEs soften the tone of speech in general, this result seems to correspond with or explain the general consensus that women are more polite than men. On the other hand, the use of bald-on-record strategies was shown to be dependent on power relationships between the participants, including

differences in their social status and age. This implied that a sense of hierarchy of age and social status plays an important role in the choice of politeness strategies. Disparity in social status between the customers and the salespersons were found to compel the use of negative politeness strategies indicating deference, and to restrict the use of positive politeness, especially those indicating solidarity and in-group identity.

The situational context of this study was the discourse type, namely persuasive sales talk. Powerful speech styles, that is, utterances without mitigating expressions are usually used in persuasive discourse. The mutual understanding between the customers and the salespersons of the discourse type was shown in the customers' rating of the salespersons' politeness performance. Even though several salespersons employed bald-on-record strategies in their sales talk, none of the salespersons was evaluated as 'not polite'. The discourse type of persuasive sales talk also explains the use of disagreements as the most common bald-on-record strategies. Customers often rely on or even try to elicit the salespersons' disagreement to the criticism of the products as a way of having the salesperson reassure them about the quality of the product. The situational context has also been reflected in the salespersons' choices of positive politeness strategies. For Quote, the salesperson indicated possible questions the customers might have as a way of showing concern, instead of commenting on their appearance, which was stated by Brown and Levinson as the most common strategy in showing concern.

The 'local context' refers to previous utterances in the conversation, which proved to be critical in investigating the politeness strategies in this study. Many of the Quotes we have seen would be viewed differently if they were considered out of their sequential contexts. For Quote, the bald-on-record acts would seem face-threatening without considering the use of the positive politeness in the previous utterance, which enhanced the familiarity between the customer and the salesperson.

Specific research questions are posed in Chapter 1. They are; *How do the social factors and the situational context in the persuasive discourse affect the speaker's choice of politeness strategies?* In response to the question, Chapter 4 demonstrates how different contextual factors affect the speaker's choice of politeness strategies as well as the linguistic realizations that are used to reach the communication goal.

5.2 Limitations of the study

The situational context focused on in this study was the discourse type, that is, persuasive sales talk. There are other aspects of the situational context, such as the physical setting or location where the conversation takes place that may influence the choice of persuasion strategies. For example, conversations in the local market would be more casual while the conversations taking place in a department store would probably be more formal due to the fact the local markets are usually near residential areas and are frequented by low and middle class people while department stores are located in business areas and are mostly frequented by high class people. In this study, the data were collected in

all sorts of different locations, and no attempt was made to determine differences among these. The methodology could be better designed to collect data from two contrastive locations such as a market place and department stores in order to explore the relationship between the degree of speech formality and the choice of politeness strategies.

It should also be noted that the present study did not plan for the degree of effectiveness in persuasion. It is possible that some salespersons that employ more politeness strategies are less effective in actually changing the customers' decision.

Future research may investigate both the effectiveness in providing 'face' support and the effectiveness in reaching persuasive objectives.

For a true cross-cultural study, it will be interesting to compare this data with a parallel set of data collected in a different culture, for Quote, persuasive sales talk in another speech community.

In sum, linguistic politeness research should base its analyses mainly on discourse – extended sequences of actual talk – and set as its goal the development of a comprehensive theory of the relations between language use and sociocultural contexts. Such research will also have to uncover how the ongoing discourse itself constitutes, maintains, and alters the dynamic local context. With the proposed 'total context' concept and a socio-pragmatic approach, it is hoped that this study has provided an improved method of linguistic persuasion research.

5.3 Implications and contribution to the study of linguistics

The data analysis has shown that it is not the linguistic expression itself but rather the context of the utterance that determines the use and the interpretation of persuasion strategies. By focusing on single speech acts, the traditional pragmatic approach has under-estimated not only the role of situational and socio-cultural contexts as frames of reference for interpreting speech, but also the role of local context in shaping the talk. Any one aspect of the context, be it cultural, social, situational or sequential, will alone not be sufficient in studying persuasion strategies in social interactions.

This study also contributes to the development of a better data collection technique for empirical research by introducing the Natural Data Elicitation Technique. This method allows the researchers to collect natural speech data, which come with full context and at the same time control some social and situational factors such as gender, social status and age.

With regard to persuasive discourse, this study also reveals the ways in which salespersons manipulate various politeness strategies in order to accomplish the competing communication tasks of being polite, which often requires redressed and hedged utterances, and of being persuasive, which calls for strong and powerful language use.

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