

## THE ROLE OF LINGUISTIC ROUTINES IN SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

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**Abstract** *Language usage patterns serve as markers of the users' cultural environments. It reveals noteworthy details regarding the establishments, behaviors, traditions, standards, beliefs, and norms of societies. It has long been acknowledged that linguists have a duty to further our knowledge of human nature as well as intercultural communication and understanding in our diverse and interconnected world.*

**Key words** *Greeting and parting, linguistic routines, intercultural communication, phatic communion utterances*

Two fundamental needs for communication—the need to communicate as effectively as possible and the need to be courteous—develop into a constant state of tension during conversational interaction.

Some cross-cultural studies on greetings and their associated forms of address have already been conducted (see, for example, Weinrich 1982). However, it is evident that actual greetings are usually preceded by pre-linguistics (pre-greeting formulaic expressions). For example, Sommer & Lupapula (2012) are of the argument that in Kihaya and Kikerewe, pre-greetings are inescapable and do differ according to different socio-cultural parameters, namely seniority, age, gender and kinship relations.

It has been demonstrated that linguistic routines are a tool for courteous behavior. They function as a way to lessen the possibility of face threats. One argument is that a polite norm governs the application of routines. Any departure from the norm indicates an effort to manage the participants' social relationships.

The analysis focuses on three different routine types that are present in the marginal phase of conversational interaction: phatic communion utterances, formulaic phrases of greeting and parting, and terms of direct address. A large portion of the common language used in daily conversations serves primarily ceremonial and ritualistic purposes. This is at least Raymond Firth's perspective in his essay on the verbal and physical rituals of parting and greeting. Firth states that parting and greeting are frequently treated as though they are the natural emotional response to people coming together or going their separate ways, overtly conveying their own social message. However, sociological observation indicates that it is largely highly conventionalized.

In a broad sense, greeting and parting conduct can be referred to as Ritual because they adhere to patterned routines, function as a system of signs that transmit messages other than those that are explicitly stated, and have the adaptive value of fostering social relationships (Firth 1972: 29-30). Supporting Firth's perspective, the goal of this chapter is to examine the communicative linguistic patterns of the small-scale customary ceremonies of greeting and farewell, as well as the adaptive, "other than overt," messages that participants

exchange in these marginal stages of conversational interaction, which are the means by which social relationships are negotiated and managed.

It is necessary to account for native speakers' knowledge of routines in a linguistically exact and explicit way, which should provide some insight into the social and cultural facets of their users' lives. The study supports the idea that linguistic patterns serve as markers of the users' cultural environments.

Language usage patterns serve as markers of the users' cultural environments. Furthermore, it reveals a few noteworthy details regarding the establishments, behaviors, traditions, standards, beliefs, and norms of societies.

It has long been acknowledged that linguists have a duty to further our knowledge of human nature as well as intercultural communication and understanding in our diverse and interconnected world. I believe linguists should be able to fulfill this responsibility with the aid of a thorough investigation into the phenomenon of linguistic routines. This is due to the fact that routines encode human psycho-socio-cultural concepts.

Similarly, Akindele (1990; 2007) argues that greetings may either be prefatory, informatory, pre-closing or closing. Prefatory greetings are content-void. In the wolf greeting system, they are referred to as passing greetings (Irvine 1974). They are casual greetings which usually prelude or pave way for the content greetings (informatory greetings). They are also conceived of as in-a-hurry greetings. Examples from English include hi, hello, etc.

On the other hand, informatory greetings are content-oriented. Examples from English include: how are your children? Along the same vein, pre-closing greetings usually mark the end of informatory greetings. They are sometimes called pre-departing greetings. An example from English include: give my warm greetings to your family. In contrast, closing greetings do mark the end of the interaction. An example from English include: goodbye.

Generally, the four types of greetings seem to be universal cross-culturally. However, every speech community has got specific categories of greetings related to age, gender, kinship relations and socio-cultural events.

On the basis of the findings of this study, it can be deduced that every chunk of time (i.e. morning, afternoon and evening) has got its own greeting; and the greeting event is performed variably depending on age, gender, kinship relation and context. Moreover, it was learnt that the response greeting terms are somewhat interrogative expressions, i.e. they exhibit the syntax of interrogative constructions, but they are in actual fact uttered affirmatively – without demanding a question mark and subsequent response.

The bottom-line argument is that greeting is an indispensable sociocultural apparatus which builds cohesive social relations in any human community. If appropriately and routinely performed, it may have socio-cultural and economic implications. For example, in most human communities, a person who greets appropriately and routinely is considered to have good manners and/or discipline, and this can enable him/her build good social relations which may earn him/her a very good social capital – which may guarantee him/her easy access to a variety of information, be it social, political, or economic.

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