

A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF KIPSIGIS EUPHEMISMS:

FORM, FUNCTIONS AND INTERPRETATION

BY

ROP MARGARET

**A RESEARCH WORK SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD
OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LINGUISTICS**

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES

OCTOBER, 2015

DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or institution for any other purpose.

Signature.....

Date

Name: **Margaret Rop**

Reg No: **C50/75411/2012**

This research has been submitted for examination purposes with my approval as university supervisor.

Signature.....Date.....

Name of supervisor: Dr. Prisca Jerono

Signature.....Date.....

Name of supervisor: Dr. Mohammed Akida

DEDICATION

This is for:

My parents: Andrew Rob and Rael Rob.....

My mentors, my heroes

My husband: Mohammed.....

My rock

My siblings: Janet, Peter, Japhet, Kegon.....

My inspiration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research is a result of inputs from various individuals to whom I am highly indebted. First, I wish to sincerely thank my supervisors Dr. Prisca Jerono and Dr. Mohamed Akida for the technical support and guidance they offered while I was undertaking this project. Thank you so much for your patience and understanding, may God bless you.

Dr. Schroeder, Prof. Okombo, Dr. Oduor, Dr. Maloba, Dr. Mukhwana, Prof. Omondi, Dr. Michira, Dr. Kaviti, Mr. Mungania, Dr. Marete my course lecturers I thank them for the training and the knowledge they impacted in me during the Linguistics course work. God bless you all.

A debt of gratitude to my loving parents who urged me to pursue further studies. Your prayers, constant encouragement kept me going, thank you. My dearest husband Mohammed, your emotional support and contribution was immense. To my dear sister Janet and in-law Alfred, thank you for the unwavering support and warm hospitality. My brothers Peter, Japhet, Kegen, I appreciate you. I love you and I am indebted to you all.

My friends Terry, Joseph, Fancy, Rita and all the respondents who made a contribution to this research can't thank you enough. My M.A Linguistics classmates and friends, a big thank you, it was a pleasure.

God's grace has been sufficient and He has enabled me thus far. My deepest gratitude is to Him.

LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 1: A list of Body parts and effluvia in Kipsigis</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Table 2: A list of Sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution in Kipsigis.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Table 3: A list of Diseases, death, mental and physical handicap in Kipsigis</i>	<i>26</i>

ABSTRACT

This study looked at the pragmatic form, function and interpretation of euphemisms as used by the Kipsigis. It defined euphemisms according to Allan and Burridge (1991) as alternatives to dis-preffered expressions used in order to avoid possible loss of face. The study purposed to group euphemisms into categories according to functions, to study euphemisms as negative politeness and off-record strategies in Kipsigis and to explore the influence of social distance among the Kipsigis on the use of euphemisms. The theoretical framework adopted is based on politeness theory formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987) which postulates that people use politeness as a way of known deception, in order to help preserve each other's face needs and avoid face threatening acts. The study used purposive sampling to collect focused information as it selects typical and useful cases only and saves on time and money as put forth by Oso and Onen (2005). The target population was of Kipsigis natives who consisted of ten adults of forty years and above who were considered to be well versed with their culture and values as well as twenty youths ranging between the ages of eighteen to thirty years so as to bring out the influence of age on the usage of euphemisms. The total sample was made up of twenty males and ten females so as to establish the influence of gender on euphemistic usage. The tools used for data collection were questionnaires, observations and oral interviews. The target population was drawn from Kapsoit location of Kericho County. This is mainly due to the fact that the researcher is a native speaker of kipsigis dialect. The study established that Kipsigis euphemisms can be grouped according to functions. In addition to that, Kipsigis interlocutors exhibit both negative politeness and off record politeness strategies in their day to day conversations. The usage of such euphemisms is influenced by social distance such as gender and age.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	3
1.3 Research objectives	4
1.4 Hypotheses	4
1.5 Rationale of the study	4
1.6 Scope and Limitations of the study	5
1.7 Theoretical framework	5
1.8 Literature Review	10
1.9 Methodology	17
CHAPTER TWO	20
EUPHEMISMS ACCORDING TO FUNCTIONS	20
2.1 Introduction	20
2.2 Kipsigis euphemistic forms	21
2.2.1 Body parts and effluvia	22
2.2.2 The sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution	22
2.2.3 Diseases, death, mental and physical handicap	22
2.3 Conclusion	23
CHAPTER THREE	24
THE KIPSIGIS NEGATIVE POLITENESS AND OFF-RECORD STRATEGIES	24
3.1 Introduction	24
3.2 Kipsigis dispreferred terms	24
3.2.1 List of Body parts and effluvia	24
3.2.2 List of Sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution	25
3.2.3 List of Diseases, death, mental and physical handicap	26

3.3 Negative politeness	26
3.3.1 Euphemisms related to body parts and effluvia.....	27
3.3.2 Euphemism related to sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution	30
3.3.3 Euphemisms related to Diseases, Death, mental and physical handicap.....	33
3.4 Off-record strategies	39
3.4.1 Euphemisms related to body parts and effluvia.....	39
3.4.2 Euphemism related to sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution	41
3.4.3 Euphemisms related to Diseases, Death, mental and physical handicap.....	43
3.5 Conclusion	45
CHAPTER FOUR.....	47
SOCIAL DISTANCE INFLUENCE ON KIPSIGIS EUPHEMISM	47
4.1 Introduction.....	47
4.2 Gender relations and euphemism.....	47
4.3 Age influence on euphemism.....	48
4.4 Conclusion	50
CHAPTER FIVE	51
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	51
5.1 Introduction.....	51
5.2 Summary and findings of the study	51
5.3 Conclusions.....	54
5.4 Recommendations.....	54
REFERENCES	56
APPENDIXES	61

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

People are often required to change speech to suit certain situations and use acceptable expressions that might not hurt the feelings of others. This kind of talk is necessary in order not to harm people's feelings and consequently not to create problems arising from inadequate communication. In order to save ones or other people's face, euphemisms come into play.

Allan and Burridge (1991:14) define euphemisms as alternatives to dispreffered expressions and are used in order to avoid possible loss of face. The dispreffered expression maybe taboo, fearsome, distasteful or for some other reason have too many negative connotations to felicitously execute speakers' communicative intention on a given occasion. Larson (1984:116) notes "euphemisms are used to avoid an offensive expression or that which is socially unacceptable or one that is unpleasant".

Bakhtiar (2012:7) says: "Fear, shame, and disgust are three principal factors motivating the use of euphemisms." In such, it causes interlocutors to be polite and indirect in their dialogue so as to avoid fear, shame and disgust and sustain a conversation. Quoting Bakhtiar again: "Indirectness is a communicative strategy by means of which, speakers avoid being outspoken and attempt to hold a correspondence between their talk and face considerations. Adopting indirectness strategy through using euphemistic terms helps:

1. Speakers prevent from mentioning socially distasteful topics.

2. Minimize the threat of overt confrontation.

By virtue of euphemisms, as part of each language's politeness system, one finds it easier to communicate his intents without affronting the hearer's face and get rid of unpleasant terms with too negative overtones" (ibid:8). Euphemism can thus be said to be the doorway through which interlocutors can hold serious conversation in a socially agreeable manner minimizing on threatening the face of each other hence adopting politeness strategies to achieve this act of saving the face.

While euphemism deals with the use of a preferred expression over a dispreferred one to avoid loss of face, politeness theory is about preservation of each other's face needs and avoidance of face threatening acts (Allan & Burridge)991; Brown & Levinson, 1987).The link between euphemism and politeness theory is that they all deal with preservation of face.

This study looked at how Kipsigis interlocutors employed euphemisms in their interactions. Kipsigis is part of the nine Kenyan Kalenjin dialects mainly spoken in the Rift Valley region. It is said to have the largest number of speakers of the Kalenjin dialects of Kenya. It is closely related to Nandi, Keiyo and Tugen. Kipsigis speakers are mainly found in the county of Kericho and are bordered by the Maasai to the south, Gusii to the west and the Nandi to the north. Little studies have been done on Kipsigis euphemisms. More so there is lack of information on a pragmatic approach on Kipsigis euphemism. It is believed that this present study will illuminate and give insightful information to linguists and other scholars on the way Kipsigis interlocutors minimize Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) in the light of politeness theory.

1.2 Statement of the problem

All cultures have a way in which they socialize. Such socialization has its own rules and regulations that are to be observed. Language usage is no exception to such rules and regulations. There are things that are considered taboo or are likely to cause unpleasantness to the hearer (H) or the speaker (S) or both depending on the level of socializations that may apply at the time of speech. Because of the need to nevertheless pass the information, they devise an acceptable language that saves the shame otherwise referred to as euphemism. Cutrone(2011:53) notes that Hill et al (1986:348) defined discernment as the “almost automatic observation of socially agreed upon rules and applies to both verbal and non-verbal behaviour” As a counterpart to discernment, they used the term *volition*, defined as an aspect of politeness that “allows the speaker a considerably more active choice, according to the speaker’s intention, from a relatively wider range of possibilities” (ibid.:347).

Studies exploring euphemisms have been done in various languages including English, Chinese, Arabic and some African languages. Ngeno (2009) looked at Kipsigis taboo words and their euphemisms in family health education where alternative words are provided to those considered taboo. Koech (2013) used a lexical pragmatic framework to study figurative language used in selected Kipsigis songs. The study focused on examining lexical items in songs that form the nucleus of meaning and analysed them in their variation as perceived by the audience. Such songs employed the use of euphemisms to pass on messages to the hearers where words convey other meanings apart from the literal, which in this case is understood by both involved parties. Even though there are some studies done on Kipsigis euphemisms, there is little or no study on Kipsigis politeness strategies. The study purposed to establish the forms and functions of euphemisms as used in Kipsigis language. This study will be very instrumental to speakers of

Kipsigis language, linguistic scholars and other interested parties to have an understanding of the way social culture influences the use of language in context in Kipsigis.

1.3 Research objectives

1. To group euphemisms into categories according to functions or purpose.
2. To study euphemisms as negative politeness and off-record strategies in Kipsigis
3. To explore the influence of social distance among the Kipsigis on the use of euphemisms.

1.4 Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be tested in this study include:

1. Kipsigis euphemisms can be grouped according to functions or purpose
2. Kipsigis interlocutors employ negative politeness and off-record strategies of euphemisms in their speech
3. Kipsigis euphemisms are used according to social distance of interlocutors in the Kipsigis community.

1.5 Rationale of the study

Various studies on pragmatics have been done including the ones touching on Kipsigis language such as Ngeno (2009) and Koech (2013) which took a different approach from this present study proposal. This study sought to establish the relationship between politeness strategies and the

various euphemisms used in Kipsigis language that save FTAs. The outcome of the study will go a long way in providing data to linguistics scholars and other interested parties to understand the form, functions and interpretation of Kipsigis euphemisms in the light of politeness theory.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the study

The scope of the study was limited to form, functions and interpretation of Kipsigis euphemisms. It focused on analysing euphemisms as used in speech and reasons for their use.

The study was limited to Kipsigis language and language users. The main data was drawn from conventional speakers of the language and supplemented by available corpora such as the bible and other local literature.

1.7 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used is politeness theory formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987) which postulates that people use politeness as a way of known deception, in order to help preserve each other's face needs and avoid face threatening acts. In their theorization they put face as the public self-image that every adult tries to protect. They came up with a positive face and a negative face.

They referred to 'Positive face' as the positive and consistent image people have of themselves and their desire for approval and to 'Negative face' as the basic claim to territories, personal preserves and rights to non- distraction. This can be simplified as follows: Positive face relating to one's self esteem, while negative face to one's freedom to act.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the positive and negative face exist universally in human culture. They defined face threatening act (FTA) as an act that inherently damages the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other. It is important to note that they observed that most of these acts are verbal.

They further said that potential severity of FTA is determined by various factors which include social distance (D) of the speaker (S) and the hearer (H), the relative power (P) of S and H and absolute ranking (R) of imposition in a particular culture. Faces saving strategies are chosen according to the gravity of the FTA. Here social distance refers to the extent to which different members of a community socialise in terms of gender, class and age while the relative power refers to that influence that one individual has in relationship to another in a given set up.

Absolute rank of imposition refers to the importance or degree of difficulty in the situation; this means that if you require a big favour then a large rank of imposition will occur.

Brown and Levinson (1987), outline four main types of politeness strategies that are to save the hearer's face when FTAs are inevitable or desired as: bald on-record strategies, which do not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face, a strategy used mostly in situations where the speaker has a close relationship with the audience; positive politeness strategies which are used to minimize the threat to a hearer's positive face and make the hearer feel good about himself, his interests or possessions, and are mostly used in situations where the interlocutors know each other fairly well; negative politeness strategies which emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer by being indirect, using hedges or questions, being pessimistic, minimizing the imposition, using apologies, obviating structures or plural nouns; and off-record strategies which uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential to be imposing.

To investigate how euphemisms function and are interpreted in Kipsigis language, the current study focused more on the negative politeness and off-record strategies than the other two strategies of politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987) say that negative politeness is characterized by self-effacement, formality and restraint, with attention to very restricted aspects of H's self-image, centring on his want to be unimpeded. Face-threatening acts are redressed with apologies for interfering or transgressing, with linguistic and non-linguistic deference, with hedges on the illocutionary force of the act, with impersonalizing mechanisms (such as passives) that distance S and H from the act, and with other softening mechanisms that give the addressee an 'out', a face-saving line of escape, permitting him to feel that his response is not coerced. Euphemism on the other hand is about using alternative expression over a dispreferred one so as to save on possible loss of face (Allan & Burridge, 1991). This therefore points that both politeness strategies and euphemisms are about saving the face of interlocutors though from different perspectives.

Brown and Levinson identify negative and off-record strategies in the following ways:

1.7.1 Negative politeness strategies:

- a. Be direct/conventionally indirect e.g. I'm looking for a pen.
- b. Question, hedge – while questioning is about raising doubt or object to something, hedging borders on avoidance to make a definite statement (or commitment) e.g. er, could you, um, perhaps...assist me with, er, an extra pen?
- c. Be pessimistic – is characterized by expression of loss of hope so as to make H commit if in position to e.g. you couldn't be having an extra pen, could you?

- d. Minimise the size of imposition on H – here S uses words that do not convey force to be complied or accepted e.g. I'd like to ask you for a pen if you have an extra one.
- e. Give deference – give polite submission and respect e.g. excuse me, would you mind to assist me with an extra pen if you have?
- f. Apologise – express regret for something e.g. I'm really sorry to bother you but could you lend me an extra pen if you have one?
- g. Impersonalise S- this is where an expression made is not attributed to the S

1.7.2 Off-record strategies:

Off-record strategies are mostly done through violation of Gricean Maxims. These maxims came out of Paul Grice's (1975) Cooperative principle which states: "Make your conversational contribution what is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." and were grouped into four namely maxim of manner, of quality, of quantity and of relation. According to Grice, maxim of manner requires that one: "be perspicuous" by avoiding obscurity of expression, avoiding ambiguity, being brief by avoiding unnecessary "prolixity" and being orderly. Maxim of quality requires that one "be truthful." It requires that a person should not engage in saying what he believes to be false neither should one say that which one lacks enough evidence. Maxim of quantity requires one to make his contribution as informative as is required and it should be done within the confines of the ongoing purposes of the exchange. It also warns that one should not make contributions more informative than is required while that of relation simply

requires one to be relevant. To perform off-record strategies the following have to be committed:

a. Violate maxim of manner: be vague, be ambiguous, over-generalize, displace H, and be incomplete. Such actions are meant to blur or mask the meaning of the conversation by intentionally blocking clarity.

b. Violate maxim of quality: use contradictions, be ironic, use metaphors, and use rhetorical questions. According to the maxim of quality, S is expected to be truthful but by resorting use of contradictions, irony, metaphors and rhetoric there will basically be that lack of truth as all of them have the element of insincerity in them but rather to impress, ridicule or confuse the H.

c. Violate maxim of quantity: overstate, understate, and use tautology. These in simple terms are exaggerating, present something in a less significant way and use of repetition within a statement in different ways respectfully. All these result in violation of maxim of quantity.

d. Violate maxim of relation: give hints, give association clues, and presuppose. Here S will not be direct but lead the H by using words that bring H closer to the intended meaning but let the interpretation of the meaning materialise from H.

From the above discussion it can be said that using politeness strategy allows the integration of euphemisms where some aspects of negative politeness like being conventionally indirect, hedging, deferring and violation of Gricean maxims are meant to acquire a euphemistic nature while serving a politeness function.

1.8 Literature Review

This section looked at some of the works done and their relevance to the present study as well as the gaps that exist in them.

There are times that users of a language can communicate using indirect references to what they mean. In that case the hearer (H) will interpret the speech from what is implied than what is said. Implicature is a form of pragmatics that is defined by Horn (2006:3) as “a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is **meant** in a speaker’s utterance without being part of what is **said**. What a speaker intends to communicate is characteristically far richer than what she directly expresses; linguistic meaning radically underdetermines the message conveyed and understood. Speaker S tacitly exploits pragmatic principles to bridge this gap and counts on hearer H to invoke the same principles for the purposes of utterance interpretation.” This study explores the use of implicature in the use and interpretation of euphemisms in Kipsigis language.

Searle (1969) developed Austin’s work to come up with what he termed ‘*indirect speech act*’ which he purported as being responsible for sentence meaning and speaker meaning which may be different. He defined direct speech acts as utterances whereby sentence meaning is consistent with speaker meaning. Indirect speech act however posed a problem of how the hearer understands the indirect speech act, when the sentence he hears and understands means something else. This therefore related to the study of euphemisms where speech is employed in a cosmetic way according to FTAs where the choice of a particular word is adopted to avoid loss of face but still be understood by H despite carrying a different meaning from the literal.

Leech (1983) developed a series of politeness principle maxims as a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges. He defined politeness as forms of behaviour

that allow participants to engage in a social interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony. Tact maxim, which requires S to minimize cost to others, as one of Leech's politeness principle can be linked with Brown & Levinson's negative politeness strategy which constituted one of the research objectives.

In the languages of Polynesia the word taboo means simply 'to forbid', 'forbidden', and can be applied to any sort of prohibition (Radcliffe-Brown 1939: 5f in Allan & Burridge, 1996:2). Taboos arise out of social constraints on the individual's behaviour where it can cause discomfort, harm or injury (Allan & Burridge, 1996:1). It is out of these taboos that people resort to the use of euphemism as observed by Wardhaugh (1998: 234) who says that so far as language is concerned, certain things are not to be said or certain objects can be referred to only through deliberate circumlocutions, i.e., euphemistically. Apte (1994), grouped linguistic taboos into four types:

- (i) Swear or curse words, i.e. words which when uttered involve damnation, misfortune, or disrespect of the targeted object or person;
- (ii) Obscene words, i.e. words referring to sexual organs and acts;
- (iii) four-lettered words, which are only acceptable in English, with example of acceptable English obscenities being words such as "cunt", "fuck", "shit", and "cock", such words only having four letters in their spellings; and
- (iv) dirty words, i.e. words that refer to sexual organs, acts and scatological substances (menstruation, urine, faeces, spittle).

Jay (1996) categorized linguistic taboos into eight types:

- (i) Taboo or obscene language – these are expressions restricted from public use, such as “fuck” and “bitch”;
- (ii) Blasphemy – the use of religious terminology to denigrate God and religious institutions, icons and so on;
- (iii) Profanity – the use of religious expressions and terminology in an unrespectable manner. The intention of the speaker is not to denigrate God or anything associated with religion but may be rather to express emotional reactions towards certain stimuli;
- (iv) Insults and radical slurs – verbal attacks on other people by denoting the physical, mental or psychological qualities of the victims, e.g. coconut head (for unintelligent person), monkey (for ugly person);
- (v) Expletives – emotional words that are in the form of interjections, and that are not directed to anyone specifically, but are used by speakers to release frustration and emotion;
- (vi) Vulgarisms – crude or raw expressions which are regarded as distasteful and offensive. They are used to devalue the thing or individual referred to or described;
- (vii) Cursing; and
- (viii) Slang – this is usually developed by social groups to identify and solidify in-group members.

Steiner (1975) categorized verbal taboos into six groups:

- (i) Personal names,
- (ii) Names of gods,
- (iii) Names of kings and other sacred persons,

- (iv) Names of the dead,
- (v) Names of relations, and
- (vi) Common words – these include taboos placed on names of objects and things that are associated with different professions, names of dangerous animals, etc.

Oyetade (1994) classified taboo expressions in the Yoruba language into four types:

- (i) propriety-related taboos, which are those that enable the society members to conform with the acceptable moral standard with regard to decorum;
- (ii) taboo for averting ominous consequences which emanate from people's belief system;
- (iii) veneration type which is used to give honour to a specific class of people such as kings, elders etc.; and
- (iv) Fear-centred taboos which centre on the belief in the existence of supernatural forces that have been claimed to have control over human beings.

From Apte (1994) to Oyatade (1994) it becomes quite apparent that categorization is not and cannot be uniform. Different scholars have come up with different types of taboo categorization based on the purpose of the study they conducted but the underlying fundamental is usually the same irrespective of the forms adopted. The above forms helped the study into grouping euphemism according to functions.

Ogiermann (2009:264) in her conclusion said that a controversial issue that remains unsolved in politeness research is the choice of a framework that is best suited for the study of politeness across cultures. She said that all recent theoretical work on politeness devotes considerable attention to Brown and Levinson theoretical framework. It is out of this light that the study

settled on politeness theory to study Kipsigis euphemisms considering that Brown and Levinson claimed that it can be applied universally amid criticism (e.g. Matsumoto 1988).

Ogiermann (2009) agreed with the postmodern view that utterances can only be classified as polite when they are interpreted as such by the addressee. The concept of first order politeness has a great potential in accessing native speakers' 'common-sense notions' of what constitutes polite behaviour in their culture (ibid: 268). Since this particular study had chosen politeness theory to unravel euphemisms and FTAs, it would be prudent to establish what the Kipsigis interpret as being polite or otherwise.

Cutrone (2011:53) said that the results in the study of Hill et al (1986) showed that the responses of both American and Japanese participants were influenced by discernment (i.e., a recognition of certain fundamental characteristics of addressee and situation); however, each group seemed to differ in the weight assigned to the various factors contributing to discernment and volition: the Japanese group adopted the discernment principle to a much greater extent (as shown by a high agreement on the appropriate form/s for making a certain request) while the American group opted more often for volition (as demonstrated by a weaker correlation between addressee/situational features and the appropriate form of a request). Such observation points out that politeness principle may not be applied uniformly by the same interlocutors but rather will be dictated by prevailing circumstances between the S and the H. Since this study also looked at functions of euphemisms, it tried to establish the circumstances under which interlocutors may regard applying or abandoning euphemism.

In his discussion, Cutrone (ibid:55) subscribes to Matsumoto's (1988) argument that understanding one's position in the social hierarchy and speaking and behaving accordingly is,

without exception, the defining feature of Japanese politeness. Such observation was used to establish how social distance affects the use of euphemisms in Kipsigis language.

Babatunde, and Adedimeji, (n.d.) defined politeness strategies as: “the methods employed by speakers to show awareness of other people’s faces.” They identified ten politeness strategies common in the social relations of the University of Ilorin Community. Their study helped in the classification of Kipsigis politeness according to formality levels, herein assumed to be determined by social distance.

Duda (2011) adopted Chamizo Dominguez and Sánchez Benedito’s (2005:8) minor functions of euphemism. The above work brought about the relationship that exists between politeness and euphemism, that the need to be polite will foster a S to use a language appropriate to the H which may result to adoption of a euphemistic word to replace that which may cause FTAs so that a word considered as taboo may be mentioned indirectly without losing face and at the same time maintain the dignity of interlocutors.

Ham (2005) said that figurative language, by definition, allocates referents not found in a word's dictionary description. This type of language comes in a variety of forms, and is used for a variety of reasons. His observation was used in this study to show how people in their quest to maintain their face resort to use of figurative language to talk about dysphemism in a euphemistic way.

It is unarguable that sex topics make most people uneasy especially where interact are drawn from different social groups and levels. Allen and Burrige (1991) revealed that people would rather use other words that are less direct for various reasons, may be to avoid ‘FTAs’

Mumbi (2004), observed that it is not conventional for people in their communities in Kenya to identify the private part of the female body the- vagina- by its “name” because it is considered an insult and that it generates a sense of shame. Consequently, this has led people to use euphemistic terms to refer to both male and female genitalia. The above observation was used to look at how interlocutors use implicature to communicate in Kipsigis and most importantly understand each other in the light of euphemism.

Ham (ibid:245) said that euphemism shows how people encode their ideals and beliefs within societal boundaries, but the question of from whom we are concealing our true thoughts, and why, remains.

Samoskaite (2011:9) classified euphemisms in terms of the prevailing time namely temporary euphemisms and persistent euphemisms. This study attempted to establish whether there are certain expressions that are adopted or created on impulse to serve the moment of time over those that may have become ‘idiomatic expressions’ in Kipsigis. It also tried to establish if regional variation affected the choice and usage of euphemisms among the Kipsigis and how geographic environment influenced choice of euphemistic expressions.

Nyakoe, Matu, & Ongarora (2012) note that the culture of a people has an effect on the people’s way of avoiding taboo words and their choices of euphemism. They note that “death is among the many concepts that are tabooed in Ekegusii and people use euphemism when referring either to death, dying or the effects of death. This therefore brings about the importance of metaphors as substitutes for otherwise taboo words where the aspect of travel is mapped onto that of death.

Nyandiba (2013) in her study observed that herbalists refer to HIV/AIDS by metaphors and with the use of euphemism. Such metaphors as translated from Kiswahili include: the modern disease,

the big disease, the insect, big malaria, among other metaphors. This clearly indicates that metaphors are used euphemistically as an off-record strategy. The above work informed the current study on the importance of metaphors as euphemistic substitutes.

Kitamaru (2000) said that 'Negative politeness' can also be expressed in two ways: 1) by saving the interlocutor's 'face' (either 'negative' or 'positive') by mitigating face threatening acts, such as advice-giving and disapproval; or 2) by satisfying 'negative face' by indicating respect for the addressee's right not to be imposed on.

The above literature review was very useful in determining euphemisms used in Kipsigis language as it offered insights into how to approach the matter in whole, including possible ways of grouping the euphemisms, dealing with euphemistic substitutes to taboo words and establish how social distance and age influence the use, function and interpretation of the euphemisms found among Kipsigis language users.

1.9 Methodology

This section highlights a description of the research design, the target population and sampling technique, data collection methods, quality control techniques, ethical considerations and data analysis.

The research used purposive sampling to collect focused information. This sampling is convenient for the research analysis as Oso & Onen (2005) say "it selects typical and useful cases only as well as save on time and money."

The target population was of natives of Kipsigis language who were competent to provide the required data for meaningful analysis. The sample consisted of ten mature Kipsigis adults of

forty years and above for the assumption that they are accustomed to customs, traditions and values of the Kipsigis people and twenty youths ranging between eighteen to thirty years old to bring about the influence that age has on the usage of politeness and euphemisms. The respondents had to state their age range so as to establish the influence of age range to application of euphemisms. The sample population also included twenty males and ten females in order to establish whether gender influenced politeness and use of euphemism through administering of same questions to one gender then to mixed gender and the response analysed. The target population was drawn from different areas of Kapsoit location, Kericho County.

Questionnaires, observation and structured interviews were used to collect data on euphemism in Kipsigis language.

Questionnaires were used to collect data that could not be observed. It was preferable so as to collect a lot of information over a short period of time even though it is limited to those who are literate.

Structured interviews were used to supplement the questionnaires and also capture data from subjects who are illiterate or had issues with the interpretation of the questionnaire. They also were advantageous as they gave the interviewer control over the line of questioning.

Observations were used because they accorded the researcher a chance to gather live data as it unfolded without necessarily interfering with the subjects' natural behaviour. Here the subjects were let to have their normal conversations and the elements of euphemism recorded both in a recorder and a notepad.

The above tools were used for qualitative data. They were designed by the researcher who is a native speaker of the language to elicit the required data. Out of the twenty-three questionnaires administered, twenty were filled and returned in accordance with the data collection schedule.

Kapsoit location has a total population of 27,849 people (KNBS, 2010). In order to come up with a sample from the population, a random sampling technique was employed in order to control extraneous variables and also because the total population is fairly large to create equivalent representative sample that are similar in all relevant variables that can influence the dependent variable.

A pilot study was administered to other respondents not included in the study to establish the validity of the instruments. Any item that was found inappropriate was modified to improve quality and appropriateness or was discarded. The test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments used in the research.

The data collected was thematically analysed and summarised for presentation since the data collected was based on attitudes, perceptions and intentions. The outcome was then discussed and presented according to the negative and off-record strategies.

CHAPTER TWO

EUPHEMISMS ACCORDING TO FUNCTIONS

2.1 Introduction

In African languages, Kipsigis included, morality is emphasized to avoid FTAs and make conversations to flow without interruptions.

Some things are considered to be either too embarrassing or grouped as taboo by the speakers of the language. Different cultures may have different taboo areas, and there may be a difference in the extent to which they are considered taboo (Andersson and Trudgill 1990: 56-57).

Taboo was the cornerstone of the whole social order and there was no part of the social system that was not regulated and governed by taboo such as relationship between rulers and subjects, political life, sexual life, family life as well as the economic life of the society (Afe, 2013:96)

Rathje (2010: 133) presents six different areas that are considered to be taboo in the Western world:

- Bodies and their effluvia
- The organs and acts of sex
- Diseases, death and killing, physical and mental handicap
- Religion and church, naming and addressing sacred persons, beings, objects and places
- Food gathering, preparation and consumption
- Prostitution, narcotics and criminal activity

According to Mbaya (2002:225), in traditional Africa, they include words for sex and parts of the body, words for death, for marriage and kinship relations, certain birds' and animals' names, etc. He says that the taboo-words and words like them must be observed by all the members of the society. Failure to do so can lead to punishment or public shame. But, where possible, the use of such words can take place only in a restricted set of situations (ibid).

Kipsigis as a language has not been left out in the consideration of some of the above as taboo and it is for this reason that interlocutors will engage in negative politeness so as to avoid possible loss of face through the use of euphemistic expression.

2.2 Kipsigis euphemistic forms

For the purpose of this study, the word form was used to refer to type. The study found out that Kipsigis interlocutors consider the following as being either taboo or embarrassing to talk about openly:

Breasts, buttocks, penis, vagina, erection, ejaculation, sexual intercourse, sperms, pubic hair, defecating, testicles, rape, menstruation, abortion, faeces, urine, urinating, HIV/AIDS and other STIs, diarrhoea, prostitute, cripple, deaf, mute and blind.

From the list above, the study came up with the following grouping for Kipsigis language that are considered to be either taboo or too embarrassing for interlocutors such that they resort to the use of euphemisms:

2.2.1 Body parts and effluvia

Under body parts and effluvia the terms breasts, buttocks, sperms, pubic hair, defecating, menstruation, faeces, urine and urinating were termed as being taboo or embarrassing. These terms were not even easily used and whenever used by those who elected to be direct risked reprimand as they were deemed to be against the community's morality.

2.2.2 The sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution

According to Qanbar (2011), taboo words bordering on sex can be found in almost all cultures of the world. Investigations in to it found that the following terms fell under the sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution: penis, vagina, testicles, erection, ejaculation, sexual intercourse, rape and prostitute.

These terms were considered to border on morality and therefore their usage is very restricted.

2.2.3 Diseases, death, mental and physical handicap

Such terms as murder, suicide, HIV/AIDS, cripple, deaf, mute and blind were found to be under the above.

A term that was of interest in this category was that of HIV/AIDS because of stigmatization, stereotyping and its associative sexual nature that inhibits its conversation. The study discovered that the term 'Ukimnyot' was used to talk about both HIV and AIDS, a term borrowed from Swahili language 'Ukimwi' meaning AIDS as shown in table 3 below.

The language in itself does not have its own set category, the study therefore used other studies e.g. Steiner (1975), Oyatade (1994), Apte (1994), Hongxu et al (1990), Qanbar (2011) to come up with the above categorizations.

2.3 Conclusion

The study looked at what is considered taboo or embarrassing in Kipsigis language and used classifications from other studies to come up with the forms used among the Kipsigis interlocutors. The categories found under this study were body parts and effluvia, the sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution, and diseases, death, mental and physical handicap.

CHAPTER THREE

THE KIPSIGIS NEGATIVE POLITENESS AND OFF-RECORD STRATEGIES

3.1 Introduction

The above chapter categorized euphemisms into three forms that will inform the rest of the discussions.

This chapter looks at euphemisms used by Kipsigis interlocutors based on negative politeness and off-record strategies. It first explores on what is considered to be a dispreferred (direct) term against what is considered to be the preferred (euphemistic) alternative saving on FTAs.

3.2 Kipsigis dispreferred terms

The following terms were considered to be dispreferred and thereby causing FTAs. The preferred terms were given alongside the dispreferred ones as follows:

3.2.1 List of Body parts and effluvia

	Kipsigis direct term	Kipsigis preferred term
Breasts	Kinaik	Tekeet ab jebyosok
Buttocks	Let	Oloo kitebee/Patai
Sperms	Muneek	Kootyeek/lagok

Pubic hair	Sumekab ungot	Suumek
Vomit	King'uung	Keweek
Defecating	Keyai sigiik	Kemanda
Menstruation	Betusiek ab arawet	Chebo arawet
Faeces	Choo	Tuguk (used contextually)
Urine	Sokosen	Beek
Urinate	Kesokos	Keyay beek

Table 1: List of Body parts and effluvia in Kipsigis

3.2.2 List of Sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution

	Kipsigis direct term	Kipsigis preferred term
Penis	Taritiet	Musa
Vagina	Munyesta	Kepkoko/Kapkwony
Testicles	Mukuiik	Oliin (used contextually)
Erection	Kotononsi	Ke ngeet
Ejaculation	Muneeek	Ketumda/Kemwokto
Sexual intercourse	Kumisiet	Keruiyo/kesesnotet
Rape	Riebet	Kikipir
Prostitute	Mukinatet	Wendote

Table 2: List of sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution in Kipsigis

3.2.3 List of Diseases, death, mental and physical handicap

	Kipsigis direct term	Kipsigis preferred term
HIV/AIDS	Ukimny'oot	Bortab betusiechu/mnyondob kasari/sisit
Syphilis	Takaneet	Mnyondab oliin
Gonorrhoea	Kipsununut	Mnyondab oliin
Cripple	Solomwet	Makararan borto/mawendote
Deaf	Mokosto	Mokosei/makase
Mute	Kiming'atyaat	Mongololii/mang'alale
Blind	Kipkoratyaat	Mokeere/magere
Suicide	Koip sobet	Kiam kerichek
Murder	Par	Ke tar/Kiges
Death	Meet	Kesirto
Murder	Borisiet/Rumisiet	Taret ab sabeet
Madness	Lywandet	Metit ne makararan

Table 3: List of Diseases, death, mental and physical handicap in Kipsigis

3.3 Negative politeness

As earlier mentioned in chapter one above, negative politeness is characterized by self-effacement, formality and restraint, with attention to very restricted aspects of H's self-image, centring on his want to be unimpeded.

This study explored the negative strategies used by Kipsigis interlocutors and found out that the most common one for euphemism was on being conventionally indirect followed by questioning/hedging.

Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989) define conventional indirectness as referring to contextual preconditions necessary for its performance as conventionalized in the language. Brown & Levinson (1987) say that questioning borders on avoidance or objection to something while hedging borders on avoidance to make a definite statement.

3.3.1 Euphemisms related to body parts and effluvia

'*Taguu munyesta*' is a Kipsigis sentence which translates to 'your vagina is showing.' Kipsigis interlocutors found it embarrassing to inform a colleague or another member that the genitalia are visibly open; they therefore opted for the following words to save on FTAs:

1. *Imiten yach ingor*

You are without clothes

2. *Tagu oliin*

That place is visible

3. *Tuch kee*

Cover yourself

The above three sentences clearly indicate the deliberate avoidance of being direct by the S. This could be attributed by the need of not wanting to embarrass the H.

The study also established that euphemism arises when referring to ‘tabooed bodily functions and the effluvia from the organ of sex, micturition and defecation’ (Allan & Burrige, 2006:114).

A look in to Leviticus 15 of the Old Testament uses the term ‘discharge from body’ to refer to bodily effluvia and avoiding being direct. In verse 25, the discharge referred for women becomes apparent as it refers to ‘customary discharge of blood’

The discharge therefore in verse 25 becomes very easy to understand as the menstruation compared to the discharge in verse 2 of the same chapter which remains quite unclear, more so if put in the light of the discharge referred to in verse 16.

Many people and culture would refrain from being direct about defecating than urinating. Faeces are deemed to cause FTAs and even the western cultures have devised terminologies that point more to the place of the action rather than the action itself. For example it is quite common to hear of somebody brushing or cleaning the teeth than washing or cleaning the body. People going to defecate or urinate will speak of going to the toilet, answering the call of nature, visiting the john; take a lick, going to the washroom and so on as a means of being polite and saving on FTAs. In Kipsigis language, a S would say ‘*amache a sokos*’ to directly refer to the want to urinate, however, the study established that the interlocutors preferred the following in relation to the want to urinate:

4. *Amache amanda*

I want to go out

5. *Kataran beek. Awendi ano?*

I am deeply pressed. Where would I go?

The direct Kipsigis reference for ‘I want to defecate’ would be ‘*kokayai sigiik lakwanin.*’ The study however found out that interlocutors chose the words in sentence (6) below to refer to a child who has faeces on it:

6. *Kakomurit ke lakwanin*

That child has dirtied himself

To warn somebody that another is urinating somewhere, the following euphemism in sentence (7) below was used in place of the direct dispreferred ‘*matiwe yun sokosi notupche*’ term which translates to ‘don’t go there your relative is urinating’:

7. *matiwe yun yae beek notupche*

Don’t go there your relative is making water

Kipsigis interlocutors used the following terms as put in sentence (8) below to inform a woman that her menses have started:

8. *Kogoit betusy’ekug ab arawet*

Your days of the month have arrived

To talk about buttocks, the study found out that Kipsigis interlocutors used the term ‘*patai*’ which means ‘behind’ as opposed to the term ‘let’ as brought in the sentence (9) and (10) below:

9. *Kakirutan patai*

I have been injected behind

10. *Mi kit neya e’ng pate ng’ung’ ii?*

Is something wrong with your behind?

The interlocutors would also refer to vomit as '*keweek*' (coming back) instead of "king'uung' as in the case below:

11. *Akase togos koweek*

I feel it might come back

The Kipsigis used hedging to refer to the pubic hair by calling it as 'the hair there'. This is well brought out in the sentence that follows:

12. *Iututos sumeek ab oliin*

The hair there itch/is itchy

The study further established that Kipsigis interlocutors used the term '*tegeet*' which means 'chest' in reference to breast (*kinaik*) to save on FTAs as shown in sentences (13) and (14) below:

13. *Itinye tegeet ne kararan*

You have a nice chest

14. *Anam tegeng'ung?*

Can I touch your chest?

3.3.2 Euphemism related to sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution

'Marriage is the institution that regulates sex, reproduction and family life. Fundamentally, the African ideal of sex and marriage involves a relationship of love, friendship or companionship. Arguably, marriage primarily functions as an economic and political unit used to create kinship bonds, control inheritance, and perpetuate family lineage or history, and share resources and

labour. Sex and marriage are very sensitive issues in Africa such that they are not discussed to the hearings of minors.’(Amakari, n.d.)

In African Traditional Society, it was not common for people to engage in sexual activities outside of marriage. Sex was a reserve for procreation and was therefore performed by people who were married. It was considered a dishonour and abject abomination for a girl to engage in premarital sex or for a boy to impregnate a girl.

Mugambi & Magesa (1990:78) say that in African traditional society, it was taboo for a parent and a child to talk about sex and other related issues, but times are changing and this attitude should also change accordingly. The changes have not been fully realized since most of the parents still shy away from topics related to sex. Whenever they do so, they adopt euphemistic terms so as to avoid FTAs and be polite.

Among the Kipsigis members, the above was also confirmed that people were not all that free to talk about sexual matters as they were considered to be taboo or causing embarrassment. This therefore prompted interlocutors to resort to the use of euphemisms to cover for FTAs.

The direct term for the intention to have sex in Kipsigis is ‘*amache akumin*’ which translates to ‘I want to have sex with you.’ However, the following words were used instead to mitigate on shame and afford one politeness to talk about such sensitive issue when informing another of intent to have sex:

15. Amache I chamachaman

I want you to love me

16. Ngeruu tuwan

Let’s sleep together

To inform another that the partner is having a sexual relationship with another in Kipsigis would be '*kumisiote boiyot/chebyoset*' which directly translates to 'your husband/wife has sexual intercourse.' The following was preferred instead:

17. Mache komandoo boiyet/chebyoset

Your husband/wife seems to be going out

18. Chame kwonyik boiyot

Your man loves women

19. Ruitos tuwan

They are sleeping together

20. Icheget ko chamanik

They are lovers

To refer to an erection (*kotononsi*), interlocutors referred to it as 'standing' as brought out in sentence (21).

21. Mamuche kotononsi

He can't make it stand

Since prostitution was equated to moving around, speakers would refer to prostitutes in the following manner:

22. Wendate kwonyin

That woman moves around

Testicles known as '*mukuiik*' in Kipsigis were euphemistically referred to as "oliin" which translates to 'there'. In a sentence, it came out as follows:

23. *Ingwari oliin*

He is scratching there.

To refer to a man who is unable to ejaculate, the Kipsigis interlocutors used the terms below:

24. *Mamuche komwokta chichiin*

That man is unable to shoot

In order to refer to a rape victim or incidence without being direct, the interlocutors used the following instead:

25. *Chepin ne kikipir ii?*

Is that the girl who was beaten?

3.3.3 Euphemisms related to Diseases, Death, mental and physical handicap

Due to the nature of some diseases, some people would resort to use of other terms because of embarrassment, stigmatization or FTAs associated with the nature of the illness involved. This phenomena by large intensifies when the talked of disease is of sexuality nature. For example, among the Shona of Zimbabwe, interlocutors would resort to metaphoric use to convey sexual nature messages as sex is taboo. The genitals will simply be referred to as *pamberi* (front) while the HIV/AIDS pandemic would be referred to as *shuramatongo* (disease that wipes out everyone), *chakapedzambudzi* (disease that kills goats), *gurukahundi* (rain that falls in autumn), *Jehoyha ndouyako* (Lord I am coming) and to refer to one who has been infected as *ane pemu* (thinning with loss of hair shine). This clearly points out the ingenuity with which interlocutors would coin up terms or rather use soft words in relation to the nature of the topic involved and the associative restrictions.

The diseases or illnesses that would likely cause FTAs between Kipsigis interlocutors are mostly STDs and other terminal diseases like cancer. Directly and ordinarily, the terms would be '*atinye kansa/ukimnyot*' that translates to 'I have cancer/AIDS. Interestingly, in as much as people shy away from talking about these diseases due to societal attitude towards the diseases and the people infected or affected, the World Report on Disability (2011) points out that such diseases in the long run increases the number of people with disability globally yet the Kenyan society is yet to embrace people with disabilities appropriately.

In this study, the following terms were applied by the Kipsigis to talk about issues related to diseases without being direct:

26. *Magomy'ean boor/ Kigoyait borta*

My body is no longer okay

27. *Kiramny'an*

I have become sick

28. *Kigoiman borto*

The body has disturbed me

29. *Magase kerich borta*

My body no longer responds to medication

The above words were applied to refer to terminal or incurable diseases without necessarily mentioning the particular disease so as to save the sufferer from FTAs. However, in the case of HIV/AIDS, the following were established to be used and understood by the interlocutors:

30. *Kigonama mnyondap kasari*

I have been infected by the current disease

31. *Kinaman mnyondo*

I have the disease

32. *Kinaman lorit neoo*

I have the big lorry

When it came to STDs like syphilis and gonorrhoea, interlocutors preferred the following

33. *Kiime mnyondo oliin*

He was disturbed by the disease of there

Death is rather a mysterious thing in many cultures and an eventuality to all living things. According to the Encyclopedia of Death and Dying lava, 'life does not end but continues in another realm.' The above is further held by King (2013) where he postulates that death 'is a natural transition from the visible to the invisible.'

In Qunu, South Africa, there's no right time to discuss the death of a person who's still alive since it is considered a taboo (iol, 2013). The same is replicated in many other communities across the world in various ways.

Fernandez (2006:101) points that 'human beings have traditionally felt reluctant to deal with the subject of death using straightforward terms. Whether owing to superstition, fear or social respect, the fact remains that when facing death language users try to soften the effect of what they really wish to communicate. To this end, they resort to euphemisms.' In Kipsigis community, due to the nature of matters related to death and the associated taboos, the Kipsigis

refrained from using the direct term 'meet' and instead adopted the following euphemisms below to talk about death as it was unavoidable not to talk about it at all:

34. *Kogometech chamanenyon*

Our loved one has left us.

35. *Kogomuny tupchengung*

Your brother has finally rested

36. *Mutyo kapisa magomiten*

I am very sorry he is no more

37. *Kokwo Kipsengwet bomuru*

Our in-law has gone to heaven

38. *Kogomut Kipyaiyat werinyon*

Our son has been taken by God

39. *Ingen is ile kigomnyan koek geny batiem, kogosirto*

Your grandmother has been sick for a long time, she has passed on

An analysis into sentences (34-39) points to the deliberate avoidance of the S to mention the word 'died' but uses other polite words that are not offensive to the H so as to mitigate on pain caused by such lose. The words adopted by S are 'left us', 'rested', 'no more', 'gone to heaven', and 'taken by God'

To refer to someone who committed suicide or to someone murdered, the term '*kiparke*' or '*kikipar*' would convey the message as 'she killed herself' or 'they were killed' but interlocutors used the following sentences respectively instead:

40. *Kiam kerichek*

She took medicine

41. *Kikigees*

They were finished

The World Health Organization (WHO) (1990) defines disability as:

An impairment or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function; a disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being; a handicap is a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that prevents the fulfilment of a role that is considered normal (depending on age, sex and social and cultural factors) for that individual (p.213).

Disability is something that is a pain to most people because of the position it puts people into. It can become embarrassing when one encounters a disabled person without knowing that they are disabled, more so when lost on how to relate with them or address them. UNICEF's (2013) Fact sheet clearly brings out these issues in its introduction when it states:

'Children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups of children, experiencing widespread violations of their rights. Discrimination arises not as a result of the intrinsic nature of children's disability, but rather, as a consequence of lack of understanding and knowledge of its causes and implications, fear of difference, fear of contagion or contamination, or negative religious or cultural views of disability. It is further compounded by poverty, social isolation, humanitarian emergencies, lack of services and support, and a hostile and inaccessible environment. Too often, children with disabilities are defined and judged by what they lack rather than what they have.

Their exclusion and invisibility serves to render them uniquely vulnerable, denying them respect for their dignity, their individuality, even their right to life itself.(p.1)'

Since these are a category of people with special needs and attention from the society, Kipsigis interlocutors resorted to the use of the following terms to save on FTAs and may be due to lack of a clear way to relate with the disabled:

42. *Ya kerenget ii?*

Is the leg bad?

43. *Korat, makere.*

He is blind, he can't see.

44. *Makase notupche?*

Is your relative unable to hear?

45. *Mang'alale*

He can't talk

46. *Mamny'ee merit ab chepin*

That girl's head is not well

Evidently, the data above clearly points out the usage of conventional indirectness and hedging or questioning as a deliberate move to avoid being direct in matters that are considered to be taboo in Kipsigis community hence circumventing directness to save on face and avoid embarrassment by using such terms as brought out in sentence 1 to 46.

3.4 Off-record strategies

Off-record strategies are mostly done through violation of Gricean Maxims as discussed in chapter one.

The following data was obtained from Kipsigis interlocutors through observation and listening to their daily interactions to bring out how they used off-record strategies:

3.4.1 Euphemisms related to body parts and effluvia

47. *Petsiechu kou teta. Akwong'e ale konu chegoo chetyan.*

Nowadays she looks like a cow. I wonder how many liters she can produce.

Sentence (47) was used to talk about a girl in a derogatory way because of her large breasts equated to that of a hybrid cow through use of exaggeration as well as employment of associative clues thereby violating the maxim of quantity as well as that of relation.

48. *Iipati mutoinik che kororon.*

Some good pillows you carry on you.

As opposed to sentence (47), sentence (48) was used in a positive manner by referring to a girl's breasts as pillows where the full meaning is borrowed from the full characteristic of a pillow. Here the maxim of manner is employed through ambiguity where the clarity of the meaning is intentionally blocked.

49. *Chito neo newendote ak kilamet ne malitaat!*

A big man walking around with unsharpened pencil!

The sentence (49) above was used derogatorily to ridicule a young man who had not gone through circumcision. The male organ was compared to a pencil that was unsharpened through a metaphor which satisfies the violation of maxim of quality.

50. *Kasit ne kararan ne keyai. Boibochin kaliang'ik.*

Such a nice job you've done. Flies are happy about it.

To express disgust and disappointment, the S in sentence (50) chose sarcasm to tell the H that he (the H) had relieved himself at wrong place thereby inviting flies and causing unpleasantness. This conforms to violation of maxim of quality where the facial meaning lacks truth as it contradicts the outcome of the action.

51. *Matebie kii eng moet akot dakiket akeng'e.*

My stomach cannot hold food even for a minute.

So as not to cause FTA to the H, the S in sentence (51) above avoided to state that she might vomit anytime if she eats and instead gave clues so as to bring H closer to the intended meaning hence violating the maxim of relation.

52. *Kole kowo arawet.*

She said she has gone to the moon.

Talking directly about menstruation is really embarrassing for most speakers. In the sentence (52) above, the S used the term 'moon' to refer to menses. The sentence can be placed under two categories where in the first instance the H is displaced through violating of maxim of manner while in the second instance there is the use of contradiction by asserting that a person B has gone to the moon. The literal meaning would be false and misleading hence violating the maxim of quality.

3.4.2 Euphemism related to sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution

The dialogue below (sentence 53 – 58) of young women elicited strong usage of off-record strategies and indirect references to matters relating to sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution.

53. *Machome chichiin. Isemberto kesweek eng olondukul*

I don't like that man. He goes about scattering seeds everywhere

The above sentence (53) was used to express a strong resentment for this male prostitute who had no control of his sexual activities and went about making girls pregnant everywhere. The sentence obviously points to violation of maxim of relations where the intended meaning has to be inferred through hints and association clues. It can also be placed under violation of maxim of manner since it obscures the real meaning of the sentence.

54. *Akase ale tinye sineet. Kinam cheptab chito neya*

I hear he is in trouble after catching a bad person's daughter

In sentence (54), the term 'catching' has been used to refer to rape. Violation of maxim of manner comes out where 'catch' in the sentence is both ambiguous and vague.

55. *Akase taip chii chage ny'in*

I wish somebody would have his granary

'Granary' in sentence (55) has been used to refer to testicles (where the seeds are stored) whereas the entire sentence bares the meaning of having the person castrated. There is both the violation of maxim of quality through the use of the term granary which is metaphoric and violation of maxim of relation where the entire meaning of the sentence is based on associative clues.

56. *Ikochin non lesenit kotemis ama minse*

That would give him a license to dig without planting

The S in sentence (56) seems to be in disagreement with the one in sentence (55) because such an action would only empower the irresponsible man to be more irresponsible since he would continue sleeping with more girls with the knowledge that he cannot impregnate them. The word ‘dig without planting’ is a metaphor for ‘having sexual intercourse with impregnating one’ thus violating the maxim of quality so as to cover the S from FTA.

57. *Kit ne kararan ko iyeten boiboindo kapsa. ‘nyeri’ kiyon*

The best would be to deny him the pleasure at all. Just ‘nyeri’ that thing

Another S in sentence (57) thinks that the best and probably the lasting solution would be to chop up the penis as denoted by the term ‘nyeri’ that thing’ where the act of chopping off male organ had been rampant. The S in sentence 57 expresses strong resentment to the offender by employing a generated metaphor of ‘nyeri’ to pass on her message therefore satisfying the violation of maxim of quality.

58. *Eeh, yeten nono karoktoet ab siiyet eng chepung’usyek tugul*

Yes, that would stop him from dipping his finger into every pot

Sentence (58) tries to compare the male organ with finger and the female organ with pot and the act of copulation as that of dipping. This can therefore be placed first under violation of maxim of quality through use of yet again metaphor, then violation of maxim of relation through association clues.

59. *Agase tagi tem imbareng'ung*

I have this urge of cultivating your farm

In the sentence (59) the S tries to avoid FTA to the H and self by using metaphors to refer to the act of sexual matters where sex is euphemized with cultivation and the female sexual organ with farm thus violating the maxim of manner.

60. *Tos imugaksei kemeny tu wan ii?*

Is it possible we move in together?

The above sentence (60) has the implication that two persons, a male and a female, come under one roof and live as man and wife. Here the S has given hints hence violating the maxim of relation.

3.4.3 Euphemisms related to Diseases, Death, mental and physical handicap

61. *ing'en ile kiam muchang'ek jirani neng'ung?*

Did you know that your neighbour was eaten by the soil?

62. *Kiwo papa nengu'ng' safari neloo. Tapoke nyoruu betut ake.*

Your father went on a long journey. We shall join him some day.

63. *Imu'nye batiem.rue rwondo neo. Kao safari ne koi.*

Grandma is resting. She is in deep sleep. She has gone on a very long journey

The sentences (61), (62) and (63) carry the same meaning but in different ways where in sentence (61), the S goes round by avoiding mentioning death and instead uses associative clue through burial which has been personalised as an act of the soil eating up people thus violating

the maxim of relation. The sentence (62) also makes use of the violation of the maxim of relation by euphemising death as a journey and avoiding being direct in the sense that the S provides clue to the H to infer meaning through association of the transition from the living to the spirit world. Sentence (63) makes proper use of tautology by using reference to death but strictly avoiding being direct in all means thereby violating the maxim of quantity. Here death is euphemised as a rest, a deep sleep as well as a long journey thus violating the maxim of quantity through use of metaphors. The difference between sentence (61), (62) and (63) is that (61) is used by grown-ups to grown-ups while (62) and (63) are used by grown-ups to young ones.

64. *Kansa ini betusyechu koame chito kotiliit.*

This cancer nowadays eats people clean

65. *Sire mny'ondap kasarii?ipuktoisye kou pirirwet ne lel eng itonwek tukul.*

Is it more like the current disease? It is sweeping like a new broom across all ages

A look into sentence (64) and (65) gives one the picture of devastating effects of diseases. Sentence (64) again like sentence (61) personifies cancer as a man-eater that takes on a person bit by bit until they end up dead. The interlocutor in sentence (65) however, does not see cancer as a bigger threat in comparison to HIV/AIDS euphemized as 'the current disease.' That it is a killer disease for both the young and the old has been euphemized through the metaphor 'new broom' which definitely sweeps clean to mean that HIV/AIDS can finish up an entire family. Sentence (64) to a larger extent violates the maxim of quantity through exaggeration of the nature of the disease of the meaning is taken from the literal. On the other hand HIV/AIDS is so feared to the point there is no direct reference to it except through violation of relation maxim by use of associative clues in sentence (65).

From the data collected from sentence (47) to (65) it becomes quite clear that off-record strategy is mostly used through violation of the maxim of relation and the maxim of quality while violation of maxim of quantity occurs minimally. The data also informs that an utterance can fall into more than one category of off-record strategy through violation of the Gricean maxims as brought out in sentences (47), (52), (55), (58) and (63).

The study further established though weakly the assertions that some terms are formed by interlocutors to serve the moment and that such application may not produce the same results if and when applied in different circumstances. This usage is clearly brought out under sentences (48), (49), (55), (57) and (58).

3.5 Conclusion

The study explored negative politeness strategies as used by Kipsigis interlocutors and was able to establish that the most common strategy was conventional indirectness followed by questioning or hedging. the study also found out that euphemisms arise when referring to tabooed body parts like pubic hair and breasts; bodily function and effluvia from the organ of sex, micturition and defecation like defecation, urinate, menstruation and vomit; sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution like expression of interest to have sex or informing another that the partner is having a sexual relationship, erection, prostitute and prostitution, testicles, matters relating to ejaculation and to refer to a victim of rape; to talk about terminal or incurable diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS, death, mental and physical handicap.

The study also established that off-record strategy is mostly applied through violation of Gricean maxim of relation and the maxim of quality while violation of maxim of quantity occurs minimally. It was observed that utterances can fall into more than one category of off-record

strategy and that interlocutors become creative and coin terms to serve the purpose of the moment and that such applications may produce a different result if and when applied in different circumstances.

It is therefore safe to conclude from the data presented in this chapter that Kipsigis interlocutors use euphemisms by employing conventional indirectness, hedging/questioning and through violation of Gricean maxims and that some euphemisms are coined by some interlocutors to satisfy communicative purposes and are therefore not assigned permanent meaning.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL DISTANCE INFLUENCE ON KIPSIGIS EUPHEMISM

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter showed how Kipsigis interlocutors apply euphemisms in their speech so as to save on FTAs. This chapter highlights how social distance affects the use of euphemisms among Kipsigis interlocutors. It looks into how different age groups and different sexes relate and use language in their communication. The data used in this chapter largely relied on the questionnaires administered and supplemented by interview data to make it to twenty-five respondents.

4.2 Gender relations and euphemism

From the data analysed, 92% of the respondents felt that mostly the females would use euphemisms more readily than their male counterparts when communicating. 64% of the respondents said that the males would only change and even then only momentarily when the females are peers. This could be attributed to the fact that females tend to be more coy and modest than the males, especially among the Kalenjins.

The study further established that 80% of the respondents thought the males had lesser restrictions when it came to the use of direct terms among themselves while a further 88% of the respondents felt that the situation did not help if the interlocutors happened to be of the same age group. It was also noted that 76% of the respondents felt that the males lacked moral regards

when addressing their female counterparts especially so with the young adults and would therefore end up being direct when speaking thereby disregarding politeness principles.

4.3 Age influence on euphemism

From the study it was noted that when it came to addressing the elders in the society, 92% of the respondents said that the interlocutors would stick to euphemism to avoid embarrassment or possible backlash.

84% of the respondents felt that for the same reason of avoiding embarrassment and saving the face of the S, the interlocutors would resort to euphemisms when addressing the young ones in the society.

The reason given by most of the respondents, who accounted for about 84%, for using euphemism with the elders is because the elders are so much respected in the community and the speakers would do anything not to provoke them as well as maintain the speaker's decorum among the elders lest they be branded ill-mannered and foul mouthed. In essence it boils down to the want to save on their face before the elders as well as the face of the elders.

When it came to addressing the younger ones, the study established that 96% of the respondents felt that the speakers chose to stick to euphemism as opposed to direct terms for the reason that the young ones emulate what their elders tend to do hence using direct terms in the place of euphemism would impart what is considered by the society as dirty language and inappropriate moral behaviour. Further probe revealed that this was taken more serious since negative things have a tendency of being taken up more readily than positive things especially by the developing minds.

The vast majority of the respondents who made 92% said that older peers tended to refrain from using direct terms and opted to use euphemisms in most of their conversations. This could be attributed to the role they have to play in the society through setting up a good example and emphasizing on good morals exhibited both through speech and conduct.

However, in response to the question that sought to establish the circumstances under which interlocutors could resort to directness as opposed to the use of euphemism, there were varied responses from the respondents where some said that when the interlocutors are drinking alcohol, the tendency to abort decency and politeness increases irrespective of the gender involved as the participants tend to be freer and in light spirits while others thought that such occurrences happen when interlocutors are annoyed, stressed, cursing or swearing.

The same could not be said or be applicable to the young adult peers. 68% of the respondents felt that in most cases than not, the young adults would perform bald on-record and even seemed to be enjoying it. However, it is important to clarify that bald on-record was mostly performed by the male peers and less by the female peers. The situation would not change much when the opposite genders were in the company of each other. The study could not establish why the young adult male peers dispreferred euphemisms other than that it was a stage of self-discovery, independence and exploration.

The study further found out that 80% of the respondents were of the view that the above group of young adults would have some control when addressing younger people and especially the children. It also noted that when an elder happened to be in the vicinity and that the elder might hear the on-going conversation, the interlocutors would henceforth switch to euphemisms best

understood by themselves. This discovery therefore points to the fact that the young adults would intentionally use bald on-record for reasons best known to them.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found out that females generally use euphemisms compared to their male counterparts. The males preferred to go bald-on record, more so when they are of the same age group. However, the trend changed when the involved party happened to be the mature adults in the society. It was also noted that the young male adults did not seem to change their speech in the company of their female peers and even when they changed, it was only temporarily.

The study further noted that the elderly and the young ones were addressed using euphemistic language in relation to tabooed words. This was said to be influenced by the need to preserve respect for the elderly and the need to act as positive role-models for the young ones so as to bring up a morally upright society for the next generation. The study revealed that older peers tended to refrain from using direct terms and opted for euphemism in their conversations due to their role in society. However, euphemism could be abandoned when interlocutors are drinking alcohol irrespective of the gender or when interlocutors are annoyed, stressed, cursing or swearing.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This being the concluding chapter gives summary and findings of the study, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research on pragmatic study of Kipsigis euphemisms.

5.2 Summary and findings of the study

This study purposed to look at the pragmatic form, function and interpretation of euphemisms as used by the Kipsigis. It defined euphemisms according to Allan and Burridge (1991) as alternatives to dispreffered expressions used in order to avoid possible loss of face. The dispreffered expression maybe taboo, fearsome, distasteful or for some other reason have too many negative connotations to felicitously execute speakers' communicative intention on a given occasion.

The study used the following objectives to introspect into the topic: To group euphemisms into categories according to functions, to study euphemisms as negative politeness and off-record strategies in Kipsigis and to explore the influence of social distance among the Kipsigis on the use of euphemisms.

The theoretical framework used on the study was based on politeness theory formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987) which postulates that people use politeness as a way of known

deception, in order to help preserve each other's face needs and avoid face threatening acts. The study relied on negative politeness strategies and off-record politeness strategies.

The study adopted random sampling to collect focused information as it selects typical and useful cases only and saves on time and money as put forth by Oso and Onen (2005). The target population was of Kipsigis natives who consisted of ten adults of forty years and above who were considered to be well versed with their culture and values as well as twenty youths ranging between the ages of eighteen to thirty years so as to bring out the influence of age on the usage of euphemisms. The total sample was made up of twenty males and ten females so as to establish the influence of gender on euphemistic usage. The tools used for data collection were questionnaires, observations and structured oral interviews. The target population was drawn from Kapsoit location of Kericho County.

On the first objective, the study found out that indeed Kipsigis euphemisms could be categorized according to functions or purposes. The categorization used Rathje's (2010) model and modified it to come up with the following:

Body parts and effluvia where the terms such as breasts, buttocks, sperms, pubic hair, defecating, menstruation, faeces, urine and urinating were included; the sexual organs, acts of sex and prostitution which included words such as penis, vagina, testicles, erection, ejaculation, sexual intercourse, rape and prostitute and the last category being diseases, death, mental and physical handicap. It included such terms as HIV/AIDS, cripple, deaf, mute and blind. All the above terms were considered to be either taboo or causing embarrassment or stigmatization to be uttered directly. The direct terms were given alongside the euphemistic terms as used among the Kipsigis.

On the second objective which required a look into the use of negative and off-record politeness strategies, the data acquired was arranged according to the category in the above paragraph. The negative politeness used was mainly performed through conventional indirectness and through questioning or hedging as a deliberate move to avoid being direct in matters that are considered to be taboo in Kipsigis community hence circumventing directness to save on face and avoid embarrassment while the off-record strategy was performed through violation of the Gricean maxim of manner, quality, quantity and relevance. From the data collected it became quite clear that off-record strategy is mostly used through violation of the maxim of relation and the maxim of quality while violation of maxim of quantity occurs minimally. The data also informed that an utterance can fall into more than one category of off-record strategies.

The study further established though weakly the assertions that some terms are formed by interlocutors to serve the moment and that such applications may not produce the same results if and when applied in different circumstances.

The last objective was to establish on how social distance affects the use of euphemisms among the Kipsigis interlocutors. The social distance so used for this study was pegged on gender relations and age factor. The study found out that gender influenced how euphemism is employed by interlocutors. The females used euphemism almost exclusively irrespective of their age than their male counterparts. It further noted that the young male adults preferred to go bald-on record especially in their own company and sometimes in the company of their female peers. However, the trend changed as they continued to age. It was also established that apart from gender, the other component that affected the usability of euphemism was age. The young ones together with the elders in the society were addressed using euphemisms. The elders in their own company would also use euphemism more than being direct. The times where the above was

broken was whenever they were drinking alcohol, annoyed, stressed, cursing or swearing. The young male adults in would only use euphemism if they were addressing a child or an elder or whenever an elder was in the vicinity and could hear their conversations.

5.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, this study has established that Kipsigis euphemisms can be grouped according to functions. In addition to that, Kipsigis interlocutors exhibit both negative politeness and off record politeness strategies in their day to day conversations. The usage of such euphemisms are influenced by social distance such as gender and age where the young adults prefer to use dysphemism while the young ones and the old together with the females use euphemisms in their daily conversations.

These observations therefore qualify all the three hypotheses as positive.

5.4 Recommendations

This study looked into euphemism based on negative and off-record strategies of politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987). The researcher found out that there are still gaps that need to be studied and therefore came up with the following recommendations for further studies:

A study on positive politeness and bald on-record be undertaken to establish their use and usefulness in Kipsigis language.

A comparative study of euphemism among the Kalenjin dialects should be undertaken to view similarity and dissimilarity in its usage and to have a clear view of how regional variation effect on euphemisms.

A lexical study should be undertaken to establish permanent euphemisms in all areas and temporal euphemisms as used by the Kipsigis. This study could be able to bring out the evolution of euphemistic words since pre-colonial era to the present time and how other terms have evolved.

A proper study to establish the circumstances that lead interlocutors to abandon euphemisms be undertaken.

REFERENCES

- Afe, A. E. (2013, January 28). Taboos and the Maintenance of Social Order in the Old Ondo Province, Southwestern Nigeria. *African Research Review*, 7(1), 95-109.
- African Religions- Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 10, 2015, from Death reference Web site: www.deathreference.com/A-Bi/African-Religions.html
- Allan, K., & Burridge, K. (2006). *Forbidden words: Taboo and the censoring of language*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Allen, K., & Burridge, K. (1991). *Euphemism and Dysphemism: language used as shield and weapon*. Oxford: OUP.
- Amakari, P. (n.d.). *academia.edu*. Retrieved 07 07, 2015, from [www.academia.edu/Sex and Marriage_an African Perspective](http://www.academia.edu/Sex_and_Marriage_an_African_Perspective).
- Anderson, L., & Trudgill, P. (1990). *Bad Language*. Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.
- Apte, M. (1994). Taboo word. In *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (Vol. 9, pp. 4512-4514). Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. OUP.
- Babatunde, S. T., & Adedimeji, M. A. (n.d.). *The Theory and Practice of Politeness*. Ilorin: University of Ilorin.
- Bakhtiar, M. (2012). Communicative Functions of Euphemisms in Persian. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 5(20), 7-12.

- Blum-Kulka, S. (1989). Playing it safe: The role of conventionality in indirectness. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House, & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Requests and apologies* (pp. 37-70). Norwood: Ablex Publishing.
- Brown, p., & Lewinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in language*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Duda, B. (2011). Euphemism and Dysphemism:in Search of a Boundary Line. *Círculo de Lingüística Aplicada a la Comunicación*, 45(1), 3-19. doi:10.5209/rev_CLAC.2011.v45.1
- Fenandez, E. C. (2006). The Language of Death: Euphemism and conceptual Metaphorization in Victorian Obituaries. *SKY Journal of Linguistics*, 101-130.
- Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole, & J. Morgan (Eds.), *Studies in Synta and Semantics III: Speech Acts* (pp. 183-98). New York: Academic Press.
- Ham, K. (2005). The Linguistics of Euphemism:A Diachronic Study of Euphemism Formation. *Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 4(2), 227-263.
- Hill, B., Ide, S., Ikuta, S., Kawasaki, A., & Ogina, T. (1986). Universals of linguistic politeness:quantitative evidence from Japanese and American English for specific purposes. *Journal of pragmatics*, 10, 347 - 371.
- Horn, L. (2006). 'Implicature'. In L. Horn, & G. Ward (Eds.), *The Handbook of Pragmatics* (pp. 3-28). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- iol . (2013, June 28). Death is a taboo topic in Qunu. Cape Town, South Africa.

- Jay, T. (1996). *Why we curse: A Neuro-Psycho-Social Theory of Speech*. Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- King, L. M. (2013). In discourse-towards a Pan-African psychology: Drum rolls for a psychology of emancipation. *Journal of Black Psychology*(39), 223-231.
- Kitamaru, N. (2000). "Adapting Brown and Levinson's 'Politeness' Theory to the Analysis of Casual Conversations". *Proceedings of ALS2k, the 2000 Conference of the Australian Linguistic Society*. Sydney.
- KNBS. (2010). *The 2009 Kenya population and housing census*. Nairobi: Government printers.
- Larson, M. (1984). *Meaning-based translation*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman Publishers.
- Machera, M. (2004). Opening a Can of Worms: A Debate on Female Sexuality in the Lecture Theatre. In S. A. (ed), *Re-thinking Sexualities in Africa*. Uppsala: Nordic African Institute.
- Matsumoto, Y. (1988). Re examination of the universality of face: Politeness in Japanese. *Journal of pragmatics*, 12, 403 - 426.
- Mbaya, M. (2002). Linguistic taboo in African marriage context: A study of the Oromo Laguu. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 11(2), 224-235.
- Mugambi, J., & Magesa, L. (1990). The Church in African Society. In *Innovative Essays in Ecclesiology*. Nairobi: Initiative Publishers Ltd.

- Nyakoe, D. G., Matu, P. M., & Ongarora, D. O. (2012, July). Conceptualization of 'Death is a Journey' and 'Death as Rest' in EkeGusii Euphemism. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(7), 1452-1457.
- Nyandiba, C. (2013). Silencing the Epidemic: Stories from Patients in Herbal Clinics in Kenya. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 4(2), 359-364.
- Ogiermann, E. (2009). *On Apologizing in Negative and Positive Politeness*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin Publishing Company.
- Oso, W. Y., & Onen, D. (2005). *A General Guide to Writing Research Proposal and Report*. Kisumu: Options Press and Publishers.
- Oyetade, S. O. (1994). *Taboo Expressions in Yoruba Africa and Ubersee*. Band 77.
- Pino, C. (2011). Politeness and Face Theory: Implications for the Backchannel Style of Japanese L1/L2 Speakers. (D. S. Giannoni, & C. Ciarlo, Eds.) *Language Studies Working Papers*, 3, 51-57.
- Qanbar, N. (2011). A Sociolinguistic study of the Linguistic Taboos in the Yemeni Society. *MJAL*, 3(2).
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. (1939). *Taboo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rathje, M. (2010). *Generationsprog*. Kobenhavn: Dansk Sprognaevn.
- Samoskaite, L. (2011). *21st century political euphemisms in english newspapers: semantic and structural study*. Vilnius Pedagogical University: Unpublished MA Paper.

Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech Act Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Steiner, F. (1975). *Taboo*. London: Cohem and West.

Thomas Nelson, Inc. (1985). *New King James Version*. National Publishing Company.

UNICEF. (2013). *Children and Young People With Disabilities: Fact Sheet*. New York:
UNICEF.

Wardhaugh, R. (1998). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

World Health Organization. (1990). *International classification of impairments and handicaps*.
Geneva, Switzerland: WHO.

World Health Organization. (2011). *World report on disability*. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO
Press.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KIPSIGIS EUPHEMISMS

This questionnaire is designed to determine euphemisms as employed in Kipsigis language. Your honest response answer will help to reach an informed conclusion in this subject. No personal information will be shared in any way.

1. Personal information

- i. Age _____
- ii. Gender _____
- iii. Place of residence _____
- iv. Level of education _____
- v. Religion _____

2. In the following list below, indicate by ticking in the box against each category or writing according to the given instructions

A. Which word(s) do you consider as being taboo or embarrassing to openly talk about?

- 1) Armpit
- 2) Breasts
- 3) Buttocks
- 4) Penis
- 5) Vagina
- 6) Erection
- 7) Ejaculation
- 8) Pregnancy
- 9) Sexual intercourse

- 10) Sperms
- 11) Pubic hair
- 12) Rape
- 13) Menstruation
- 14) Abortion
- 15) Faeces
- 16) Urine
- 17) Defecating
- 18) Urinating
- 19) HIV/AIDS
- 20) Syphilis
- 21) Gonorrhoea
- 22) Diarrhoea
- 23) Cancer
- 24) High blood pressure
- 25) Diabetes
- 26) Leukaemia
- 27) Suicide
- 28) Murder
- 29) Prostitute
- 30) Death
- 31) Madness
- 32) Cripple
- 33) Deaf
- 34) Mute

- 35) Blind
- 36) Saliva and salivating
- 37) Sweat and Sweating
- 38) Vomit
- 39) Testicles

B. From the words above, kindly provide the equivalent term (translation) from your mother tongue

- 1) Armpit _____
- 2) Breasts _____
- 3) Buttocks _____
- 4) Penis _____
- 5) Vagina _____
- 6) Erection _____
- 7) Ejaculation _____
- 8) Pregnancy _____
- 9) Sexual intercourse _____
- 10) Sperms _____
- 11) Pubic hair _____
- 12) Rape _____
- 13) Menstruation _____
- 14) Abortion _____
- 15) Faeces _____
- 16) Urine _____
- 17) Defecating _____

- 18) Urinating _____
- 19) HIV/AIDS _____
- 20) Syphilis _____
- 21) Gonorrhoea _____
- 22) Diarrhoea _____
- 23) Cancer _____
- 24) High blood pressure _____
- 25) Diabetes _____
- 26) Leukaemia _____
- 27) Suicide _____
- 28) Murder _____
- 29) Prostitute _____
- 30) Death _____
- 31) Madness _____
- 32) Cripple _____
- 33) Deaf _____
- 34) Mute _____
- 35) Blind _____
- 36) Saliva and salivating _____
- 37) Sweat and Sweating _____
- 38) Vomit _____
- 39) Testicles _____

C. Which other word(s) would you likely use instead of the ones translated above

- 1) Armpit _____
- 2) Breasts _____

- 3) Buttocks _____
- 4) Penis _____
- 5) Vagina _____
- 6) Erection _____
- 7) Ejaculation _____
- 8) Pregnancy _____
- 9) Sexual intercourse _____
- 10) Sperms _____
- 11) Pubic hair _____
- 12) Rape _____
- 13) Menstruation _____
- 14) Abortion _____
- 15) Faeces _____
- 16) Urine _____
- 17) Defecating _____
- 18) Urinating _____
- 19) HIV/AIDS _____
- 20) Syphilis _____
- 21) Gonorrhoea _____
- 22) Diarrhoea _____
- 23) Cancer _____
- 24) High blood pressure _____
- 25) Diabetes _____
- 26) Leukaemia _____
- 27) Suicide _____

- 28) Murder _____
- 29) Prostitute _____
- 30) Death _____
- 31) Madness _____
- 32) Cripple _____
- 33) Deaf _____
- 34) Mute _____
- 35) Blind _____
- 36) Saliva and salivating _____
- 37) Sweat and Sweating _____
- 38) Vomit _____
- 39) Testicles _____

3. In your opinion, which gender do you think is most likely to use the alternative word instead of the direct word when:

- a. Addressing the same gender? _____
- b. Addressing the opposite gender? _____
- c. Addressing an elder person? _____
- d. Addressing a younger person? _____
- e. Addressing a peer? _____

4. Briefly explain your reasons for the choices in question 3 above.

7. Kindly give the circumstances under which an individual may be forced to be direct in place of indirectness

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The information being sought will be used for purposes of this academic study alone. Your participation is therefore vital to reach a valid conclusion. No personal information will be released or shared to anybody.

Questions

1. Kindly state your names, age and gender
2. How well can you say you know and understand this language?
3. What do you consider as being taboo in as far as Kipsigis language is concerned?
4. Kindly give as many examples as you can of words that you consider taboo or embarrassing in Kipsigis language
5. How else do you go about talking of such terms among the people of Kipsigis
6. In your experience with other Kipsigis speakers, which gender will you say uses the alternative terms when:
 - a) Addressing the same gender
 - b) Addressing the opposite gender
 - c) Addressing an elder person
 - d) Addressing a younger person
 - e) Addressing a fellow age-mate
7. In your own understanding, how does age influence or affect the usage of alternative terms in your language?
8. Are there instances when a speaker may abandon the usage of alternative terms?
9. If there are, kindly give such instances?

Thank you for your cooperation and information.

APPENDIX C: KIPSIGIS/ENGLISH GLOSSARY

	Kipsigis dispreferred term (Taboo word)	Kipsigis preferred term (Euphemistic word)	English translation
Breasts	Kinaik	Tekeet ab jebyosok	Woman's chest
Buttocks	Let	Oloo kitebee/Patai	Sitting place/behind
Sperms	Muneek	Kootyeek/lagok	Seedlings/children
Pubic hair	Sumekab ungot	Suumek	Hair
Vomit	King'uung	Keweek	To return
Defecating	Keyai sigiik	Kemanda	To go out
Menstruation	Karatik	Chebo arawet	Of the mouth
Faeces	Sigiik	Tuguk (used contextually)	Things
Urine	Sokosen	Beek	Water
Urinate	Kesokos	Keyay beek	To make water
Penis	Taritiet	Musa	
Vagina	Munyesta	Kepkoko/Kapkwony	Woman's place
Testicles	Mukuik	Oliin (used contextually)	There
Erection	Kotononsi	Ke ngeet	To wake up/rise up
Ejaculation	Muneek	Ketumda/Kemwokto	To pour/to shoot
Sexual intercourse	Kumisiet	Keruiyo/kesesnotet	To sleep
Rape	Riebet	Kikipir	Beaten
Prostitute	Mukinatet	Wendote	Walks around
HIV/AIDS	Ukimny'oot	Bortab betusiechu/mnyondob kasari/sisit	The current body/ the latest disease
Syphilis	Takaneet	Mnyondab oliin	The disease of there/that place

Gonorrhoea	Kipsununut	Mnyondab oliin	
Cripple	Solomwet	Makararan borto/mawendote	The body is unwell/cannot walk
Deaf	Mokosto	Mokosei/makase	Unable to hear
Mute	Kiming' atyaat	Mongololii/mang' alale	Unable to speak
Blind	kipkoratyaat	Mokeere/magere	Unable to see
Suicide	Koip sobet	Kiam kerichek	To swallow medicine
Murder	Par	Ke tar/Kiges	To finish
Death	Meet	Kesirto	To pass
Murder	Borisiet/Rumisiet	Taret ab sabeet	Ending life
Madness	iywandet	Metit ne makararan	A bad head