

LUBA PEOPLE AND POLITENESS IN THEIR EVERYDAY SPEECHES

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ABSTRACT

I totally agree with Ayad Hameed Mahmood (2018), as he states that in the last few decades, communicative competence has received special attention in the field of language teaching and learning. Politeness has become one of the most active areas of research in language use by increasing interest in Grice's (1975) cooperative principles (Chen, 2007). Studies from Brown and Levinson (1987) and Scollon and Scollon (1995) have aroused increasing attention in the study of politeness. The present article shed light on the way Luba people, one of numerous tribes of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, use politeness in their daily speeches. The aim is to provide Ciluba speakers with some literatures concerning their language as far as politeness is concerned, and the non-speakers of ciluba with some basic linguistic elements of that language, in case they happen to learn it.

African continent is generally characterized by strong respect between its people. Bound to their culture, Africans feel much respect for members of their community (Ngondombo 2021). Luba areas, as part of African society, are characterized by their notoriousness as far as politeness is concerned. Lots of examples can be given to support this point of view of an old Congolese. For instance, to behave politely, a man cannot talk face to face with his mother-in-law, or when addressing an old man the young boy or girl cannot stare at him in the eyes. Ladies must kneel when they serve men. It is impolite for a woman to pass between men, for instance. If they are asked to eat in the same plate with adults, young people must wait until the elder should start eating first, etc.

Keywords: Politeness, use, Baluba, Ciluba

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Koike (1989), politeness is believed to be a crucial part of pragmatic competence of the speaker's knowledge besides the rules of appropriateness which together determine how to perform and comprehend speech acts in a social interaction. This statement shows the interrelationship between politeness and speech acts.

Politeness is seen as a foundation of social interaction in communities across the world. For that reason Leech (2006) defined politeness as a set of practices deployed to 'avoid communicative discord or offence, and maintain communicative concord'.

It can be said that politeness does not concern our nonverbal behaviors only, but our speech as well. I agree with Ayad Hameed Mahmood (2018), that in daily interactions in any language, to look polite, one is required to commit to a system of social rules which govern the selection

of words and shape the forms of sentences. One of the serious challenge for learners of a second language is the social norms of a language which are often local in nature. The reference to appropriate or non-appropriate use of politeness can, positively or negatively, impact on inhabitants' relationship.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Politeness:

According to Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1989), Politeness refers to how languages express the social distance between speakers and their different role relationships; it once can be understood as a social phenomenon, a means to achieve good interpersonal relationships, and a norm imposed by social conventions. So it is phenomenal, instrumental and normative by nature. In many ways, politeness is universal. It can be observed as a phenomenon in all cultures; it is resorted to by speakers of different languages as a means to an end and it is recognized as a norm in all societies. Despite its universality the actual manifestations of politeness, the ways to realize politeness, and the standards of judgment differ in different cultures. Such differences should be traced back to the origin of the notion of politeness in different cultures.

According to Crystal (2008), politeness is a term which characterizes linguistic features mediating norms of social behavior, in relation to such notions as courtesy, rapport, deference and distance. Foley (1995) defines politeness as a bunch of strategies used by interlocutors to get smoothly engaged in daily social interactions. This clearly shows that politeness uses linguistic features in order to realize social purposes.

For Holmes (2001), politeness is appropriateness in utterances. He links the level of politeness to the relationship between the interactants, postulating that "being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of the relationship".

2.2 Use: The action or fact of using something. To put into service; make work or employ for a particular purpose or for its inherent or natural purpose.

2.3 Baluba: The baluba of Kasai are one of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo living principally in the region of Kasai, in the south of the river Sankuru, and belonging to great Luba group. They speak Tshiluba or Ciluba.

2.4 Ciluba: Ciluba is among the four national languages of the DRC. It is spoken mainly in the former Kasai Occidental and Kasai Oriental. It is the vehicular language of these two provinces. Ngoma (2006). This language is recognized as a national language by article 1 of the constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo of 2006.

Ciluba is a Bantu language classified among the Luba languages, which constitute half of group L of the classification of Bantu languages according to Guthrie. There are two variants. The Kasai Oriental buluba and the Cyena lulua (L31a and L31b in the Linguistic Atlas).

3.0 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF CILUBA

Ciluba or Luba-kasai is a Bantu language spoken by approximately 7 million speakers (1991) in the provinces of Kasai, Kasai-central, Kasai-oriental and Sankuru in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in the province of Lunda-Nord in Angola by 60,000 speakers (2018).

4.0 LINGUISTIC ASPECT OF TSHILUBA

In fact, Ciluba is the harmonized language based on Baluba and Cyena luluwa. The variant spoken in Kasai Oriental differs from that of Kasai Occidental in tone, intonation and certain final vowels (Ngoma: 2006). It is from the Luba language group.

- Niger-Congolese languages (hypothetical family)
 - Atlantic-Congolese languages
 - Voltaic-Congolese languages (hypothetical)
 - Benue-Congolese languages
 - Bantoid languages
 - Southern Bantoid languages
 - Bantu languages
 - Zone L (Guthrie classification)
 - Luba languages
 - Luba-kasai

L31

Luba-kasai is commonly called by its autonym, written “Ciluba” or “Tshiluba”. It is also called luba-luluwa, notably in the ISO 639 standard, or even western luba. It is sometimes also called “Luba” but this name can also designate other Luba languages. Ethnologue also indicates the name “bena-luluwa”; Beena luluwa (literally “members of Luluwa” strictly designating the Luluwa and their speaking being the Cyena luluwa or the name “Luva” but this rather designates the Kiluba (transcribed “kiluva” or “kiluba” by certain 20th century authors like Van Bulck in which the bilabial becomes a fricative between two vowels.

Ex. The vowel e is realized a in Buluba and e in Cyena Luluwa; the vowel o is realized o in L31a and u in L31b.

Ex. Bupola/Bupole = peace

Nzoolu/Nzoolo = hen

| L31a | L31b | English |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|
|-------------|-------------|----------------|

| | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| Ndi ndya | Ncidi ndya | I'm eating |
| Ndi | Ncidi | I am |
| Bupola | Bupole | Peace |
| Meema Meeme | Me | |

1. The sounds of the Luba language

Ciluba has three kinds of sounds: vowels, consonants and semi-consonants.

1.1 The vowels

Phonologically, Ciluba has five vowel units:

| | |
|---|---|
| i | u |
| e | o |
| a | |

/i/ Diyi: voice

/e/ kutela: to sew

/a/ Taatu: father

/o/ kumona: see

/u/ kututa: hit

- Semi-vowels

/y/ myanda: (business)

/w/ wawa: that one

1.2 Consonants

/b/ bulaba: earth

/c/ or /tsh/ cinu: knee

/d/ Ditama: play

/f/ Mfumu: leader

/h/ or /p/ kuhambuka: to hang oneself

/j/ Njila: road

/k/ kukwata: stop

/l/ Kulala: sleep

/m/ kumana: end

/n/ nzoolu: hen

/p/ou /h/ Mupanu/Muhanu: pants

/s/ Kusomba: to sit, to stand

/t/ Tuutu: big brother

/v/ Mvula: rain

/z/ nzala: hunger

The following combinations are often encountered in the Ciluba language:

1.3 Consonant combinations

Consonant combinations offer the following possibilities:

- Nasal consonant (NC)

| | | |
|----|-------------|---------------|
| Mb | Mbulamatadi | government |
| | Mbangilu | the beginning |
| Nk | Nkasu | hoe |
| Nd | ndundu | ball |
| Mf | Mfwalanga | Money |
| Nj | njiji | flies |
| Ng | Ngondo | month |
| Mp | Mpala | face |
| Nz | nzadi | nails |
| nt | ntambwe | lion |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|
| Mv | mvula | rain |
| - Consonant Semi-vowel (CS) | | |
| By | byama | iron |
| Py | kapyā | fire or hot |
| Dy | kudya | to eat |
| Ky | kya | small buttock |
| Vy | muvyele | father-in-law or mother-in-law |
| Bw | bwatu | canoe |
| Dw | dwesu | pot or pan |
| Kw | kwake | leave |
| Fw | kufwa | death |
| Sw | kuswa | to accept with pleasure |

- Nasal semi-vowel

| | |
|------------|-------|
| Ex.: Myaku | words |
| kunwa | drink |

- Nasal semi-vowel consonant (NCS)

| | | |
|-----|--------|------------------|
| Nnw | nnwa | to drink |
| Npw | mpweka | descend |
| Nkw | Nkwata | take |
| Mvw | Mvwala | wear the clothes |
| Mfw | Mfwana | to look like |
| Nsw | Nswa: | |

The nasal consonant n always takes the point of articulation of the consonant it precedes in a combination. We will have the consonant m in front of the following bilabial consonants: f, v p, b and m. In front of the dental, glottal and palatal consonants, we will have the nasal n. Before the semi-vowel w we will have the consonant m. The consonant n goes before the semi-vowel y.

Examples of the nasal consonant

Ex: Ngondo = Month

N.B. The consonant G does not exist in Ciluba as a sound, but this consonant always appears after the nasal n.

Before bilabial consonants:

/m/ Mfwalanga = money

/p/ Mputa = wound

/v/ Mvunde = Tourbillon

/b/ Mbulamatadi = Government

Mbangilu = The Beginning

Examples of the nasal consonant in front

- Dental consonants:

/d/ Ndundu = Ball

/t/ Ntambwe = Lion

- Palatal consonants

/j/ Njila = Road

/z/ Nzadi =

- Glotal or uvular consonants

/g/ Ngondo = Month

- Semi-vowel w

/w/ mwana = Child

Before a nasal consonant n, we write the nasal n.

/n/ Nana Resin of certain trees

N'nwenu = it's you

- Prefixes

In the Bantu languages, which include the four national languages of the DRC, it is the nominal prefixes that control the agreements in the sentences. The number of classes of the nominal prefixes is expressed by opposition or even by “pairing of classes”.

In Ciluba, pairing numbers look like this:

CI1/2: mu/ba muntu/Bantu = Man/Men

CI1 a/2: o/ba Taatu/bataatu = father/fathers

CI3/4: mu/mi Muci/Mici = Tree/ Trees

CI5/6: di/ma Ditama/matama = Cheek/cheeks

CI7/8: ci/bi Cimuna/bimuna = Fruit/Fruits

CI9/10: n/n Nzolu/nzolu = Chicken/Chickens

m/m Mbuji/Mbuji = Goat/Goats

CI11/10: lu/n Lukasu/Nkasu = Houe/Houes

CI12/13: ka/tu Kadilu/Tudilu = Fire/Fires

CI14/6: bu/ma Buta/mata = Rifle/Rifles

CI15: ku kulaala = Sleep

CI16: pa Pa nzubu = on the house

CI17: ku ku nzubu = at home

CI18: mu mu nzubu = In the house

Classes 16,17 and 18 are rental classes. And class 15 is the class of infinitives.

Here are the nominal, verbal, pronominal and adjectival prefixes in Ciluba

Class P.N. P.V. P.P. P.A Object Infix

CI1 mu- u- mu- mu- -mu-

CI2 ba- ba- ba- ba- -ba-

CI3 mu- u- u- mu- -u-

CI4 mi- i- i- mi- -i-

CI5 di- di- di- di- -di-

C16 my- a- a- my- -a-

C17 ci- ci- ci- ci- -i-

C18 bi- bi- bi- bi- -bi-

C19 n- u- u- mu- -mu-

C110 n- i- i- i- -mi-

C111 lu- lu- lu- lu- -lu-

C112 Ka- Ka- Ka- Ka- -ka-

C113 you- you- you- you- -you-

C114 bu- bu- bu- bu- -bu-

The derivation

Derivation is the process by which a word is formed from a radical by infixation and suffixation. These elements alter the meaning of a word, or better, add additional meaning to the stem.

suffix

Ntu: Male

Luntu: Worthless Man

There are derivative suffixes such as:

The application

- He has the sense to do something for someone

Ex: Ku-lamb-a to prepare the food

Ku-lamb-il-a to prepare food for someone

The causative

-ish: do the action

Ex: kudia: to eat

Ku-di-ish-a: to make eat

The repetitive

-ulul-

Ex: kulomba: ask

Ku-lomb-ulul-a: ask several times, repeatedly

The reverse

-ul-

Ex: ku-kang-a: close

Ku-kang-ul-a: to open

The passive

-ibu-

Ex: ku-kum-a: hit

Ku-kum-iibu-a be hit

infixion

There are two kinds of infixes in Ciluba.

reflexive infix

-di-

Ex: 1) kudila: to cry

Kudi-di-la: to cry for oneself, to cry for oneself

2) kubela: give advice (advise)

Kudibe-la: give each other advice (advise each other)

According to the standardization of spelling, Luba-Kasaï uses the Latin alphabet, with the digraphs “ng”, “ny” and “sh”. The commonly used trigram “tsh” is replaced by the letter “c”. The letters “q”, “r” and “x” are only used in words borrowed from other languages and foreign names.

Tshiluba Alphabet

Letters: a b c d e f g h i j k l m n ng ny o p r s sh t u v w z

Pronunciations: a b tʃ d e f g h i j k l m n ŋ p o p r s ʃ t u v w z

Dialects

Ethnologue notes significant differences between the historical regions of Kasai-Ouest (current province of Kasai and Kasai-Central, populated by the Luluwa ethnic group) and the Bakwaluntu of Kasai Oriental, Lomami and Sankuru populated by the ethnic groups of Bena-Lubilanji, Bena-Konji, Bakwa-Diishô)

Lunenyi Lumwe Maalu-Bungi (1991) gives the two main dialects, each having several varieties:

- Cena-luluà (sometimes written luluwa) or Cena-Kananga, spoken by the Bena-Luluà in the former province of Kasai-Occidental (the current provinces of Kasai and Kasai-Central);
- The Bulubà or Cena-Mbujimayi spoken by the Bena-Lubilanji in the former province of Kasai-Oriental (the current provinces of Kasai-Oriental, Lomami and Sakuru).

Gilles-Maurice de Schryver (1999) includes the speech of the Bakwà-luntu (L31c), in the Kasai-Central province, as the third main dialect of Tshiluba.

Standard Ciluba, also called "Classic Tshiluba", is based on Cikwà-diishi and Cena-mpukà mainly because, historically, their speakers served as early informants to missionaries. Maalu Bungi and Kapudi Kalonga (1992) further indicate that the standard Ciluba of the Catholic missionaries "integrates substantial elements of the Luntu and Luluà dialects", making it a "pan-dialectal, supra-local" speech, unlike the Cilubà of the Protestant missionaries based mainly on Cena-luluà.

Grammar

Noun class prefixes

Class nominal prefix verbal prefix (Subject)

| Example | Translation |
|---------|-------------|
|---------|-------------|

1 mu- u- muntu = person

1a Ø ut- taatù = father

2 ba- ba- bantu = people

2a ba- ba- bataatù = fathers

3 mu- mu- mucima = heart

4 mi-ci-micima = hearts

5 di- di- dikèlà = egg

6 ma- ma- makèlà = eggs

7 ci-ci- cimuma = fruit

8 bi- bi- bimuma = fruits

9 n- n- nunyu = bird

10 n- i- ninyu = birds

11 lu- lu- lukàsu = hoe

10 n- i- nkàsu = hoes

12 ka- ka- kambelè = peanuts

13 tu- tu- tumbelè = peanut

14 bu- bu- budimi = field

6 ma- a- madimi = fields

15 ku- ku- kubala = lira

16 pa(-) pa- pa nzùbu = on the house

17 ku(-) ku- ku nzùbu = at home

18 mu(-) mu- mu nzùbu = in the house

5.0 USE OF POLITENESS IN BALUBA'S EVERYDAY LIFE

1. Greetings

a. Formal Greetings

In Ciluba the following expressions are used to salute people regardless of the time or the period of time the greeting is done: Wetwawu, weto, moyo, moyoawu. Those expressions have their plurals: Betwawu, betwabee, beto, moyi wenu awu.

| | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------|
| Wetwawu or Inoyawu | } | Good morning |
| | | Good afternoon |
| | | Good evening |

In Ciluba to make a formal greeting, one must add an honorific or a title before or after the greeting Moyi or moyawu or wetowawu when the social distance is great or when greeting unknown people.

e.g. * Taatu Moyi = Good morning dad or Good afternoon sir.

* Yaya moyawu = Good evening lady.

* Mulongesha Moyo = Good morning Professor.

* Mamu Moyi = Good morning mum.

* Mfumu moyawu = Good afternoon Chief.

* Inabanja wetowawu = Good morning Lady.

b. Informal Greetings

Informal greeting in Ciluba are simply the reproduction of the formal expressions without titles.

- Weto
 - Wanyawu
 - Wanyo
 - Wetwawu
- } - Hi
- Give me five
- Etc.

2. Introducing people

When they meet someone for the first time, Luba people would say:

- Bienza disanka bwa kutwilangana = Pleased or nice to meet you.
- Bwalu bimpa bwa kutwilangana = Nice to see you.

3. Asking about well being

- Bishi?
 - Udi bishi?
 - Bishi koku?
 - Maalu kayi?
- } How are you?

Answers

- Bimpa
 - Bilenga
- } *Fine or Well*
- Maalu bimpa = things are well.
 - Ndi bimpa = I am fine.
 - Bimpa = Fine.
 - Ndi bilenga = I'm well.

One can note once again that the formal way differs to the informal one just by adding the titles for the first.

4. Saying goodbye

In Ciluba, there is no clear difference between the formal and informal ways of saying goodbye; except the fact of adding the title in the formal one.

a. Formal way

- Ushala bimpa Shabanza = Goodbye Chief.
- Nushala bimpa Taatu = Goodbye father.
- Ne tumonangana Maamu = Goodbye mother.
- Ushala bilenga Mfumu = Goodbye Chief.

b. Informal way

- Ne tumonangana! = So long.
- Ushala bimpa. = Go well.
- Nushala bimpa = go well.
- Ne tumonangana = see you.
- Ushala bilenga = Go well.

5. Requests

For instance asking the way or direction:

- Ndeja koku njila ndi uyaku...? Or Ndeja koku njila wa kuya ku...? = Excuse me. Could you tell me which way ... is?
- Bua lusa, cyena mumanya njila. = Excuse me. I don't know my way around.
- Ndeja koku njila wa kuya ku/ kua...? = Could you please tell me the way to...?
- Ndeja koku njila wa ku lupitadi? = Would you mind telling me on which way the hospital is?
- Ndeja koku njila wa kuya kucisalu? = Could you show me the way to the market, if you don't mind?

The use of 'Koku' makes all the difference between an imperative, which is less polite, and the polite request.

Ex. Mpecha koku = would you please give me

Mpecha = give me.

Ndeja koku njila? = Could you show me the way?

Ndeja njila! = show me the way!

Congo Palace udi penyi? Where is Congo Palace?

6. Asking for permission

- Ndi bwa kuyaku pa mbelu anyi? Or Ndi bwakutuka koku anyi? = Can I go out, please?

- Ndi bwa kwenzaku mudimu ni ni mukanda wa myaku weebe anyi? = Can I use your dictionary?
- Ndi bua kukangila dididisha wewa mwa kuswa anyi? = May I open the window, please?
- Bualusa, ndi mwa kumunaku album weba wa bindidimbi anyi? = Please, can I have a look at your photo album?
- Ndi mwa kulabulaku cyakudya aci anyi? = May I taste that food?
- Ndi mwa kunwaku mfwanka anyi? = Do you mind if I smoke?
- Ndi mwa kukulombaku cintu anyi? = Would you mind if I asked something?
- Mema ni bwa kusomba mwaba ewu, bidi mwa kufika lutatu anyi? = Is it okay if I sit here?
- Bidi mua kukusankisha mema ne mwa kuangata kaamwa kuba ka muyuki anyi? = Would it be alright if I borrowed your mobile phone?

For asking permission, luba people sometimes use the verb Wanyisha in the imperative: Anyisha(singular) Anyishai (plural)

- Anyisha tukangula ordinateur weba= would you allow us to start your computer?
- Anyisha untumina (ku) mulangi? = Would you bring me the bottle?

7. Giving Permission

- Eyowa, ki mbwalu to. = Yes, please do.
- Eyo, yaku kumpala. = Sure, go ahead.
- Eyo. = Sure.
- Kakwena bwalu to. = No problem.
- Eyowa = Please, feel free.
- Eyo eeh. = Of course, You may.
- Ndaku!
- Enzaku
- Njila ndi bwashi/ njila bwashi = You have the green light

8. Refusing to give permission

a. Refusals

- Bwala or to = No.
- Nkutupu = Nothing.
- Ngabenyi = I refuse.
- Kabyena bikumbana = It is not possible.
- Kakwena mushindu to = No way.
- Bwala to. = No, please don't.
- Bwala bwanyi. = I am sorry you can't.
- Kabyena bikumbana to. = I'm sorry, but that's not possible.
- Bwala, cyena muswa to. = I'm afraid, but you can't.
- To, kwenji nanku to. = No, you certainly can't.

e.g. Mujinga, eight years old, is asking her mother for permission to use the computer.

Ciluba version

Mujinga: Maama eh, ngenzaku ka mudimu ni ordinateur anyi?

Mother: Bwala. Diba dyakumbanyi dya bulala.

Mujinga: Ndi bwa kubala mwamu kumpala kwa mene kulala anyi?

Mother: Eyo! Kadi ulala padiba.

Mujinga: Twasakidila wa bunyi, maamu.

English version

Mujinga: Please mum, can I use the computer?

Mother: No, dear you can't. it's time to go to bed.

Mujinga: May I read a story before I sleep?

Mother: Sure! But try to sleep early.

Mujinga: Thanks a lot mummy.

9. Compliments

- Bwala bimpa. Udi mwenza bimpa = that's so kind of you/ Nice of you.
- Udi muntu mwimpa = you are so sweet/kind/ nice/Generous.
- Bilenga bê
- Bimpa bê = very well
- Buta (informal) = Excellent!

10. Apologizing

Mfuila lusa bua... = forgive me for...

Ndi ndomba lusa bua... = I apologize for...

Mbwikidila bua... = I apologize for...?

Mbwikidila literally means cover that for me. Or don't put it on my shoulders. This is cultural and pragmatic.

11. Taboos

In Ciluba some words are considered as taboos. They cannot be said anyhow. They can be used only among peers.

Mataku = buttocks

Cibudi = Penis

Mukoto/ Bunyimu = Vagina

Kusanda =

Kusandangana =

Kuluma =

Kulumangana =

Kunyima = Anus

In order to behave politely or hold a polite speech a Muluba would rather try to soften his speech, that is to say he will avoid to cite those taboo words, by replacing them with the expressions below:

Cisambedi (back) instead of Mataku.

Butaka bwa mulume (Nakedness of a man) instead of Cibundi.

Butaka bwa mukaji (Nakedness of a woman) instead of Bunyimu or Mukoto.

Kwangatanga is said in the place of Kulala or Kushala (to have sexual intercourse or to fuck.)

6.0 CONCLUSION

Baluba or Luba people are one of the batou peoples, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, characterized by strong respect in their interpersonal relationships. This can be noticed in their everyday communications. As said earlier, in daily interactions in any language Ciluba included, to look polite, one is required to commit to a system of social rules which govern the selection of words and shape the forms of sentences. In the present article, after defining the key concepts, the geographical and historical background of Luba people, and the linguistic situation of Ciluba (Language) before shedding light on the practical way of using politeness in Luba people everyday lives.

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