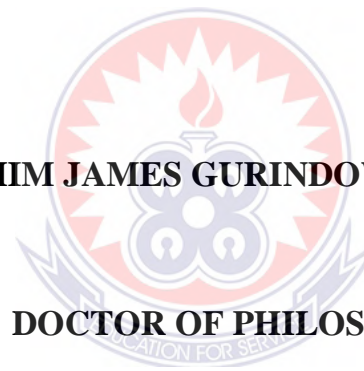


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN DAGBANI: A SOCIO-  
PRAGMATIC APPROACH**

**IBRAHIM JAMES GURINDOW M-MINIBO**



**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**2019**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

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**9140080001**

**A Dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign  
Languages, Linguistics and Communication Studies, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Applied Linguistics)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**MAY, 2019**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Ibrahim James Gurindow M-minibo, declare that, this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

..... (Principal Supervisor)

Signature :.....

Date:.....

..... (Co-Supervisor)

Signature :.....

Date:.....

## **DEDICATION**

To my family



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people supported me in this project: my supervisors: Dr. Saanchi James Ankaaraba and Dr. Samuel A. Atintono. I am grateful for your patience and guidance. Dr. Issah Alhassan Samuel, Profesor Adams Bodomo, Mr. Achaempong Samuel and Dr. Elfreda for reading through and offering very useful suggestions. My Data collection team and all the participants from whom data was collected. To all of you, and my family, I say **taali, Naawuni mali mi yi bukaata.**



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1	First person
2	Second person
3	Third person
ANIM	Animate pronoun
COND	Conditional marker
CONJ	Conjunction marker
COP	Copula
DEF	Definite marker
DM	Discourse marker
DIRM	Directional marker
DISM	Distal marker
EMPH	Emphatic form of pronoun
EPP	Extended projection principle
FOC	Focus marker
IMPERF	Imperfective aspect
IS	Information structure
INAN	Inanimate pronoun
INTER ALIA	Among others
LOC	Locative marker
NEG	Negative morpheme
NOM	Nominaliser
OBJ	Object
PERF	Perfective aspect
PL	Plural

POSS	Possessive determiner
PRT	Particle
PST	Past tense marker
QM	Question marker
SG	Singular
SUB	Subject
VP	Verb phrase
*	Ungrammatical sentence
#	Contextual infelicitous structure



## ABSTRACT

This study offers a systematic socio-pragmatic discussion of politeness strategies in Dagbani, a Gur (Mabia) language belonging to the Oti-Volta branch in the Niger-Congo family. The work focuses on both linguistic and non-linguistic strategies that are employed in the language for the coding of politeness. It employs Brown and Levinson's notion of 'face' as the theoretical framework. The study explores some key thematic areas, which include the correlation between power and politeness, the possible relationship between gender and politeness as well as the correlation between age and politeness strategies in Dagbani under two broad categories-linguistic and non-linguistic politeness strategies. It was found out that there exists a correlation between power, age, gender and politeness. Thus, politeness strategies are marked along the lines of these social determinants. The research also shows that honorifics are used extensively as politeness strategies among speakers of Dagbani. Another interesting finding, which requires additional research in future, is how women are required by societal expectations and cultural underpinnings to use more politeness strategies both verbal and non-verbal in their daily discourse as well as their general behaviour. The study concludes that politeness strategies among the Dagbamba manifest in various forms including sitting arrangement in palaces, dress codes, the use of proverbs and euphemisms as well as linguistic hedges. In all, the effective use of these politeness strategies shows one's communicative competence in Dagbani.

**Key words:** Dagbani, politeness, face saving strategies, gender, honorifics.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

The focus of this dissertation is to give a systematic and detailed account of the politeness strategies employed by speakers of Dagbani in their daily interactions. It is a socio-linguistic study with a focus on how politeness plays out in interpersonal interactions among speakers of Dagbani. Realisation of politeness encompasses both linguistic and non-linguistic strategies as acknowledged by a number of scholars (Marquez-Reiter, 2000; Nwoye, 1992). However, others pay more attention to only the linguistic strategies (Leech 1983, Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987). The study is grounded in the notion of face as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) an idea initiated earlier by Grice (1975), Lakoff (1973) and later espoused by Leech (1983).

Politeness phenomenon, of late, has attracted an enviable attention in sociolinguistic literature. As a result, many empirical investigations and theoretical studies have been conducted in varied related areas such as in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, social psychology, sociology, and communication (Vikki 2006, Haugh 2007). Researchers have investigated the linguistic devices used to convey politeness across languages and cultures. Despite the different approaches adopted in the study of politeness, as observed by Lee-Wong (2000:20), these approaches all deal with politeness as a mitigating factor or as avoidance of confrontation among interlocutors. This is because humans are necessarily social, a fact which demands and defines human relations among individuals in a society. Once humans interact as social beings, there will surely

be confrontations as the words or deeds of one person may not please another given their individual differences and perspectives.

A pre-study of key informants interviewed on Dagbamba perception of politeness showed that no specific linguistic item conveys the term, but related words included respect, courtesy, soft spoken, good behaviour, common sense which all summed up to three terms namely **yem** 'wisdom', **jilima** 'respect' and **biehigu** 'courtesy'. However, **yem**, **jilima**, and **biehigu** are demonstrated not only in language use but also more importantly in one's behaviour in a given context. This has made this study of politeness strategies in Dagbani lean towards a social norm approach where politeness strategies are associated not only with linguistic elements but with social behaviour as well. This is because politeness strategies by Dagbamba go beyond linguistic forms and constructions.

Furthermore, people are mindful to preserve their personal self-image and at the same time take precautions not to offend others they engage with in an interaction. This, they do with the hope of achieving cordiality and promoting peaceful living. They do this hoping to achieve cordiality and go on peacefully (Lakoff 1973; Brown & Levinson 1978: 87; Leech 1983). Brown and Levinson (1987) also associate politeness with linguistic indirectness in which two notions of face are proposed namely negative politeness and positive politeness. For Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness and positive politeness are the very two essential elements, which inform the choice of politeness strategies. They go further to propose that linguistic strategies exhibit direct relationship with three social variables namely level of power (P), distance (D) and rank of the imposition (R) of participants in a speech act.

In the case of Dagbamba, politeness is heavily rooted in the traditional systems of life. These systems regulate human behaviour with the cultural values and practices in what Nukunya (1992) describes as long-held beliefs, customs and authority of the ancestors. The cultural values, therefore, function to supplement the (R) variable and allow culturally shared knowledge (cultural script) to inform individual behaviour, which directly control the power and distance variables.

The Dagbamba live very high communal lives but every single individual in the Dagbamba society is unique with his/her personal qualities, preferences and self- image thus (his/her) individual idiosyncrasies which exist within this communal life. The essence of these interdependent societal systems is that the behaviour of an individual member or group of members of a Dagbamba society is largely informed by the social and cultural expectations of that given Dagbamba community of people-nation, ethnic group, or a village. This is reflected largely by their beliefs, and experience. In effect, acceptable or unacceptable behaviour is constrained by societal expectations and sets of social institutions which impact on an individual's behaviour. Therefore, Dagbamba politeness is rooted in their traditional systems which define and regulate human behaviour in the eye of the values and practices in the society.

Consequently, culturally shared knowledge often becomes a powerful constraint upon a participant's action in an interaction. For example, when a speaker's strategic intentions are inconsistent with interactional norms, he/she utilizes both individual and cultural scripts in order to deflect a high R variable. This affirms the fact that meaning of politeness strategies clearly goes beyond only the words or morphemes of a language. This is because 'Meaning' is a dynamic process negotiated between speaker, hearer and context and not something inherent in words alone (Thomas 1995: 22). In



the same way, language is not merely referential or transactional. It is not just a means of exchanging or transmitting information. But it also, has an affective/ relational/ interactional (interpersonal) function (Holmes 1995). It is also involved in “the management of social relations” (Spencer-Oatey 2000:2).

The point is that what the Dagbamba regard as polite is grounded not only in the linguistic structure of Dagbani but also very importantly in their socio-cultural life. To this end, Dagbamba notion of ‘face’ is that it operates in complex ways that integrate volition (linguistic strategies motivated by ‘face wants’ (see Byon 2006: 258), and discernment (indexing of social relationships) (Salifu, 2012).

In addition, Dagbamba cultural values overtly revere hierarchical interactions in social relations between different social positions. These social positions may include the scope of roles and obligations which necessarily must reflect the various social contexts such as loyalty between king and subject, filial piety between parents and children, distinction between husband and wife, precedence between senior and junior in terms of age, gender, power, social status etc. Due to this emphasis on hierarchical power variables, the Dagbamba are very sensitive to social position in relationship to others as Dagbamba society is highly stratified.

The focus of the study primarily is how the Dagbamba of the Northern Region of Ghana use politeness strategies to improve their human relationships. The research investigates, among others, linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of politeness by the people as they occur in natural language performances and interactions such as requests, compliments, promises, apologies, courtship, and address terms in given social settings such as market, school, palace, at funerals, festivals, homes, etc. Again, there may even

be dialectal differences within the same language as far as politeness strategy is concerned.

Considering the fact that the idea of socio-pragmatics is very salient in this research, it is important for one to offer some background to the concept. It is worthy of mention that, etymologically, the term 'socio-pragmatics' was first coined by Leech (1983: 10) in describing the ways in which pragmatic meanings reflect 'specific "local" conditions on language use.' Leech further contends that socio-pragmatics should be seen as a sub-field of pragmatics that is distinguished from the study of more 'general' pragmatic meaning. Leech (1983: 159) is also of the view that socio-pragmatics focuses more on 'how communication of pragmatic meaning involves speakers' presentation of their identities.' Since politeness strategy is context-driven among the Dagbamba, it is imperative to realize that socio-pragmatics is key in handling this topic. Thus, the ability to recognize the effect of context on the chosen strings of linguistic events and to use language appropriately in specific/given social situations is important in this particular discussion since we are dealing with a social routine in the daily lives of a people. It is for this reason that socio-pragmatics is defined by Leech (1983: 10) as 'the sociological interface of pragmatics', referring to the social perceptions underlying participants' interpretation and performance of communicative action. I am therefore of the view that when we talk of socio-pragmatics, it entails the aspect of language use that relates to everyday social practices, of which politeness strategy is certainly key.

This chapter proceeds as follows. Section 1.2 outlines the statement of the problem that has necessitated this current research and in section 1.3 the objectives of the study are presented. This is then followed by the research questions, which are outlined in section 1.4. This section is very salient as it specifies the questions that are meant to be

addressed by the end of the research work. Section 1.5 presents a brief introduction to Dagbani and its speakers. The section discusses the number of speakers, dialectal issues and the geographical location of the speakers. Section 1.6 outlines the organization of the rest of the dissertation.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This section of the thesis outlines the problem statement. I therefore outline a concise and precise description of the problem that is identified and intended to be addressed in this work. The section therefore, identifies the research gap that I hope to fill up. Linguistics research in Dagbani has received an appreciable level of attention from researchers. However, most of the works have focused more on the core aspects of linguistics; Wilson (1972a), Olawsky (1999) among others, to the neglect of the socio-linguistics domain. Given that successful communication does not only entail knowledge of grammatical competence, but also communicative competence, I assume that documenting this aspect of Dagbani requires equally keen attention from Dagbani linguists. Although there are quite a number of cursory works that touch on aspects of the socio-linguistics of Dagbani: Salifu (2012, 2010, 2000), there is lot that requires attention in this aspect of Dagbani. For instance, Salifu (2012) discusses the interplay of gender and Dagbanli<sup>1</sup> in Dagban culture, Salifu (2010) discusses address forms of the Dagbamba. Furthermore, Salifu (2000) also focuses on discourse at the palace of the overlord of the Dagban kingdom concentrating on turn taking and leave-taking in the Zoṅtua (the main sitting room in the palace). However, Salifu's (2000) study is only a description of the etiquette that characterises discourse at the Chief's court and politeness behaviour is not considered. Although Dagbani employs varied strategies to

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<sup>1</sup> The culture of the Dagbamba

mark politeness, no work has documented this aspect of the language. This is largely because the studies on Dagbani have focused on the core aspects of linguistics to the neglect of the socio-linguistics component. This research intends to fill this research gap by providing a detailed investigation into the politeness strategies of Dagbani, with the hope that it will serve as motivation for other scholars to contribute to the discussions within this domain of scientific research.

Furthermore, regarding the issue of politeness strategies, there are numerous linguists who have noted that maintaining one's own face and saving the face of others are the two basic components of face work (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003; Holmes and Stubbe, 2003). What has been lacking is that no studies have explored the integrated aspects of these two elements in specific social interactions. Moreover, the concentration has been on linguistic politeness but not the other forms in which politeness is manifested. The other issue with most previous studies is the limitedness of their scope. As a result, their theory leaves some gaps particularly, on grounds of it being culturally biased (Fukushima, 2000; Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003; Terkourafi, 2005). Their emphasis on negative face has led to the common dimensions of cultural variation (e.g. individualism-collectivism, moral and philosophical/ideological aspects, affective-emotional feelings) becoming neglected. The Dagbani data will have something significant to contribute in the light of this.

Finally, Dabang culture is under threat due to formal/ Western education and the continuous increase in membership of the two major foreign religions: Christianity and Islam. Most of the cultural undertakings among the Dagbamba have been outlawed by beliefs and practices of these two religions. There is therefore, the fear that these cherished values will die if steps are not taken to document them. For instance, Islam

generally does not allow that one kneels down to greet an elderly person although that practice is a core component of the social setup of the Dagbamba, and especially in marking politeness.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. Systematically outline politeness strategies used by speakers of Dagbani.
2. Investigate the correlation between power and politeness among Dagbamba
3. Investigate possible relationship between gender and politeness strategies.
4. Investigate possible correlation between age and politeness strategies.
5. Attempt a categorization of the politeness strategies in Dagbani
6. Show that politeness can be coded via non-verbal strategies among the Dagbamba

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The main questions that this study intends to answer are:

1. What are the politeness strategies used by speakers of Dagbani?
2. What is the correlation between power and politeness strategies among Dagbamba?
3. What is the possible relationship between gender and politeness strategies?
4. What is the possible relationship between age and politeness strategies?
5. How could the politeness strategies of Dagbani be categorized?
6. What are some of the non-linguistic politeness strategies in Dagbani?

### 1.5 Brief introduction to Dagbani and its Speakers

The Dagbani language belongs to the Niger-Congo language group, a member of the Gur language family. The language has been classified by Bendor-Samuel (1971), Greenberg (1963), and Wilson (1970a) as belonging to the Gur language family and a member of the Moore Gurma sub-group of West African languages. Bodomo (1993, 1994) *et seq* however, suggests the term *Mabia* for the group of languages within which Dagbani is found. The term *Mabia*, a compound word consisting of **ma** ‘mother’ and **bia** ‘child’ has been considered more appropriate as it reflects the sociocultural identities among the speakers of these languages. These include Dagbani, Dagaare, Mampruli, Kusaal, Moore, Safaliba and Taleni.

Speakers of Dagbani are called Dagbamba (pl.) and Dagbana (Sg.). There are other names like Dagbanpaga and Dagbandoo when emphasis is on gender though the two have derogative meaning relating to miserliness. Although the speakers refer to their language as Dagbanli, the orthography document written in 1997 recommended that Dagbani should be used as the official language of the Dagbamba whereas Dagbanli is used to refer to the culture/practices of the people. Up to date, this is not without controversy as speakers think their language is Dagbanli rather than Dagbani. It is worth pointing out that Dagombas is a Europeanized term for Dagbamba and is also found in the literature. The Dagbamba are a large group of people living in Northern Ghana. Their kingdom, called Dagban, was established centuries ago and dominated an area near Yendi, the traditional capital located East of the White Volta River and North of Tamale. There are three major dialects of Dagbani which include the Eastern dialect, (Nayahili) which is spoken in Yendi and its environs, the Western dialect (Tomosili), also spoken in and around Tamale (the political capital of the Northern Region) and then Nanunli which is also spoken in and around Bimbilla. The differences are mostly

at the phonological level and some lexical differences. However, there are no known syntactic variations. There are, however, some sub-dialects in which there are also some minor disparities.

### **1.5.1 *The social set-up of the Dagbamba***

The Dagbamba are primarily subsistence farmers living in small villages with farms surrounding the village. They are not only skillful farmers, but hunters who hunt wild games for meat in the dry season when they have little or no work in the farms. The games from hunting are mostly sold for cash although some can also be made available for the use of the family. Some engage in administrative and managerial work. Dagbamba craftsmen are skilled tailors, traders, and makers of ropes and mats. Some also specialize as blacksmiths, butchers, and barbers. Parents send their young sons to be trained by these craftsmen. Through observation and practice, a boy will gradually learn a trade and assume his role in the new occupation. It is however, worthy to note that some of the professions are strictly by clan such that one is deemed, for example, as a butcher even if one does not practise, but just because one is born into a butcher family. Others include blacksmith, and **wanzam** (traditionally trained to be in charge of shaving and circumcision).

In a Dagbamba village, the houses are specially ordered such that the house of the chief (the personality with more power than any other in the village) has a dome-shaped hut, which must stand out in terms of size and height, than any other in the village. The village is divided into wards or quarters, all facing the chief's home. A quarter is identified by its head or by its dominating specialist group. For example, there may be a soldiers' quarter or a butchers' quarter. The commoners are scattered throughout the

village in round or rectangular huts (for female and male, respectively); there is no physical separation of the commoners from the ruling class.

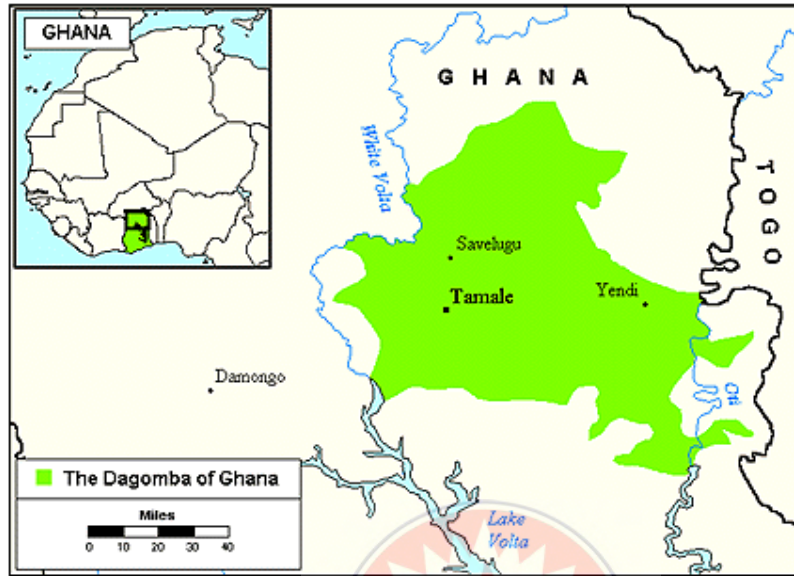
Another important part of Dagbamba life is the lorists, the traditional drummers. The **lunsi** (drummers) play very important roles in the village by not only being entertainers but also court historians. In most cases, a drummer's son follows in his father's footsteps, becoming a drummer and learning from his father the origin of the people and their kingdom.

### ***1.5.2 Geographical location of Dagbaŋ and number of speakers***

Dagbani is spoken mainly in the Northern Region of Ghana by the Dagbamba people. Dagbaŋ (homeland of the speakers) is located at the Northeastern part of Ghana covering an area of about 8082sq miles (12931 sq. kilometers). There are other ethnic groups such as the Konkombas, Basares, Chokoses, and Kombas in Dagbaŋ. The Dagbamba are the second largest ethnic group of the 54 tribes (ethnic groups) in Ghana. Ethnic groups that have also inhabited Dagbaŋ include the Mamprusi, Nanumba, Gonja, Mossi, Gurunsi (in particular the Farefari and Kusaasi people), the Waala, Ligbi and Konkomba.

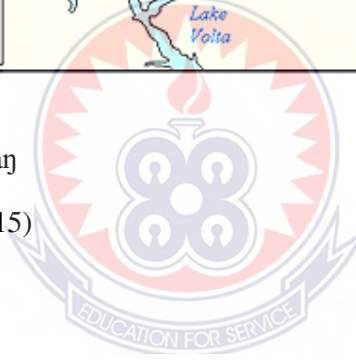
The area hosts twelve administrative districts in present day Ghana. These are the Tamale Metropolis, Tolon, Kumbungu, Savelugu, Nanton, Yendi Municipality, Gushegu, Karaga, Zabzugu, Mion, and Sagnarigu Municipality and Saboba. The overlord of the Dagbaŋ Traditional Kingdom is the **Ya-Naa**, whose court and administrative capital is at **Naa ya** (Yendi). The seat of the **Ya-Naa** (literally translated as King of Absolute Power), is a collection of cow skins. Thus, Dagbaŋ or its political system is often called the **Yeni** Skin (not throne or crown or stool). See figures 1 and 2 below.





*Figure 1: Map of Dagban*

Source: Ethnologue (2015)



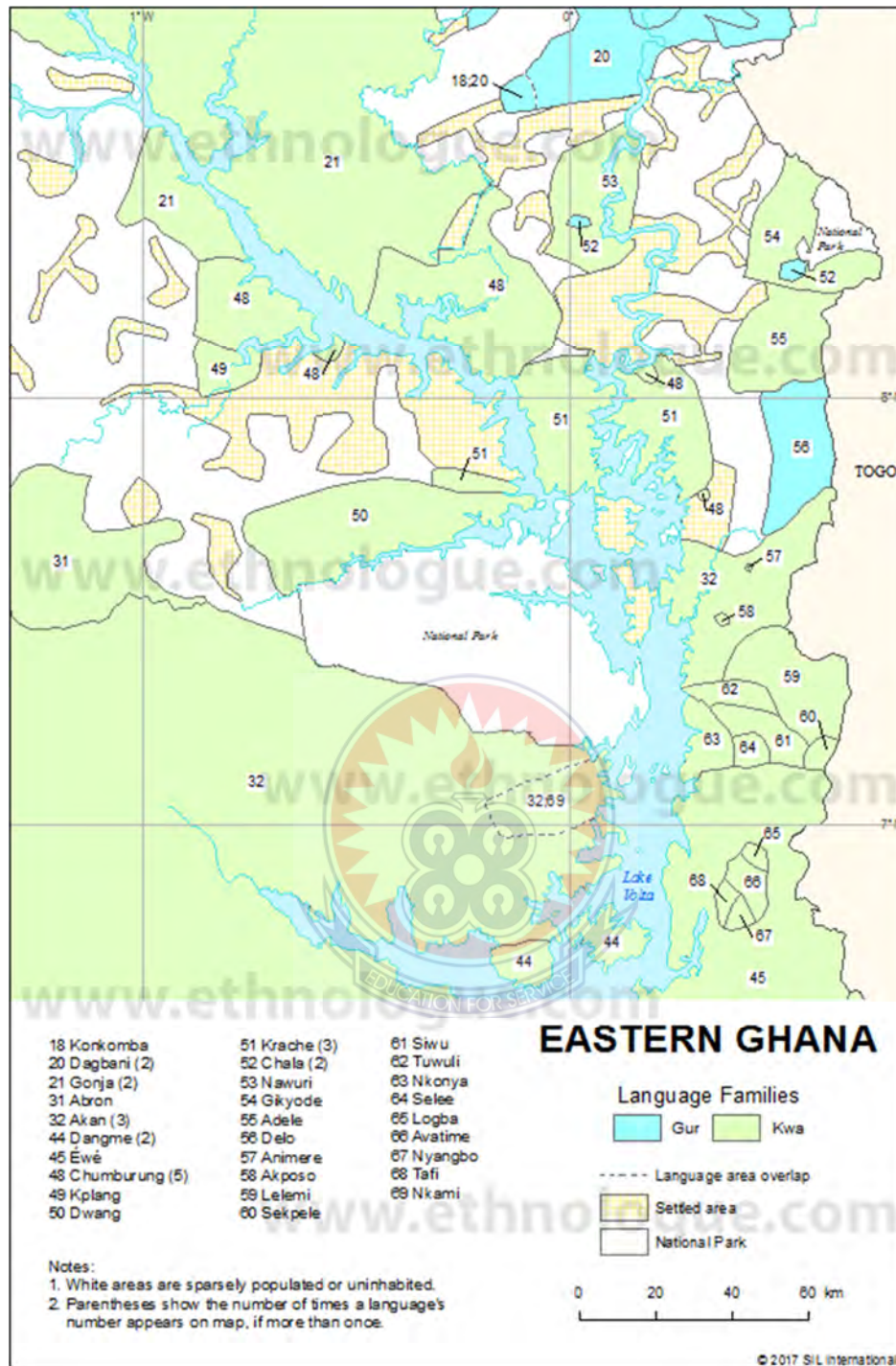


Figure 2: Language Map of Ghana

Source: Ethnologue (2015)

According to UNSD (2013) Dagombas number 1,600,000 while Ethnologue (2015) puts the number of speakers of Dagbani at One Million, One Hundred and Ninety-Six Thousand in the world. Muslims are 77% of this number and 22% are Christians.

### **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into seven chapters as follows. Chapter 1 presents the general background information of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the relevant literature in politeness studies. It focuses on bringing to light the various theories of politeness and shows how these theories capture the phenomenon of politeness in relation to Dagbani. This review of theories and literature later serves as a context in situating and discussing the findings of the research. Some of the theoretical domains discussed in this chapter include the social norm view of politeness by Fraser (1990), the conversational Maxim view of Grice (1975), Leech's politeness principle and maxims of interaction as in the case of Lakoff (1973), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987) face-saving view of politeness. Ultimately, there is a major discussion on the concept of face and face threatening acts among others. Chapter 3 of the thesis focuses on the methodology that is employed for data and analysis. It also discusses the research design, sources of data, and research instruments used in the collection, organization and analysis of data. Chapter 4 focuses on the linguistic data and analysis. Here, the linguistic strategies that are used for the marking of politeness in Dagbani are discussed. Chapter 5 discusses the non-linguistic data and Chapter 6 discusses the influence of power, gender and age in Dagbamba politeness strategies. The concluding, chapter 7, summarises the findings of the research, draws a conclusion to the research as well as puts forward a few recommendations for future research in this field.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature on politeness strategies and the major theoretical issues and concepts of politeness. The chapter is structured as follows: Section 2.1 discusses the theoretical framework where the varied perspectives of politeness are presented while section 2.2 is etymological overview of the term politeness. Section 2.3 presents an overview of the operational definition of politeness and section 2.4 also gives an overview of the relevant theories to the study of politeness to account for empirical materials on the notion of politeness. Whereas 2.5 explains some social norm views on the concept of politeness, Section 2.6 examines the concept of politeness and its relationship to power, gender and age. Finally, in section 2.7, an interim summary of the issues discussed in the chapter is presented.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

According to Terkourafi (2006), politeness research since Brown and Levinson (1987), has adopted two main “traditional” views based on the dual premises of Grice’s Cooperative Principle and Speech Act Theory (Lakoff 1973, Brown and Levinson 1987, Leech 1983). Also used has been the “post-modern” view, which places emphasis on participants’ own perception of politeness and on the discursive struggle over politeness (Eelen 2001; Mills 2003; Watts 2003).

The present study finds roots in both views but leans heavily on the traditional view as proposed in Brown and Levinson’s famous seminal paper (1978, 1987) as far as politeness strategies are concerned. Brown and Levinson (1978) propose a universal

model of linguistic politeness and explained that politeness phenomenon is realized linguistically by means of various strategies across cultures. A key component of politeness in Brown and Levinson politeness Model is the concept of face. Brown and Levinson (1987:61) define face as ‘the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself’. They further argue that all normal human beings have face wants in their desire to be appreciated by the person or people that s/he interacts with. Furthermore, they note that a person appreciates freedom of thought and action without any hindrance from another person. Brown and Levinson propose, and distinguish between positive and negative faces. They explain that face is universal to all normal human beings (model man). Positive face is the speaker’s desire to be appreciated or approved of (e.g., by seeking agreement, solidarity, reciprocity). Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987: 61) explain that negative face ‘represents the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, i.e., freedom of action and freedom from imposition’. This is exemplified by being indirect, giving deference, being apologetic etc. According to Brown and Levinson (ibid), face is invested; therefore, it is something that can be lost, and it must be constantly attended to in interaction.

In addition, Brown and Levinson argue that during social interaction, a speaker must rationally assess the nature of a Face-Threatening Act (henceforth, FTA) (e.g., a rebuke or a refusal). This is the seriousness of an act and involves three independent, culture-sensitive, and social variables. These are the social distance (D) and social power (P) between a speaker and a hearer, and the absolute ranking (R) of imposition in a particular culture. Although D and P are universal, Brown and Levinson (1987) acknowledge the fact that diverse cultures have diverse ways of interpreting them. They also maintain that the R variable is certainly culture-specific and its imposition will definitely differ from one culture to another.

Brown and Levinson (1987: 69) propose five steps that participants in an interaction employ to assess a FTA. These strategies are based on a hierarchy of binary choices and are ordered with respect to the degree of politeness or face-work involved. These include (i) the speaker has to decide whether to do or not to do the FTA, (ii) decide to do it either on record or off record (e.g., by using irony, understatement, rhetorical questions), (iii) if the decision is to go on record, (iv) speaker must perform the act with or without redressive action (e.g., ‘Cook me groundnut soup, please’ versus ‘Cook me groundnut soup’). (v) if the speaker chooses to perform a FTA with redressive action, he/she must do it using positive or negative politeness strategies such as ‘Adisah, my baby, give me the pen’ vis-à-vis ‘Could you please give me the pen?’).

Though many criticisms have been leveled against Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework of politeness, it is very relevant in this present investigation because none of the criticisms is able to invalidate completely Brown and Levinson’s conceptualization of politeness. Rather, the condemnation of the theory “helps us to refine and elaborate on their [Brown and Levinson] original insights” Watts (2003:11). Therefore, before applying Brown and Levinson’s theory to the analysis in this study, few adjustments and assumptions will be made.

First, the concept of ‘face’ needs to consider the socio-cultural context to incorporate both the strategic and social indexing aspects of politeness. Second, Brown and Levinson politeness model’s dependency on the Speech Act Theory not only limits the unit of analysis of a FTA to a single sentence. It also leads to the assumption that certain types of speech acts threaten only certain types of face (e.g, giving advice threatens the hearer’s negative face does not apply in Dagbani, my target speech community). To

amend this weakness, this study will broaden the basic unit of analysis by incorporating conversational sequences.

The post-modern tradition led by (Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003) introduced the term “first-order politeness” and “second-order politeness to clarify the common sense and scientific notions of politeness. Watts (2003) matches ‘first-order politeness with the various ways in which polite behaviour is perceived and talked about by members of a socio-cultural group. On the other hand, ‘second-order politeness’ is said to be a theoretical construct, a term within a theory of socio-linguistics that describes social behaviour and language use. First order politeness covers the common notion of politeness as realized and practised by members of a community in their everyday interactions. However, Felix-Brasdefer (2008) divides first-order politeness further into three components, which he names as “expressive, classificatory, and metapragmatic” politeness. Expressive first-order politeness is the polite intention that the speaker manifest through speech. The use of politeness markers such as ‘please’, and such conventional formulaic expressions as ‘thank you’ are instances of expressive first-order politeness. Classificatory first-order politeness involves the classification of behaviour as polite and impolite based on the addressee’s evaluation. This evaluation derives from meta-pragmatic first-order politeness, that is, the way people think of politeness and the way it is conceptualized in various interactional contexts. Altogether, first-order politeness is an evaluation of ordinary notion of politeness concerning the norms of society and the perception it attracts in daily interactions by both speakers and hearers. In studying politeness strategies of the Dagbamba, the present study shares in both the composite and fragmented detailing of notions of ‘First-order politeness’ as the ordinary man’s knowledge of what politeness is as triggered by the prevailing socio-cultural environment. The notion of first order politeness is particularly relevant to the

current study such that in analysing the data, opinion of native speakers (traditional drummers and elders) who have special expertise to determine what constitutes polite or impolite was sought. They passed their judgment based on their knowledge of the socio-cultural setting and their in-depth knowledge and experience. Second-order politeness is a scientific theory of politeness used not by ordinary people but by researchers and people in academia. The theory elaborates the functions of politeness in interaction and further provides criteria by which im/polite behaviour is distinguished. The second-order politeness also can present universal characteristics of politeness in different communities.

Accordingly, the universality of characteristics of politeness has been attempted through various models of politeness. Notable among these is Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Calls have been made for a clear distinction between common sense and scientific notions of politeness with the hope that it will facilitate a better understanding of politeness definitions (Eelen 1999, 2001 Watts 2003). Eelen (1999:57) observes that when researchers talk about politeness they “somehow never seem to be talking about... those phenomena ordinary speakers would identify as ‘politeness’ or ‘impoliteness.’” Moreover, the presuppositions that these researchers adopt when discussing politeness “do not come from their talk with ordinary speakers asking what these ordinary speakers ... have to say on this matter.” As a result, scholars elevate “a lay first-order concept ... to the status of a second-order concept” (Eelen 1999:55). Put another way, they “qualify certain utterances as polite or impolite, where it is not always clear and sometimes doubtful whether ordinary speakers do’ (Eelen, 1999:12).

The special attention assigned participants’ perception on what is polite and what is not by the post-modern tradition will be adapted in this study as key informants will be



given an opportunity to determine the politeness status of some of the data gathered. This is because politeness needs to be interpreted by the interlocutors based on particular societal norms and the context of use.

## **2.2 Overview of the term ‘Politeness.’**

The literature does not only lack a consistency of definitions of politeness among researchers of politeness but there is also a lack of common definition among researchers in the field (Mohsen & Farinaz 2013; Watts 2003). Politeness has had many meanings at one time or the other. Among the meanings of the term is one that makes reference to the refined manners characteristic of privileged members of the high social class. This sense of the term is evident in languages such as German, French or Spanish.

One of the popular concepts of politeness relates to the identification of a behaviour or set of behaviours as obeying a series of more or less explicit social norms or conventions. These are usually established by a particular community of practice regarding the thoughts, actions, reactions or states of affair that are desirable or predictable in a given context (Fraser 1990, Eelen, 2001). For example, Fraser (1990) did a critical overview of the way researchers approach politeness namely: i. Social Norm View ii. the Conversational Maxim View iii, the Face-saving View, iv the Conversational-contract View. This, to some extent, paved the way for researchers to treat the term politeness in a more systematic way and conduct their research based on the model of their taste. The four way categorization of politeness study was contrasted by Terkourafi (2005) fifteen (15) years later when she identified only two types of politeness but tried to propose a third category. Terkourafi (2005) names these views as: the “traditional” view based on the dual premises of Grice’s Co-operative Principle and speech act theory (Leech, 1983), the “post-modern” view, which challenges these

premises and substitutes them by an emphasis on participants' own perceptions of politeness (politeness1) and on the discursive struggle over politeness (Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003).

Her proposed third view is the frame-based view, which is a data based driven approach where large quantities of data are collected and analysed. Because Fraser (1990) has been one of the most frequently referenced sources of politeness investigation, the present study prefers to adapt her four-perspective proposal for review. In the event that such thoughts, actions, reactions or states of affair agree with these norms or conventions, the members of the specific community of practice value them positively and regard them as polite. However, when they are perceived as an incoherent relative to given social norms or conventions, they are regarded as impolite. This concept of politeness is well established in the life experience of the members of a community of practice. It entails a subjective process of introspection whereby a member analyses and evaluates his own or another individual's behaviour relative to a behavioural norm or standard assumed to be shared in a given community (Eelen, 2001).

### **2.3 Operational Definition of Politeness**

The real perception of the concept of politeness by the community of practice (the Dagbamba of Ghana) is the focus in this section. In a pre-study survey, respondents perceived what is polite in two main ways; linguistic and non-linguistic. They said one could show deference by the choice of certain lexemes and the manner in which the lexemes are used. The non-verbal ways are actions and inactions including body language. Furthermore, the people do show politeness in their interactions as individuals on one hand and as members of their community on the other. All these are

stipulated by the Dagbamba socio-cultural norms. The concept has been summed up in **M ba Gbariga Kpanalana** -‘title of an elder’ and response thus:

**Jelima tibu din yiri la noli ni yetoga ni nira behigu ni** ‘showing deference comes from a person’s language use and deeds’. This illustrates Watt’s Politic behaviour which he says is “linguistic behaviour which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction.” (Watt, 2003: 19). In this study, politic behaviour encompasses behaviour in general (linguistic and non-linguistic).

## **2.4 Some Politeness Theories**

This section elaborates a holistic review of theories of politeness ranging from classic theories of politeness to current theories namely the social norm view, the conversational maxim view, the conversational-contract view, and Brown and Levinson’s face-saving view. It also takes a look at the less referenced ones like Arndt and Jannaey’s Supportive face-work and interpersonal politeness, Spencer-Oatey’s view of rapport management, Ide’s notion of discernment and volition, Scollon and Scollon’s intercultural communication, and Watt’s politeness view.

## **2.5 The Social Norm View**

In the opinion of Fraser (1990:17), “the social norm view of politeness assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe a certain behaviour, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in a context.” Ide (1989) is credited as the first scholar to express this view in her study of politeness phenomena in the Japanese society and Mohsen and Farinaz, (2013), ascertain this in current studies. Nwoye (1992) explains that within the social norm view, politeness is necessitated by a social obligation expected by members of that society towards the

addressee. Furthermore, Held (1992) explains that this view consists of two factors namely:

Status conscious behaviour which is realized by showing deference and respect to others' social rank.

ii. Moral components and decency which involves a concern for general human dignity (by protecting others from unpleasant intrusion, and respecting taboos and negative topics) as well as the maintenance of others' personal sphere (by reducing or avoiding territorial encroachment).

Watts, Ide & Ehlich (1992) liken this social norm view to discernment called *wakimaei* in Japanese. Ide (1992:24) explains that *wakimae* is "the practice of polite behaviour according to social conventions". *Wakimae* is a behaviour according to "one's sense of place or role in a given situation". According to Ide (1992), this ensures friction free communication so that information can be transmitted freely. This concept can be equated to the Dagbani statements as in (4a) and (4b).

4. a    **A            yayi            lala**  
          2SG            grow pass       DemPro  
          'You are above that.'

b.    **A        bi        sayi/paai        lala**  
          2SG    NEG    reach            DemP  
          'You are not up to that.'

The current study, politeness strategies in Dagbani, being grounded in sociolinguistic ideology draw a lot of ideas from the social norm view.

### 2.5.1 *The conversational maxim view*

The Conversational Maxim view takes inspiration from Grice (1975). The cornerstone of politeness studies is based on the Cooperative Principle (CP) formulated by Grice (1975). Felix-Brasdefer (2008) describes Grice's Cooperative Principle as the foundation of models of politeness. The proponents of the conversational Maxim View are personalities like Lakoff (1998) and Leech (1983). Grice argues that "conversationalists are rational individuals who are, all other things being equal, primarily interested in the efficient conveying of message" (Grice, 1975:17). He explains that human beings communicate with each other in a logical and rational way, and cooperation becomes a corner stone in the resulting conversations. In addition, Grice argues that this practice is a habit and cannot be lost since it was learned in the formative stage of the participants. The point is that the audience or listener understands the implication of a speaker's talk by relying on an assumption of cooperativeness, contextual information and background knowledge.

(Grice, 1975:17) regards the Cooperative Principle as the underlying principle that governs the rationality in a conversation to 'make your conversational contribution such as required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.'

To put it more simply, the Cooperative Principle calls for what one has to say, at the time it has to be said, and in the manner in which it has to be said. Grice lays the foundation of CP on four maxims, hoping that rational speakers will follow them as follows:

*Quality*: speaker tells the truth or provable by adequate evidence;

*Quantity:* speaker is as informative as required such that speaker neither gives too little nor too much information but that which is just enough for the hearer to understand.

*Relation:* response is relevant to topic of discussion;

*Manner:* speaker avoids ambiguity or obscurity, is direct and straightforward.

Grice explains that the maxims are assumptions describing how speakers talk in a conversation. This is aptly explained by Bach (2005) that Grice introduced the maxims as instructions for successful communication and should be better understood as presumptions about utterances, which listeners rely on, and speakers use.

Grice believes that in order for the speakers to produce utterances, which are informative, true, relevant, and non-confusing, they have to adhere to CP. However, Grice also explains situations in which one or more of the maxims are violated in an attempt for extra meaning. That is to say, the speakers lead the addressee's attention to making an inference, 'conversational implicature', in Grice (1975:3). He suggests that conversational implicature happens when an inference is gotten from what the speakers say; conversational implicature is triggered through the violation of one or more of maxims by the speaker and is elicited by the hearer relying on the assumption that the speaker is still adhering to the CP. People who do not follow the maxims in communication but still seem cooperative, resort to another set of rules to communicate. In Lakoff (1973) "the rules of politeness" and Leech (1983) 'the politeness principle' can be covered by the umbrella term of conversational maxim view of politeness. In his theory, Grice makes a distinction between saying and meaning. Grice argues that when speakers create implicit meanings, their audience is able to infer the intended meanings from their conversations. He believes that people follow certain patterns in their interactions and claims that listeners generally assume that a speaker's utterance

contains enough information, and is relevant. When it patently violates this assumption, we still understand that meaning testifying that violation of relevance does not mean a lack of co-operation.

Grice considers the coherence or unity of conversations at a rational level, i.e. the rational structure of a conversation. He is concerned with the ways in which we connect our sentences meaningfully in a conversation and the reasons for saying what we do. Considering the talk of people's interaction, particularly when different speakers try to promote various issues, it can be clearly seen that their conversation enjoys partial unity (Brown & Yule, 1983: 88-89).

Although scholars in this field have adopted Grice's CP frequently, it has nonetheless attracted many criticisms. This notwithstanding, the criticisms have led to the improvement of his theory and have eventually broadened the scope of the subject of politeness. For instance, Leech (1983) contends that Grice's framework fails to explain accurately the reason people are often indirect in conveying what they mean. On his part, Keenan (1976) questions the universality of Grice's maxims. This is because according to Keenan (1976) achieving politeness through CP is not observed in all cultures. This point is not true with the present study because the culture of the Dagbamba is different from the culture of Grice's participants although some similarities cannot be ruled out. This then makes valid the cultural sensitivity of these conversational strategies, which need to be duly accounted for in every theoretical framework.

### ***2.5.2 Lakoff's rules of politeness***

In his quest to account for politeness phenomenon, Robin Tolmach Lakoff proposes two basic rules, which he calls rules of pragmatic competence. This was in response to

the fact that the Cooperative Principle was unable to account for politeness in a direct straight way. Lakoff (1973) integrated Grice's conversational maxims with his own taxonomy, which consisted of two main principles:

- i. be clear
- ii. be polite

He explains that all of Grice's conversational Cooperative Principles can be grouped into the first of his two rules: Rule 1-'be clear'. This is because Grice's maxims relate mainly to clarity and orderliness in conversation (Grice, 1975:297).

He, therefore, summarised Grice's maxims in her first rule proposing the following sub-rules as the sub-rules of his second rule, i.e. "be polite". These sub-rules aim at "making one's addressee think well of one" and accordingly "imparting a favorable feeling" as far as the content of communication is concerned (Lakoff, 1973: 31). She puts forward the sub-rules of politeness as follows:

- 1) Don't impose
- 2) Give options
- 3) Make a feel good

The first sub-rule, according to Lakoff (1977), deals with "distance and formality", the second rule is concerned with "hesitancy" and the third one with "equality".

Lakoff (1973) postulates that speakers fall on these rules to either express politeness or avoid offence because of indicating speaker/addressee status. Rule 1 (Don't impose) is realised once a sense of distance is created by the speaker between him/her and the listener. The realization of rule 1 would result, according to Lakoff (1977:32) in "ensuring that status distinctions are adhered to, that no informality develops, and that



the relationship remains purely formal.” Lakoff points out that the use of title and last name as a form of address, the preference of the passive to the active, and the use of technical terms to avoid the unmentionable in such situations as medical, business, legal, and academic ones are examples of the implementation of this rule.

For Rule 2 (Give options) as “the rule of hesitancy” in Lakoff (1977:32), the speaker makes room for alternatives so that the listener can express uncertainty over the speech act which the speaker is performing. Lakoff argues that in realising rule 2, “the speaker knows what he wants, knows he has the right to expect it from the addressee, and the addressee knows it” (Lakoff, 1977:32). Furthermore, Lakoff explains that Rule 2 is used as a sign of true politeness i.e., “the speaker knows what he wants, but sincerely does not wish to force the addressee into a decision”. The use of “please”; particles like “well”, “er”, and “ah”; euphemisms; hedges like “sorta”, “in a way” and “loosely speaking” can be considered as some of linguistic realizations of rule 2.

Rule 3 (make A feel good) is concerned with “the equality rule” which maintains that although the speaker is superior or equal in status to the addressee, the speaker implies that s/he and the addressee are equal to make addressee feel good. This sense of friendliness or solidarity can be verbally expressed by the use of first names or nicknames which gives the impression of an informal relationship between speaker and addressee; particles such as “I mean”, “like” and “y” know” which enable speaker to showcase emotion about what he is talking about (Lakoff, 1977). The linguistic manifestation of rule 3 can be achieved through giving compliments and using explicit terms for expressing taboo terms. Lakoff (1990) considers modern American culture as a culture in which “the appearance of openness and niceness is to be sought”. Like Grice, Lakoff is not spared criticisms for his work.

In the first place, Lakoff is criticised for lack of sufficient empirical evidence for cross-cultural politeness strategies. Another problem is that there is no clear distinction between polite behaviour and appropriate behaviour. Felix-Brasdefer (2008) contends that appropriate behaviour in social interaction, as is the case with greetings, leave-taking, and other formulaic routine formulas may not necessarily be considered so in all situations. Other criticisms of Lakoff's extended view of Grice's cooperative principle come mainly from Brown (1976) and Watts (2003). Brown (1976: 246) points out that Lakoff's definition of politeness, consisting of three kinds of rules, "rigidifies her account and is her major weakness." This study identifies with this criticism as politeness in the present context goes too far than this narrow perspective. Another criticism against Lakoff's rules is the claim of universality. Tannan, (1984), accuses him for not defining the terms that he uses, but also that notions such as 'informal' and 'aloof' are also culture-specific. Tannan (1984) claims that politeness is something broader and more complex than the sum of these rules and is difficult to capture in its entirety by some four finite set of rules as contained in Lakoff (1973). In this case, the present study's view of politeness really goes beyond Lakoff's scope of the subject as stated above. The operational view of politeness in this study is that politeness is realized in very broad ways beyond verbal renditions and that with the Dagbamba, it is largely vested in the expectations of the larger society of performance.

Watts (2003) comments on Lakoff's theory by stating that his approach cannot be considered a theory of politeness production. Watt's reason is that Lakoff's approach does not lead to a model depicting how speakers come to produce utterances that are classified as 'polite'.

### ***2.5.3 Leech's politeness principle and maxims of interaction***

Leech (1983) like Lakoff (1973), proposes a general pragmatic model based on Grice's views. Leech (1983) uses the term 'rhetorical' to characterize his approach to pragmatics. Under the Interpersonal rhetoric, Leech (1983) includes Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP), a Politeness Principle (PP) and an Irony Principle (IP). He points out that the PP regulates the "social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place" (1983:82).

Relying on a Gricean framework, Leech (1983) proposes the Politeness Principle (PP) and regards politeness as a regulative factor in communication through a set of maxims. Politeness, as Leech (1983) proposes, is a facilitating factor that influences the relation between 'self' (speaker), and 'other' (listener) or listener and/or a third party. To Leech, politeness is about "minimizing the expression of impolite beliefs as the beliefs are unpleasant or at a cost to it" (Leech, 1983:37). Leech attaches his Politeness Principle (PP) to Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) in an attempt to account for the violation of the CP in conversation. Geoffrey Leech establishes the relationship between his own Politeness Principle and Grice's Cooperative Principle as follows:

He explains that it is based on the CP that one participant in a conversation communicates believing that the other participant is willing to cooperate, thus the CP assumes the function of regulating speech in that it contributes to some assumed illocutionary or discursal good(s). He focuses on a "goal-oriented speech situation, in which a [speaker] uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of [the hearer]" (Leech, 1983:15). Leech (1983) distinguishes two rhetorics; one is *Interpersonal* and the other *Textual* with each of them consisting of a set of principles.

Politeness Principle as a subdivision is embedded within the interpersonal rhetoric domain along with two other subdivisions, that is, Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) and Leech's Irony Principle (IP). As cited by Marquez-Reiter (2000), Leech (1983) regards the IP as "a secondary principle which allows a speaker to be impolite while seeming to be polite", in other words, the speaker seems ironic by violating the Cooperative Principle. "The IP then overtly conflicts with the PP, though it enables the hearer to arrive at the point of utterance by the way of implicature, indirectly".

Leech (1983) further makes a keen distinction between Absolute Politeness and Relative Politeness with an emphasis on the former, in his attitude. Absolute Politeness is brought into play in an appropriate degree "to minimize the impoliteness of inherently impolite illocution" and "maximizing the politeness of polite illocution". "Absolute politeness" involves the association of speech acts with types of politeness and has a positive and negative pole, since some speech acts, such as offers, are intrinsically polite whereas others such as orders are intrinsically impolite. This applies in the target speech community of this study, as some people will even reject offers given by way of orders.

According to Leech (1983), Relative Politeness relates to the norms of a particular culture or language community with context influencing its variations. This relativity is a matter of the difference of language speakers in the application of the politeness principle are embodied in these maxims below.

(I) TACT MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)

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

(II) GENEROSITY MAXIM (in impositives and commissives)

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

(III) APPROBATION MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)

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

(IV) MODESTY MAXIM (in expressives and assertives)

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

(V) AGREEMENT MAXIM (in assertives)

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



(VI) SYMPATHY MAXIM (in [expressive])

- (a) Minimize antipathy between *self* and *other*
- (b) Maximize sympathy between *self* and *other*

Leech (1983) further argues that the degree of tact or generosity appropriate to a particular speech act can also be determined by a set of pragmatic scales he proposed. The scales termed the optionality scale, the amount of freedom available to an addressee to act on the action proposed by the speaker, (Locher, 2004). There is also the indirectness scale, “how much inference is involved in the proposed action”, (Sifianou 1992), the authority scale, “which describes the degree of distance between the speakers

in terms of power over each other”, (Marquez-Reiter, 2000), and the social distance scale, which describes the degree of solidarity between the participants”. The Tact Maxim is used for impositives (e.g. ordering, commanding, requesting, advising, recommending, and inviting) and commissives (e.g. promising, vowing, and offering). These illocutionary acts refer to some action to be performed by either the hearer (i.e. impositives) or the speaker (i.e. commissives). Under this maxim, the action “may be evaluated in terms of its cost or benefit to S or H” using a cost-benefit scale. Using this scale, an action that is beneficial to H is more polite than one that is at a cost to “H”.

The Generosity Maxim, which works most of the time together with the Tact Maxim, concerns impositives and commissives too. However, the hypothesis that the Tact Maxim receives greater emphasis than the Generosity Maxim results in impositives that omit reference to the cost to H of an action and that describe the intended goal of the act as beneficial to S.

The Approbation Maxim requires people to say or do things, which are not pleasant, especially when the subject is related to the hearer. The strategies of indirectness included in Politeness Principle, however, let speakers balance the unpleasant side of criticism.

The Modesty Maxim works closely with the Approbation Maxim and involves both self-dispraise and avoidance of other people dispraise due to impolite nature of dispraising others. Observing the Modesty Maxim is a matter of relativity, that is to say, it is effective when one avoids being tedious and insincere as a result of continuous “self-denigration” in any situation (Leech, 1983). In the Dagbamba culture, the Modesty Maxim works very perfectly, and this maxim of Leech’s appears to be very significant in interactions among the Dagbamba and the research hopes to investigate

how it really operates, and how it exists in the language. The Approbation Maxims along with the Modesty Maxim are concerned with expressives and assertives.

The next two maxims of politeness, namely the Agreement Maxim and Sympathy Maxim, concern assertives and expressives respectively. The Agreement Maxim seeks opportunities in which the speaker can maximize “agreement with other” people from one hand, and can “mitigate disagreement by expressing regret, partial disagreement, etc.” on the other hand. Concerning the Sympathy Maxim, it is best instantiated in condolences and congratulation speech acts when speakers attempt to minimize antipathy with others and maximize sympathy with others.

It must be noted that Leech (1983) observes that not all the maxims are of the same importance. He points out that the Tact Maxim and the Approbation Maxim are more crucial compared to the Generosity and Modesty Maxims, since in his idea, the concept of politeness is more oriented towards the addressee (other) than the addresser. He regards sub-maxim (a) within each maxim to be more important than sub-maxim (b). As such, Leech (1983) claims that “negative politeness (avoidance of discord) is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness (seeking concord)”. Hence, the number of maxims is infinite and arbitrary.

A second criticism of Politeness Principle theory concerns Leech’s equation of indirectness with politeness. This idea has found many counterpoint cases where a direct utterance can be the appropriate form of politeness in a speech situation (Locher, 2004).

Leech’s theory appears “too theoretical to be applied to real languages”, as Locher (2004) argues but “the maxims can be used to explain a wide range of motivations for polite manifestation”. O’Driscoll (1996) points out that Leech’s maxims do not

contribute to the universality of politeness, but they can be used to account for many culture-specific realization of politeness. This can be applied in the present study. Leech's Politeness Principle can also be employed to account for the cross-cultural variability of the use of politeness strategies, as observed by Thomas (1995). Brown and Levinson (1987), posits that cross-cultural variability stems from assigning different importance to different maxims by different cultures.

Like the Japanese preference of Modesty Maxim over the Agreement Maxim as reported by Leech (1983), Dagbamba do not uphold self-praise since it is regarded as sheer arrogance. However, this model is not yet supported by sufficient empirical research cross-culturally and needs to be tested in various cultures for further corroboration like the present study seeks to do.

According to Leech (1983), the speaker always endeavours to maximize the benefits for his/her hearer while minimizing the cost that is unfavorable to the hearer, and ultimately reaches the social goal of establishing and maintaining comity. However, as Fraser (1990: 227) points out, Leech's (1983) principle is far too theoretical and too abstract saying that '... there is no way of knowing which maxims are to be applied, what scales are available, how they are to be formulated, what their dimensions are .... and so forth.' Brown and Levinson (1987:4) contend that if we must formulate new maxims every time we need to explain how human interaction takes place in an atmosphere of relative harmony, we will simply end up with "an infinite number of maxims, and the theory of politeness becomes vacuous." The criticism is that it looks rather difficult to claim universality for politeness and yet define it in terms of rules and maxims. In fact, Mey (1993) proposes that Leech's maxims can best be interpreted as a moral code of behaviour.



In another development, Mey (1993) criticizes Leech's (1983) view that "some illocutions (e.g. orders) are inherently impolite, and others (e.g. offers) are inherently polite" (Leech, 1983: 83). First of all, Mey (1993) posits that the social position of the speakers relative to one another may indicate different politeness values for individual cases. For example, commands in the military are neither polite nor impolite. In other words, the existence of a social hierarchy may pre-empt the use of politeness. Second, the politeness of the order may depend on other factors, such as the beneficial effect to the addressee.

Mey (1993) argues that someone can use a 'bald' imperative if the 'order' is beneficial to the addressee. (e.g. *Have another sandwich*). Leech (1983) develops the Politeness Principle (PP hereafter) to operate on the same level as, and to collaborate with, the Cooperative Principle (CP hereafter). However, as Mey (1993:70) points out, it is not at all plausible that a PP is able, or needed to 'rescue the CP'. As indicated by Brown and Levinson (1987), instead of treating politeness as absolute and rule-governed, we should try to develop a model that concentrates on choices that participants in a conversation make in actual contexts and allows for cross-cultural variability. Despite the criticisms, these maxims and principles are still relevant in some politeness contexts.

#### **2.5.4 *The conversational-contract view***

The underlying assumption of this approach, according to Fraser (1990), is that people in conversation get into contract before a conversation begins, and each participant operates based on some assumed rights and obligations which inform the expectation of each of the participants in the conversation. These rights are governed along the social relationships of the interactants. They make room for re-negotiation of the rights

and obligations as the interaction is in process. The rights and obligations define the interlocutors' duty as a Conversational Contract (CC). As far as the interlocutors respect the terms and rights agreed upon at the primary stages, they are interacting politely. Due to the possibility of negotiation and readjustment of the terms and rights, there is always the opportunity of negotiating the intentions and behaving politely for the interlocutors. Based on this provision, Fraser (1990) conceives that politeness is about "getting on with the task at hand in light of the terms and conditions of the CC". The Conversational-Contract view is similar to the Social Norm view in that politeness involves conforming to socially agreed codes of good behaviour but different from Social Norm view because in Conversational-Contract view the rights and obligations are negotiable.

Universal applicability is a remarkable feature of this model. Socio-cultural norms and patterns are the determinant factors in applying conversational-contract model of politeness. Kasper (1998) is of the view that conversational-contract cannot be manifested regardless of members of "specific speech communities". However, conversational-contract model, as Thomas (1995) reports, is not empirically applicable due to the lack of model details.

Watts (2003), questions the terms and rights as it is not clear what social conditions may prepare the ground for the readjustment and renegotiations of rights and terms. He also argues that the nature of the terms and rights are open to question. Furthermore, Felix-Brasdefer (2008), calls for further empirical application of Fraser's model of politeness in cross-cultural context in order to determine the validity of CC.

### ***2.5.5 Brown and Levinson's face-saving view***

Having outlined the conversational-contract view of politeness in the previous subsection, this section now focuses on face-saving view of politeness as argued by Brown and Levinson (1987). According to Mohsen and Farinaz (2013), the major proponents of this model are Brown and Levinson. This theory is based on constructing a Model Person (MP) who is a fluent speaker of a natural language and equipped with two special characteristics, namely 'rationality' and 'face'. Rationality enables the MP to engage in means-ends analysis. By reasoning from ends to the means the MP satisfies his/her ends. Face, as the other endowment of the MP, is defined as the public self-image that the MP wants to gain. Brown and Levinson propose that face has two aspects:

- i. Positive face which is the positive consistent self-image or personality claimed by Interactants (in other words, the desire to be approved of in certain respects).
- ii. Negative face which is the 'basic claim to territorial personal preserves and rights to non-distraction' (in other words, the desire to be unimpeded by others).

Drawing upon the "rational capacities" the MP can detect and choose the linguistic behaviour necessary for the maintenance of face. In short, the emphasis on addressing social members' face needs results in politeness strategies; polite behaviour is basic to the maintenance of face wants. Face wants consists of "the wants of approval" (i.e. positive face) "the wants of self-determination" (i.e. negative face) as presented by Kasper (1998).

### 2.5.5.1 The concept of face

The centrality of the concept of face in Brown and Levinson (1987) Politeness Theory cannot be over emphasized. Face can be said to be dignity, reputation, honour, and prestige of an individual person in relation to the person's value from the point of view of others in society. Face is a combination of the individual's sense of belonging as an important and accepted member in the society, and his/her social opportunities, such as credibility and community support. Face constitutes a very important aspect of the Dagbani society. There is a constant effort on an individual's part to maintain face in daily interactions with other members of the society. The term 'face' is historically linked to Goffman (1967), who seem to have derived it from Chinese usage (Hu, 1944; Ho, 1976). Goffman (1967:5) defines 'face' as the "positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". Known for his observational research, Goffman claims that there are three features of a person's face: a person desires to be seen as consistent, as having worth and as worthy of respect. He claims that there are two basic rules of social interaction; be considerate and be respectful, both of which exist for the maintenance of face.

Following the above view of Goffman on 'face' and face-work from an interactional perspective, Brown and Levinson (1987) offer a descriptive analysis of the strategies used by participants in a discourse to maintain their respective faces in social interaction. They assume 'that all competent adult members of a society have (and know each other to have) 'face'. They define 'face' as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 61). For Brown and Levinson, face is something that is "emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" Brown and Levinson (1987: 61).

Brown and Levinson (1987) propose that the concept of face can be realized at two levels that is face has two components instead of three as earlier on maintained by Goffman. Brown and Levinson describe these as ‘positive face’ and ‘negative face’. These are two related aspects of the same entity and refer to two basic desires or ‘wants’ of any individual in any interaction:

(a) Negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition.

(b) Positive face: the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 61)

The Politeness Theory states that all rational persons desire that others do not interrupt their actions. This desire is said to be Negative Face. On the other hand, people want a positive and consistent self-image that others are expected to appreciate or approve of. Brown and Levinson term this as Positive Face.

#### **2.5.5.2 Face threatening acts and politeness strategies**

Given these universals, Brown and Levinson claim that many communicative acts entail imposition on the face of either one or both of the participants. By this, Brown and Levinson argue that many communicative acts are inherently face-threatening acts (FTAs). In the framework that they developed, politeness is defined as a redressive action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of face-threatening activities. Acts that appear to impede the addressees’ independence of movement and freedom of action threaten their negative face, whereas acts that appear as disapproving of their wants threaten their positive face. Examples of acts that threaten the addressee’s negative face include orders, requests, suggestions, advice, threats, warnings, offers, and so forth.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), acts that threaten the addressee's positive face include expressions of disapproval or disagreement, criticism, and the mentioning of taboo topics. They further state that, under normal circumstances, all individuals are motivated to avoid conveying FTAs and are motivated to minimize the face-threat of the acts they employ. Thus, individuals must often prioritize three wants, the want to communicate the content of a face-threatening act, the want to be efficient, and the want to maintain the hearer's face. Three altogether produce five strategic choices that speakers must make (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 60): Five Strategic choices that speakers must make in the Figure 3 below:



Figure 3: Possible strategies for doing FTAs.

Source: Marquez-Reiter, R. (2000)

The five strategies that Brown and Levinson identify (see Figure 3) are claimed to be dependent on the extent to which risk of loss of face is involved. The risk factor increases as one moves up the scale of strategies from 1 to 5 with 1 being the least polite and 5 being the most polite. In other words, the more an act threatens the Speaker's or

Hearer's face, the more speakers will want to choose a higher-numbered strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the degree of this risk or weight of face threatening is determined by the cumulative effect of three universal social variables (Brown and Levinson, 1987:74):

D: the social 'distance' between the participants;

P: the relative 'power' between them;

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

They further point out that the way in which the seriousness of a particular FTA is weighed seems to be neutral as to whether it is S's or H's face that is threatened.

The weightiness of an FTA is calculated as follows Brown and Levinson (1987: 76):

$$W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$$

$W_x$  is the numerical value that measures the weightiness of the FTA.  $D(S,H)$  is the value that measures the social distance between the speaker(S), the hearer (H),  $P(H,S)$  is a measure of the power that the hearer has over the speaker, and  $R_x$  is a value that measures the degree to which the FTA is rated as an imposition in the given community. Thus, the seriousness or weightiness of a particular FTA (e.g. a request, an invitation, or a refusal) in any given situation is the sum of these three factors. For example, requesting that one's boss take over a time consuming project is more imposing on the hearer's negative face than is requesting that one's best friend open a door. Which strategy should be applied then depends on the weight of the FTA. The point Brown and Levinson (1987) make about impositives especially some kind of request in Dagbani

cannot be said to be a FTA. A case in point is fetching fire from a neighbour. The neighbour rather does it gracefully irrespective of P or R.

In Brown and Levinson's theory, a face bearing rational agent will tend to utilize the FTA-minimizing strategies according to a rational assessment of the face threat to participants. Brown & Levinson state that their argument has an empirical basis and the three factors P, D and R are universal and yet the value of each factor in a certain FTA is culture and context-dependent (Ibid.:78).

Among the five strategies of doing FTAs, politeness is rather irrelevant at the two extremes, especially the fifth strategy-'don't do FTA.' This category includes those cases where nothing is said because the risk of offending the addressee's face is too high, even while employing redressive actions. Their first category of strategies is what they call 'bald on record', which is used when a speaker gives more priority to communicating a face-threatening act efficiently than to preserving the hearer's face. Redressive action is not necessary because such strategies are either performed by interlocutors who are on intimate terms or because other demands for efficiency override face concerns. Brown and Levinson propose that we can treat the bald-on-record strategy as speaking in conformity with Grice's Maxims (Grice, 1975). There are, however, different kinds of bald-on-record usage in different circumstances because S can have different motives for his desire to do the FTA with maximum efficiency. For example, face protection is ignored or is irrelevant when it is mutually understood that maximum efficiency or urgency is important (e.g. *Wake up! The house is on fire*). Face protection may also be ignored when the face-threatening act is primarily in the hearer's interest, as in the case of comforting advice (e.g., *Don't be sad*) or sympathetic warnings (e.g. *Your headlights are on*). Another example, of bald-on-



record usage occurs not because other demands override face issues but because the speaker wants to alleviate H's anxieties about impinging on S's face. This class of circumstances includes welcoming ("*Come in*"), farewells ("*Don't let me keep you*"), and offers ("*Eat!*"). Brown and Levinson (1987:99) state that these situations illustrate the way in which respect for face involves mutual orientation, so that each participant attempts to foresee what the other participant is attempting to foresee. In addition, there are situations that actions rather than words portray bold on record FTA. An example is wearing of the **zipiligu goliyu**: 'a cylindrical hat' tilted forward in Dagbani. With this, there is no any redressive action to be taken to minimize the weight/ the insult to the targeted people.

Based on the concept of the two aspects of face, Brown and Levinson developed two types of politeness. Positive politeness is "redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/value resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable" (Brown & Levinson 1987:121). Negative politeness is "redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his desire to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded" (Brown & Levinson 1987:129). These two types of strategies that include the majority of linguistic devices used in everyday interactions are the ones most central to the current study. Just as Brown and Levinson's model is deemed the most influential in politeness study, it has also equally received many criticisms. One most regular of these is the individualistic nature of social interaction, which they put forward.

However, in non-western cultures, where group norms and values is the framework in which the interaction takes place, the model speaker proposed by Brown and Levinson is not considered polite. This appears not correct with Asian and African cultures where

the context of interaction is constrained by rules representing social group attributes (Mao, 1994; Nwoye, 1992; Sifianou 1992).

Another criticism addressing Brown and Levinson's theory, concerns the politeness strategies proposed by the authors. The case is that no utterance can be inherently interpreted as polite or impolite and any assessment of polite or impolite verbal interaction must be performed with regard to "the context of social practice". This point seems to have been overlooked by Brown and Levinson thus attracting criticism based on the politeness strategies they propose. In response to this, Felix-Brasdefer (2008) suggests that "pragmatic strategies" be used instead of Brown and Levinson's use of "politeness strategies" for describing, "the expressions used during the negotiation of face in social interaction".

The Politeness Theory is further criticized on the social variables they propose as constant; Distance (D), Power (P), and Ranking of Imposition(R). Fraser (1990) does not share this view because she believes that those social variables are subject to change in a short time span. As such, she argues that such variables as power and social distance must be treated as constantly changing variables according to the context of the interaction. The context orientation of this variable appears valid in Dagbani and will be investigated in this study.

Huang (1996) also conducts a cross-cultural study on American and Mandarin Chinese requests. Based on the discourse-production questionnaires she collected in the United States and in Taiwan, Huang tested the validity of the correlation between face threat and politeness strategies that are predicted in Brown and Levinson's theory. In terms of cross-cultural differences, although the two languages seemed to share a similar repertoire of linguistic strategies for making requests, there are variations in the specific

pattern of strategies that each language group prefers to use. The analysis of the use of head acts and their directness level showed that Taiwan Mandarin speakers are more direct in their requesting behaviour than American English speakers. As for the use of supportive moves, Americans tended to use modifiers, which signal a desire to remove the potential obstacle or to avoid impinging upon the hearer. The Chinese, on the other hand, preferred to use more self-denigration devices such as appreciation and concern.

In other words, the American subjects preferred negative politeness in making requests, while the Chinese subjects tended to use a combination of bald-on-record and positive politeness strategies. She also found that increased weightiness of face threat does not automatically result in a significantly increased use of greater politeness strategies, as claimed by Brown and Levinson. For example, hints, in spite of the indirectness they carry, are not necessarily interpreted as being the most polite strategies in both communities. Direct imperatives can also be made polite by adding imposition-softening devices or by being placed in an appropriate context. According to Huang, in addition to the three variables of power (P), distance (D), and rank of imposition (R) proposed by Brown and Levinson, other aspects of communication variables such as linguistic conventions, cultural attitudes, and social norms - also intervene in determining the relative politeness in social interaction.

While none of the above studies' results completely invalidates Brown and Levinson's theory, nevertheless, they reveal a common problem regarding politeness research in general and Brown and Levinson's theoretical framework in particular. Whether the problems concern the concept of face or the realization of politeness strategies, they all derive from the lack of a context filter, either on the global level (i.e. the socio-cultural context) or on the local level (i.e., discourse context). Given the differences between

Chinese and Western culture, especially on social values and beliefs and on the communication styles in certain speech events (e.g. gift-offering, food-plying), it is expected that other empirical research results on politeness in Chinese will also not totally support Brown and Levinson's theory. Any politeness theory that hopes to maintain its cross-cultural value needs to take both levels of context into consideration. Brown and Levinson's is no exception. The present study will pay attention to the cultural sensitivity of face which the Politeness Theory does not highlight enough. For instance, in some cultures of northern Ghana as we have between Dagbamba and Mossi, and Farefari and Dagaabas, there are sub-cultures, which promote playmate relationship among ethnic groups, which permit actions and statements considered FTAs in different contexts. Furthermore, the immediate environment such as an educated home and unadulterated home may interpret FTAs in different ways.

#### ***2.5.6 Politeness notion as a common sense***

With the various variations of arguments over what politeness entails and the need for further clarification Eelen (2001) sets in with a distinction between theoretical and commonsense terms in politeness research. Eelen (2001) looks at the subject as a common sense and sociolinguistic scholarly concept. On the common sense approach to what politeness is, Eelen says that "historically a number of different factors seem to be involved in determining politeness: aspects of social hierarchy (the court) and social status (life in the city), but also a more general notion of 'proper behavioural conduct'.

Claims about linguistic practices can easily be extrapolated to the non-linguistic domain, as the important thing for politeness is not so much the verbal or non-verbal nature of the behaviour in question, but rather how it is evaluated. These evaluations can be applied to both forms without implying any major changes in the underlying

notion of politeness. The common sense Notion of politeness relates language to aspects of social structure (life at the court and in the city) as well as behavioural codes and ethics ('proper' behaviour). As such, its study can be of value for understanding how society and ethics are connected to language and to behaviour in general, and provide a deeper insight into how society is established and maintained through interaction. This pivotal position of politeness as a link between language and social reality is also found in current theorizing, where politeness as a form of language use is invariably coupled with social relationships and social roles, and through these to the large-scale social phenomena of society and culture (Eelen, 2001; Watts, 2003) politeness is also a well-established scholarly concept, basic to 'politeness theory' – one of the more popular branches of contemporary pragmatics, and a widely used tool in studies of intercultural communication. The current study, in a great measure, shares in Eelen's views that politeness is very much grounded in the sociocultural stipulations of a given people.

### ***2.5.7 Face-work and interpersonal politeness***

From the point of psychological research, Arndt and Richard (1985) consider politeness as emotive communication and interpersonal politeness. Emotive communication "refers to transitory attitudes, feelings and other affective states" (Felix-Brasdefer, 2008). According to Arndt and Richard (1985), emotive communication is realized through verbal, vocal, and kinetic abilities. They explain that confidence cues, positive-negative affect cues, and intensity cues make up the emotive aspect of interaction.

But Felix-Brasdefer (2008) rewrites confidence cue as the degree of (in)directness or certainty to which an interlocutor approaches or avoids a topic in the presence of another interlocutor, and confidence may be expressed or reinforced verbally, vocally,

or kinesically. The next cue, namely positive or negative affective cue is defined as “the verbal, vocal, kinesic activities employed to support interpersonal communication by means of supporting (positive support) or contradicting (negative support) the interlocutor’s point of view.”

These cues all-together function as maintaining and balancing the course of communication. Drawing on Goffman’s notion of face and Brown and Levinson’s positive and negative face, Arndt and Richard (1985) opine that ‘personal autonomy’ and ‘interpersonal support’ are manifested through negative face and positive face respectively. Accordingly, they propose four supportive strategies in their model in order for the interlocutors to negotiate face-work. The strategies, namely supportive positive messages, non-supportive positive messages, supportive negative messages, and non-supportive negative messages can be realized both verbally and non-verbally. Felix-Brasdefer (2008) concludes that Arndt and Richard (1985) “politeness is viewed as interpersonal supportiveness and consists of supportive face-work strategies that express positive or negative feelings without threatening the interlocutors emotionally.” The lack of politeness research in cross-cultural contexts for supporting the validity of this model is the criticism encountering this theory of politeness.

### ***2.5.8 Politeness as rapport management***

Felix-Brasdefer (2008), reports that rapport management is the management of harmony-disharmony in a social interaction. Rapport management is realized through two alternatives, namely face management and sociality right management (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). Face management consists of two dimensions, namely quality and identity. Felix-Brasdefer (2008) rewrites quality of face as “the desire for people to evaluate us positively (i.e., Brown and Levinson’s positive face) according to our

qualities (i.e., competence, appearance).” Identity of face is “the desire for people to acknowledge our social identities and roles as, for example, a group leader or close friend.” The sociality rights suggested by Spencer-Oatey (2000) are made up of equity rights and association rights. The equity rights embody the idea that everybody deserves fair behaviour and it is realized when the cost and benefits between the interlocutors is balanced. The second component of sociality rights, namely association rights is one’s right to have a harmonious relationship with others both internationally and affectively.

Felix-Brasdefer (2008) summarizes Spencer-Oatey’s theory as “an alternative for analyzing sociocultural behaviour in social interaction”. Rapport management view “excludes Brown and Levinson’s original notion of negative face in which the individual is seen as an independent member of society; instead, group identity captures the notion of an individual who desires to be perceived as a member of the group”. This model is yet to be applied in cross-cultural investigation of politeness.

### ***2.5.9 Politeness as discernment and volition***

Ide (1989) proposes a quite radical notion of politeness postulating that discernment and volition constitute linguistic politeness. Ide (1989:184) explains that “the volitional type is governed by one’s intention and realized by verbal strategies, and the discernment type is operated by one’s discernment (or the socially prescribed norm) and is expressed by linguistic form”. The use of linguistic form in which the interlocutors’ differences in terms of rank or role are clearly expressed is the way discernment can be realized. As such, formal forms such as honorifics are different from verbal strategies to Ide (1989) and she does not consider honorifics among negative politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987).

Verbal strategies are the medium for the expression of volitional politeness according to Ide (1989). Volitional politeness aims at saving face, as the purpose of Brown & Levinson (1987) theory is to save face. Altogether, volition and discernment help the interaction flow smoothly as discernment indicates the speaker's contribution to the interaction as far as socially prescribed forms are concerned and volition indicates the speaker's intention as how polite s/he wants to be in a given situation. Felix-Brasdefer (2008) points out that: 'if honorifics or pronouns of address are used appropriately in a particular situation, that is, according to the social norms of a given culture, a person may be perceived as being impolite.' The applicability of Ide's model in non-Asian languages (Western and African) is yet awaited to provide supporting evidence for the validity of this model but for the present study, the group norm of politeness applies well in Dagbani politeness.

#### **2.5.10 *Watts's politeness view***

Watts (2003) distinguishes the common sense or lay notion of politeness from the theoretical notion calling the former first-order politeness or politeness 1 and the latter notion as second-order politeness or politeness 2. As Vikki (2006:6) reports (that): "politeness 2 is a socio-psychological notion that is used for the various ways in which members of socio-cultural group talk about polite language usage, whereas politeness 2 is a theoretical, linguistic notion in a sociolinguistic theory of politeness." Watts (2003) introduces politic behaviour as appropriate behaviour verbal or non-verbal in any social interaction and adds polite behaviour as the surplus of politic behaviour. Watts believes that the evaluation of verbal and non-verbal behaviour as inherently polite or impolite is inaccurate and this evaluation must be subject to the interlocutors' interpretation of a given context. Watts (2005) relational work reflects the idea that



depending on social and contextual variables the interpretation of polite and impolite behaviour varies from one culture to another.

## **2.6 Politeness, Power, Gender, and Age**

Coulmas (2013:102) notes that “politeness is inextricably linked with social differentiation, with making the appropriate choices which are not the same for all interlocutors and all situations”. Politeness theory postulates that speakers will vary their communication styles depending on whether their interlocutor is an equal or not, as well as whether they are familiar with each other, with a greater power differential and a lack of familiarity leading to greater use of linguistic politeness strategies (De Felice & Garreston, 2018; Brown & Levinson, 1987).

### **2.6.1 Power and im/politeness**

Power is a basic aspect of inter-group and inter-personal relations and very central in human interactions. Though definition of power varies from one authority to another, the common understanding is that it influences decisions and actions and attitude of others in line with the one who has it. In the past decade, a lot of research has been done on the use of power in politeness studies especially in the work place (Takano 2005; Vine 2004). Power at work place can be observed both in speech and in writing. Gilbert (2012:1037), for example, notes that “[a]t work, email is the performance of power and hierarchy captured in text.” Prabhakaran and Rambow (2013), describe the four types of power discern in a subset of the Enron emails, namely hierarchical power (as determined by position within the company), situational power (which is independent of the organisational hierarchy, but rather task-or situation-dependent), power over communication (held by those who drive the communication by asking questions or issuing requests, rather than responding to such utterances), and influence (held by a

person who has credibility or wants to convince others). They find that people with hierarchical power are less active in email threads—that is, they do not write as much—and note that their findings “suggest that bosses don’t always display their power overtly when they interact” (ibid: 2013: 221). In fact, most findings on politeness and power in the workplace converge on the fact that even in situations of power asymmetry, more powerful speakers retain the use of politeness strategies. Kim and Lee (2017: 210), for example, found that “[although superiors may have legitimate power of control and regulation, encouraging subordinates to be autonomous and self-regulating individuals was valued, which led superiors to mitigate their requests”.

In the present study, power is not exactly as the case in a workplace but it involves leadership and more of instructions and control than in the case of Kim and Lee (2017).

### ***2.6.2 Gender and politeness***

Gender is a socially constructed roles in society for males and females but not just biological sex (Mills, 2003). Research over the years has identified and systematized politeness strategies and characteristics of women and men in interaction in society especially in Western society. For Western cultures, Mullany describes these expectations as of men being assertive, competitive, and aggressive, and of women being co-operative, supportive, and indirect (Mullany, 2012p: 513). Researchers have extended investigation to the workplace to find out linguistic behavior of men and women there. Accordingly, the role of gender in workplace interaction (mostly spoken) has had a considerable attention for some time now (cf: Holmes & Schnurr, 2005; Holmes, 2006; Mullany, 2007; Baxter, 2010). These works observe that, while individual workplace contexts (each) tend to follow their own set of communicative practices, overall, societies have a set of expectations regarding how men and women

‘should’ or ‘will’ behave in a professional context (though, as Marra et al. 2006 note, they are often found to be using the same linguistic strategies). Furthermore, with regard to Clinton’s language specifically, Jones (2016:635) notes that “Clinton’s [spoken] linguistic style was most masculine during the years she served in the Senate and Department of State”.

Homes (1984) observed some differences in the use of ‘I’ in directives by males and females. She notes that the bigram *I think* is a canonical downtoner for requests and suggestions with men using downtoners more than women as seen in the case of Coates (2013: 31–49). E.g: *I think [Jake should be on the call, calling now would be appropriate, it’s also worth talking to him]*. In contrast, only female-to-female messages contain phrases like *I don’t [know, think, understand]*.

According to Homes, the 1<sup>st</sup> Person Plural, *we*, is used by men only to report information (about completed or planned work), while women use it to formulate instructions which Coates (2013) confirms in the Clinton E-mails.

In a more recent study, Saito (2010) explored seven Japanese male workplace superiors’ linguistic practices, particularly their use of directive speech acts. Findings revealed that the gender of the speaker, in addition to various contextual factors, plays a role in the choice of the directive form chosen and that actual practice is not always consistent with gender stereotypes.

## **2.7 Interim Summary**

The chapter has been used to establish the theoretical framework that drives this study, that is, the traditional theoretical view by Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) and to some extent, the post- modern view. The point has also been made that politeness does

have some amount of universality and yet, there are culture specific differences. It has also been established that politeness is achievable through non-linguistic means although attention in politeness research has largely been focused on the linguistic aspects.

Furthermore, this chapter made an attempt to provide a critical overview of the principles of the most well-known theories of politeness. As it was indicated, the earliest theories of politeness (e.g., face-saving theory sought universal principles of verbal interaction based on which they can provide a universal framework for polite verbal behaviour on the one hand.

On the other hand, the theories (e.g., face-saving theory of Brown & Levinson (1987:47) accounted for the variation of such social factors as distance, power, and weight of imposition respectively and the consequent influence of these variables on the formulation of politeness strategies. Moreover, it was pointed out that depending on social and contextual variables the interpretation of polite and impolite behaviour varies from one culture to another. In this regard, it seems that with the ever-increasing number of interactions among people coming from different cultural backgrounds, two different frameworks should be developed in future orientations of theories of politeness. First, there should be some universal principles and rules considered to be polite for taking into consideration, when people from different cultural backgrounds are going to interact politely. This framework could be an intercultural framework of politeness. Second, within every culture, the interaction of people belonging to the same cultural background should follow the rules and principles of the shared norms of interaction within that particular culture, that is, intra-cultural framework. The

consideration of culture-specific norms of interaction can contribute to intra-cultural interactions to be polite.

Although, the development of a universal framework of politeness for intercultural interactions seems demanding and depends on a number of cultural characteristic, the framework seems plausible, as there are frameworks such as political conventions which are taken into account in international relations. Therefore, the consideration of polite interaction among people coming from different cultural background calls for a universal intercultural framework shared globally.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I offered an extensive literature on the topic under study.

This chapter focuses on the research design, and methods used in the collection of data and the instruments used. Methods used over the years in socio-linguistics/pragmatic research are classified broadly into observation, and elicitation. Some of the most popular data collection techniques include Discourse Completion Task (DCT), Multiple-choice Questionnaires (MCQ), Role Play, Audio Recording of naturally occurring data, field notes and interviews. Section 3.1 discusses the research design and how the qualitative research design is employed for this current study, whereas section 3.2 outlines the methods of data collection including recording of natural data, focus group discussions, data from local video (Dagbani films), key informant interviews, personal observation, participant observation and native intuition of a native speaker conversant with the customary practices of the people. Section 3.3 captures the demography of the sample population used for the research. The sample population had a fair representation of both males and females to help with one major objective of the study, which is to ascertain whether or not there is a difference in the politeness strategies used by men and women and if there is, how it plays out in Dagbani. I also, selected towns that covered the three major dialectal variations of Dagbang as a way of ensuring that all potential differences in various dialects are captured. The data collection procedures are discussed in 3.4 while section 3.5 focuses on the data analysis strategies employed for the discussion in this thesis and an interim summary is provided in 3.6.

### **3.1 Research Design**

The research approach employed in this research is qualitative. The ethnographic research design was employed for the study because this study examined the approaches and attitudes of the participants as well as other characteristics and behavioural patterns of the target community.

### **3.2 Methods of Data Collection**

Data was collected through the recording of natural conversation, purposive interviews, observation, filming of events, focused group discussions, and the native speaker intuition of the researcher. Data was also collected from an existing song by Abu Sadik (Policeman), a popular Dagbana musician on euphemisms. The fieldwork for the the data took a sixteen-month period in the towns and villages of Dagbaŋ. I also trained five research assistants in the towns and villages where data were collected at different times in the community to collect natural spontaneous data of interaction of participants.

#### **3.2.1 Recording of natural data**

I used audio and video recorders for the purpose of recording naturally occurring data. These were used alternatively depending on which one was readily available, and suitable when a conversation was to be recorded. The interactions were spontaneous naturally occurring language and social performance scenes. Turnbull (2001) contends that an ideal pragmatic data-collection method should allow data to be generated in situations in which researchers can control and manipulate variables in the systematic testing of hypotheses. He also advises that the data-collection situation should be such that subjects can talk freely and spontaneously unconscious that the activity is the object of study. The recordings helped in the observation of social conventions, the social

identities of the interactants and particular situational settings. For Fukushima (2000:140), naturally occurring data for politeness research by admitting that only naturally occurring data can provide in-depth analysis of interactional norms. Moreover, Conversation Analysis researchers who are currently placed high in politeness research insist on the use of audio- or video recordings of scenes of naturally occurring interactions as their basic data. These contexts informed the use of naturally occurring data to provide for a more in-depth analysis of interactional norms.

For an empirical research in pragmatics such as the present study, naturally-occurring data are not only important but also essential because they are the only type of data that come with real-life context. In the present study, naturally occurring data was collected and played back several times to identify politeness strategies used for particular contexts and purposes. Recordings were done in public arenas, at work, at funerals ceremonies, in the markets, during naming ceremonies, in individual households, and in palaces. Although the ethics of research demands that the participants must participate in the process willingly, in the case of the naturally occurring data, it was difficult for the researcher to satisfy this condition at the time the conversations were playing out. This was particularly so because he did not want to interrupt the naturally flowing conversations. However, after the recordings, consensus was sought after educating them on the purpose of the study and due permission was sought to use the data of which they gladly consented. In the case of the palaces with security implications, the chiefs were informed ahead of time and permission given before the appointed date and activity. The idea of the research excited the Chiefs and as such they welcomed the research. The challenge which was encountered in the palaces was that after several hours of recordings, it was found out that there were very few instances of politeness strategies. This was because I could not control the subject of the naturally



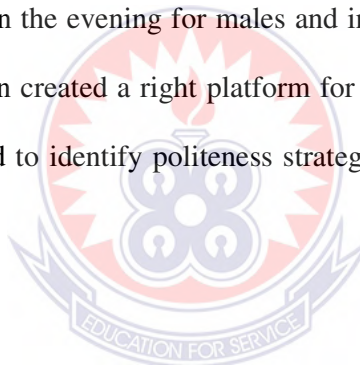
occurring conversations and as such could not tailor the discussions to go in a particular way. This, however, remains a disadvantage of recording naturally occurring data; there is more information but it must be sieved to get useful data to help in one's research.

Regardless of this disadvantage however, naturally recorded data have the advantage of being indefinitely rich in empirical detail, which could never be produced by the imagination of anybody. The use of recorded data also served as a control on the limitations and fallibilities of my intuition and recollection. It further exposed me to a wide range of interactional materials and circumstances. It also provided some guarantee that analytic conclusions would not arise as artifacts of intuitive idiosyncrasy, selective attention or recollection or experimental design. The availability of a taped record enabled repeated and detailed examination of particular events in interaction and hence greatly enhanced the range and precision of the observations that were made. The use of such materials has the additional advantage of providing hearers and, to a lesser extent, readers of research reports with direct access to the data about which analytic claims are being made. This further minimized the influence of my individual preconception.

With the initial challenge of not getting enough data from the recorded data, the researcher had to devise other means in the data collection process. Combinations of methods were used to collect more reliable data so that the results could provide better insight into the politeness strategies used by Dagbamba. The researcher used some of the ideals of Conversation Analysis to reach a specific kind of systematic insight in the ways in which members of Dagbaj mark politeness. These methods helped to support the naturally occurring data.

### **3.2.2 Focus group discussion**

The second instrument that was used was focus group discussions. Purposive sampling was done to get participants with the requisite experience and knowledge in the language and Dagbamba culture. They were asked to pass judgment on the tokens about their politeness or impoliteness status. These participants were a cross section of society including commoners (non-title holders), elders of chiefs and especially the traditional drummers or *domdom* drummers (lorists). Five such group discussions were organized to discuss different tokens by different groups. There were ten participants in each focus group discussion. There were two (2) lorists in the first group, one (1) in the second group, three (3) in the third one, and two (2) in the last two groups. They were done in different communities in the evening for males and in the afternoon for females. The Focus Group Discussion created a right platform for divergent views to be aired and resolved. This was used to identify politeness strategies found in the local films that were watched together.



### **3.2.3 Local Songs**

The songs were gathered by their album titles which had some Dagbani culture displayed. The researcher first listened to them and noted lyrics which demonstrated some politeness strategies or the other. These tokens became the subject for discussion by the Focus group discussion as explored in 3.2.2 earlier.

### **3.2.4 Key informant interviews**

A purposive interview was conducted to get confirmation on the strategies identified as politeness strategies and to get some detail. Ten key informants who were knowledgeable in the strategies used by Dagbamba to mark politeness were interviewed. Open-ended questions were used to give the interviewees a lot of

opportunity to explain and give detailed information from their rich experience. The interviews allowed the researcher to understand the meanings people hold for their everyday activities.

### ***3.2.5 Personal observation***

Observation was used to gather primary data for the purpose of the study. The researcher actively participated in social activities with keenness to interactions and activities for potential politeness strategies. Personal observations became necessary because there was a need (I wanted) to painstakingly experience and live the cultural etiquette of Dagbamba life.

All five instruments were used since each had its own set of assumptions, strategies, strengths and weaknesses regarding the study of the social world and the kind of data that could be produced to increase knowledge. Use of various the methods helped to improve quality of research findings since conclusions from one method were used to check validity of results from another method.

#### **3.2.5.1 Participant observation**

Participant Observation is where the researcher shares, as intimately as possible, in the life and activities of the subjects under study. This entails an extended residence period in order to fully participate in all the daily routines of the people and develop an insider's view of what is happening. It must be noted that the researcher hails from the the study area and is a native speaker of Dagbani. The participant observation in essence helped me in gaining further understanding of the daily activities of the speakers. (I must note that, I am a resident native in the area and I used the study period to pay more attention to the daily activities of the speakers of Dagbani for further understanding of these activities.)

Participant observation was employed because for many years, it had been a hallmark of both anthropological and sociological studies. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) believe that participant observation ensures a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study because it ensures objectivity and accuracy as possible given the limitations of the method. They suggest that participant observation be used as a way to increase the validity of the study, as observations may help the researcher have a better understanding of the context and phenomenon under study. But validity is stronger with the use of additional strategies used with observation, such as interviewing.

### **3.2.5.2 Limitations of observation**

But the instrument is not without weaknesses and several researchers have noted the limitations involved with using observations as a tool for data collection. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) for instance, note that male and female researchers have access to different information during observation. This is because the two have access to different people, settings, and bodies of knowledge. Furthermore, Participant Observation is conducted by a biased human who serves as the instrument for data collection. In the current study, even though there were a few gender differences in the politeness strategies, the strategies were known to both men and women without any gender limitations. Both males and females were engaged in the study as much as possible in a bid to allow for equal participation and also help see the potential differences between their uses of politeness strategies. To handle the observer bias, I crosschecked my knowledge of the language and culture with other competent members in Dagbani society.

### **3.2.6 Native intuition**

My native intuition of Dagbani and its culture was an added advantage, which allowed me access the background, and details of the politeness strategies used by the

participants. This helped a lot in the personal observation and participant observation in the collection of data.

### 3.3 Participants

The data was gathered from people who were competent in Dagbani and its cultural performances. Participants were both males and females. They consisted of chiefs/queen-mothers, elders, opinion leaders, non-title holders, and ordinary men and women. Interviews and focused group discussions were used to determine the politeness status of the tokens. The participants were of an average age of forty-five years. Data was taken from across the length and breadth of Dagbani including Yendi, Gukpeyu, Tolon, Savelegu, Gukpegu and Tugu etc. Details are shown below in Table 1 and Table 2. As evident in the table, 60 informants were used and the focus group discussion technic was employed.

Table 1

#### *Number of Participants*

	# of Times	Male	Female	Total
Focus Group Discussion	5	25	25	50
Key Informant	5	6	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>60</b>

Table 2

#### *Participants and Events*

Event	# of Attendance	Male	Female	Total
Funeral	3	6	4	10
Coronation	3	3	3	6
Wedding	3	3	3	6
Naming Ceremony	4	7	6	13
Palace	3	4	3	7
Work Place	3	3	3	6
Market	3	3	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>54</b>

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

The main data collection technique adopted for this study was recording of naturally occurring speech events of the participants. The conversations/interactions were captured as the participants performed their linguistic and social roles in the performance of libation, at work, in the chief's palace, marriage ceremonies, funeral ceremonies, festivals, in the market, and home etc. They were captured through:

Audio visual recordings

Audio recordings

From existing songs

Data were gathered from some key Dagbanga towns including: Yeni, Kumbungu, Tolon, Tugu, Savelugu, Gukpegu, and Gushegu.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Strategies**

Process of Data Analysis refers to the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. This was done through description, interpretation, and analysis of the collected data. The details of the scenes of the conversations/tokens or circumstance of those tokens were given through adequate description etc. Analysis addressed identification of essential features and the systemic description of interrelationships among them - how politeness worked in the Dagbamba society. With interpretation, the question of meaning and context were handled. The data further went through organization, generating of categories, themes, and patterns, and searching for alternative explanations of the data from politeness literature.

Analysis of this study was primarily qualitative, with the unit of analysis being one 'Move', in some cases. Geis (1995: xii) points out that "the fundamental unit of investigation for speech act theory should be naturally-occurring conversational

sequences, not the individual, constructed utterances, isolated from actual or even explicitly imagined conversational contexts that traditional speech act theory has been based on.” In his discussion on conversational dialogue, Goffman (1976: 271) clearly states that a sentence is not the analytically relevant entity, since “a respondent could employ several in what is taken to be a single interactionally relevant event”. He proposes to use the notion of a ‘move’. Goffman describes a ‘move’ as:

any full stretch of talk or of its substitutes which has a distinctive unitary bearing on some set or other of the circumstances in which participants find themselves, such as a communication system, ritual constraints, economic negotiating, character contests, ‘teaching cycles’, or whatever. (1976: 272)

Goffman further explains that:

an utterance which is a move in one game may also be a move in another, or be but a part of such other, or contain two or more such others. And a move may sometimes coincide with a sentence and sometimes with a turn’s talk but need do neither. (Pg 272)

On his part, Perez de Ayala (2001) used ‘move’ in his study on the politeness strategies used by the British Members of Parliament during Question Time. He states that moves are the structural categories in which a turn can be divided, and which identify a new function in the discourse of the speaker. In his analysis, a main discourse act is identified for each move. According to Perez de Ayala, it is at this level that FTAs and politeness strategies are identified.

Despite the above support for the adoption of ‘Move’ as the unit for analysis, Brown and Levinson (1987) use of the sentence in Speech Acts Theory and the politeness strategies as a unit of analysis was used. There were instances where politeness

strategies were identified in a single lexeme (as the unit of analysis) as in the case of linguistic hedges.

### **3.5.1 Coding and results**

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed five super-strategies from which an individual may choose when attempting to conduct a FTA: 1) bald-on-record without redressive action; 2) positive politeness; 3) negative politeness; 4) off-record; and 5) don't do the FTA. The first step in coding the data was that each 'move' was labeled as one of the five strategies, namely, negative politeness, bald-on-record and positive politeness, off record and don't do the act.

To code a 'move', the recordings were listened to with the researcher not only considering the socio-cultural background of the participants, but also the context as well as the interaction itself in a sequential nature, that is, what had been said before and after. Since politeness strategies are socio-pragmatic, the researcher used his communicative competence as a native speaker of Dagbani and as a member of the speech community to understand and interpret the utterances. This enabled make inferences based on the linguistic form used and on the 'total-context' in which the politeness strategy occurred. The total-context included the cultural, social and situational aspects as well as previous utterances in a discourse. Goodwin and Goodwin (1990:85) point out that "participants in a conversation continually react to prior talk, and that the concept of context, as well as the notion of relationship is not static but dynamic." A case in point is the playmateship in Dagban and among the people of Northern Ghana. It therefore became necessary to consider the total context in order to capture the interactive nature of the participants and to be able to interpret the politeness strategies from the Dagbani point of view. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory was



applied to the data by incorporating the ‘total context’ into the model. The negative politeness strategies were labeled (FTAs with redressive features) as Category A, Bald-on-record strategies (FTAs without any redressive features) as Category B, and Positive politeness strategies (compliments, showing interests to the customers, make promises, etc.) as Category C, Off record FTAs as Category D Non-verbal Strategies as Category E (Prosody, and Actions & inactions etc).

The second step was to examine each category and code similar strategies as sub-categories. After the second sorting, the sub-categories for each of the seven strategies were sorted as follows:

**Category A: Negative Politeness**

A1: hedges (lexical, syntactic, particles, prosody)

A2: show deference

A3: indirect strategies

**Category B: Bald on record**

B1: disagreement (criticism); question

B2: suggestion/advice

B3: request

B4: warning; threatening

**Category C: Positive Politeness**

C1: show concern, interest

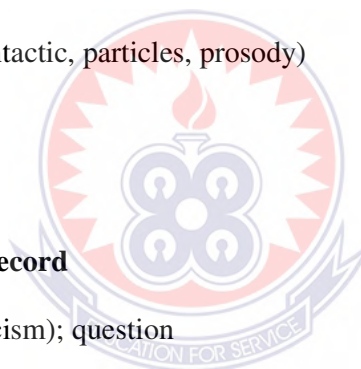
C2: promise, guarantee

C3: solidarity/in-group talk

C4: compliment

C5: joke, humor

**Category D: Off-Record**



This strategy uses indirect language and spares the speaker potential to be imposing. For example, a speaker using the indirect strategy might merely say “wow, it’s getting cold in here” insinuating that it would be nice if the listener would get up and turn up the thermostat without directly asking the listener to do so.

### **3.6. Interim Summary**

The focus of this chapter was to offer some methodological background into the study. The study used the qualitative research approach and the data were drawn from varied sources. The use of varied data was motivated by the need to prevent possible biases in the analysis and also to capture for potential differences that might result from certain variables in the study. The chapter that follows offers a detailed study into the politeness strategies of Dagbani. It therefore serves as the first analytical one for this current study.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN DAGBANI**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

In chapter 2, I examined relevant literature on politeness strategies around the globe, and in Africa in particular. It was shown that there exist politeness strategies in all languages as part of the competence of language performance.

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the data on the linguistic mechanisms through which Dagbamba mark deference. The chapter gives an overview of the notion of verbal politeness drawing data from Dagbani. Section 4.2 discusses honorifics in the context of Brown and Levinson (1987). Here, it is seen that the use of honorifics is one of the linguistic strategies that are employed for the coding of politeness in Dagbani. This section offers a cut-edge review of what honorifics are and how they are used in the context of Dagbani. The honorifics of Dagbani include the age category, familial category, occupational category, and formal and informal situations. Section 4.3 discusses chieftaincy titles as honorifics while 4.4 centers on a discussion on politeness in Dagbamba greetings. In section 4.5 some perspectives on politeness in Dagbani are offered whereas 4.6 is devoted to a discussion on importance of greetings while 4.7 gives an insight into Dagbani address systems. In section 4.8, the use of proverbs as politeness strategy in Dagbani is discussed and section 4.9, linguistic hedges while section 4.10 summarizes the chapter.

#### **4.1. On Dagbani Verbal Politeness**

Verbal politeness is the relationship between the use of certain linguistic units in communicative exchanges and the norms of social behaviour as stated by Held (1992). Verbal politeness mechanisms are analysed based on Dagbanj culture employing the

relevant theory of Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) as an analytical tool. This theoretical tool is supported by any other theory that is found relevant for the data under consideration. The notion of politeness in Dagbani is respect for self and others by not being arrogant, rude in behaviour/ and speech. It is therefore, a face-saving mechanism for both the speaker and hearer in a given discourse. This gives rise to the Dagbamba to describe someone deemed polite as indicated in the data in (1) and (2). One grammatical fact to note is that the 3rd Person Singular Pronoun /o/ codes both masculine, and feminine.

5. a. **O ti-ri jilima.**

3SG give respect

H/he is respectful.

b. **O mali jilima.**

3SG have respect

She/he is respectable.

6. a. **O mali yem**

3 SG have sense

S/he has sense' (Lit: S/he is wise.

b. **O mali biehigu**

3SG has behaviour

S/he behaves well.

Contrary to the descriptions in (5-6) which are generally indicators of politeness, there are also some structures that show impoliteness among the Dagbamba as exemplified in (7) through (8). These are the negatives of what we have just seen above.

7. a. **O bi ti-ra jilima.**

3SG NEG give respect  
S/he does not give respect. (Lit: S/he is not polite)

b. **O ka jilima**  
3SG have.NEG respect  
S/he has no respect. (Lite: She is not polite.)

8. a. **O ka yem.**  
3SG have.NEG sense  
He has no sense. (Lit: S/he is not sensible)

b. **O ka biehigu.**  
3SG have.NEG character  
S/he has bad behaviour.

As evident from the data so far presented, deference is marked through linguistic routines. These routines are the sequential organizations beyond the sentence and are either activities of one person or the interaction of two or more persons. Linguistic routines such as gestures, paralinguistic features, topics and rituals are core in everyday interactions among the people of Dagbaŋ. The most outstanding of these are address forms, greetings, apology, request, gratitude, use of proverbs and songs in information dissemination since they are daily occurrences as the data indicate. Dagbaŋ society expects from its members competent performance of these routines not only to enhance communication but also to create and sustain harmony in the society. Hymes (1972) refers to this ability as communicative competence. Politeness markers are usually employed in such routines by competent speakers of Dagbani in order to make clear their messages. Given that language use goes beyond the grammatical knowledge (linguistic competence), knowledge in communicative competence is very crucial in

ensuring that language users maintain rapport and minimize social conflict during communication or interaction with other users of the language.

Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) propose five sets of politeness strategies, i.e. the on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record and don't do the face-threatening act (FTA) as strategies available to competent speakers of a language to use appropriately in conversation. Selection of any of these politeness strategies over the others is directly related to the sums of three sociocultural variables namely power, distance and status. The higher the sums of the socio-cultural variables, the more politeness strategies the speaker is expected to select. From the data, some of the linguistic strategies through which the Dagbamba of the Northern Region of Ghana realize politeness are enumerated in the subsequent sections.

#### **4.2 Honorifics**

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), an honorific is usually a language structure; syntactical or morphological that encodes the relative social status of the participants in the conversation. Generally, linguistic honorifics convey formality, social distance, politeness, humility, and deference/respect. On the part of Richard et al., (1985:131), honorifics are “politeness formulas in a particular language which may be specific affixes, words, or sentence structure.” With a similar view, Irvine (1995:1) points out that “linguistic honorifics are forms of speech that signal social deference, through conventionalized understandings of some aspects, of the form and meaning relationship.” From the definitions above, one key characterization of honorifics is the fact that they are used to show respect in communication.

Based on the above understanding of honorifics, three main types of honorifics have been identified (Levinson 1987; Lakoff, 1973) and categorised according to the individual whose status is being expressed:

Addressee (or speaker/hearer)

Referent (or speaker/referent)

Bystander (or speaker/bystander)

Addressee honorifics are said to project the social rank of the hearer, irrespective of the subject matter. This is found in Japanese with three different words for "house" depending on the status of the person spoken about. Referent honorifics on the other hand, express the status of the person being spoken about. In this type of honorific, both the referent (the person being spoken about) and the target (the person whose status is being expressed) of the honorific expression are the same. We find this in the classic example of the Tu–Vous distinction present in French, in which either *tu* or *vous*, 2nd person pronoun is chosen based on the relative social status of the speaker and the hearer (the hearer, in this case, also being the referent). Finally, in bystander honorifics, the status of someone who is nearby, but not a participant in the conversation (the over hearer) is considered. These are the least common, and are found primarily in avoidance speech such as the "mother-in-law languages" of aboriginal Australia, where one changes one's diction in the presence of an in-law or other tabooed relative.

The Speaker/Situation honorific does not concern the status of any participant or bystander, but the circumstances and environment in which the conversation occurs. A classic example of this is diaglossia in which an elevated or "high form" of a language is used in situations where more formality is called for, and a vernacular or "low form" of a language is used in more casual situations. However, in Dagbani, honorifics do not exactly play out in the ways examined above as seen in the literature although there are some similar grounds in some situations.

#### 4.2.1 *Dagbani honorifics*

Honorifics abound in Dagbani evidenced from the data gathered. Honorifics, as politeness strategy, could perhaps fall into four main categories in line with Habwe (2010) in the Kiswahili language.

##### 4.2.1.1 Age category

The age category has relatively few honorifics. This type of honorific is defined against the backdrop of age difference. These honorifics include in Dagbani **kpema**, (elder), **beli**, (elder sister/elder brother, and **yeba**, (an elderly person/grandfather). This was common among wives of brothers in the clan or family, and in the interactions between these wives and their sister-in-laws. It was a common honorific in utterances referring to wives of younger brothers to wives of elder brothers of their husbands, for example, **M beli Awaabu** (Elder Sister Awaabu), **Mbeli Neena** ‘Elder Sister Neena’. Wives addressed their sisters-in-law as **M beli Sanatu** ‘Elder Sister Sanatu’, **M beli Adisa** ‘Elder Sister Adisa’ among others. In some situations, the wife may be older than her sister-in-law but the wife addresses the sister-in-law as **Mbeli** just to indicate that the wife is polite to her husband which has been extended to his sister. An example is the conversation between Neena, Dahimani’s wife and his younger sister, Mariamabila thus;

9. Neena: **M beli Mayaama, a sagim n be kurigazie**  
 1POS elder M. 2POS food be bowl red
- maa ni maa. Di lee ni maai mi.**  
 DEF inside DEF FUT MoodFUT cold FOC
- N zaŋ n ti a naa?**  
 1SG take CONJ give 2PSG DM



My elder sister, Mariamabila, your tuozaafi is in that red bowl.  
It might have become cold. Should I bring it to you here?

10. Mayamabila: **Ah zaŋ mi na, a bi mi ni**  
 INJ bring FOC DM 1SG NEG know that  
**kum wum ma pam?**  
 hunger hear 1SG INTEN  
 Ah, bring it, don't you know that I am very hungry?'

11. Neena: **M beli Mayaama ŋuna yi ti**  
 1POS elder M. 3SG.EMPH COND PRT  
**ye-ra di ŋmani la o bi**  
 talk-IMPERF it looks like FOC 3SG NEG  
 di mi zuŋo zaa  
 eat.PERF FOC today all  
 When sister Mayaama is talking, it looks as if she has not eaten  
 the whole day.

In 9. - 11. Above, politeness is marked with the use of **M beli**, 'my elder brother/sister'. This is the expected politeness that the wife of one's younger brother renders to his elder sister. It marks age lower of the speaker than the addressee. Younger people are expected to be polite towards older persons. We also see in these data the gender factor because males are not expected to do this to wives of their elder brothers or elder sisters of their wives unless the age difference is very pronounced.

Similar honorific markers were found in references of wives to both elder and younger brothers of their husbands. But in the case where the brother in-law was too young, he was addressed using his first name.

It is therefore, not surprising that people who are genuinely older are shown deference using some of these markers indicated above. This is demonstrated in the encounter between the researcher and his cousin called Dinyi when he visited home when his mother got ill in November, 2016:

12. Dinyi: **N kpema, a maraaba!**  
 1POS elder you welcome  
 My elder brother, you are welcome!

Gurindow: **N go mi na**  
 1SG travel FOC DM  
 I have paid you a visit.

Dinyi: **N Kpema, ti payakpema maa ningbuna**  
 1POS elder, 1PL oldlady DEF body  
**duyili maa n taha maa na yoyo?**  
 heat DEF CONJ bring DEF DM. ADV.  
 Have you come because of our old lady's sickness?

Gurindow: **Ma n pun kani na ka di pa**  
 But 1SG already come DM CONJ it NEG  
**la bariṅ n tahi-ri ma na**  
 FOC sickness FOC bring-IMPERF 1SG.OBJDM DM  
 But I have been coming even when my mother was not sick.

Dinyi: **N kpemapa ka lala ka n yeli maa**  
 1SG elder NEG that FOC 1SG say DEF  
 My older brother, I didn't mean that.

In 12 above, Dinyi addressed Gurindow with the honorific **N kpema** even though the former knew the latter's name. But to show deference of age and social rank, Dinyi does not use the Gurindow's personal name but the age honorific reference. His misinterpretation of his cousin's remark about the purpose for visiting made it even more polite for him to use the honorific **N kpema** to calm down the situation. In this instance, the honorific was used to please and reassure his fellow interactant that Dinyi acknowledges that he (Dinyi) is younger and never a colleague to his cousin.

Furthermore, the honorific **kpema** and **pira** can each be used, sometimes as a suffix to uncle and auntie for the same purpose of marking age difference. They are used as **M ba pira**, ‘paternal uncle’ (my father’s younger brother), **M ba kpema**, ‘paternal uncle’ (my father’s elder brother). This is demonstrated in a complaint as in (12) and a show of deference in (13).

13. **M ba kpema, Neindoo-bila n yaa bori m ma pira**  
 My father elder Neindoo-small FOC HAB want 1SG mother small
- |               |             |            |
|---------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Zuwera</b> | <b>vuri</b> | <b>maa</b> |
| Zuwera        | trouble     | DEF        |
- My elder uncle, little Neindoo as usual, is disturbing my younger auntie Zuwera.

The same usage with *bila* attached to **Neindoo** is present to mark age difference. But this one is used as a suffix to the personal name of the addressee. In the list of past Tolon-naanima is Sulemana-**kpema** and Sulemana-**bila** in an unpublished collection of the history of Tolon in Dagban by Alhaji Iddrisu Adam. Notice also needs be made of the gender marked with **ba**, ‘father’ and **ma**, ‘mother’

#### 4.1.1.2 Familial category

Honorifics are also based on family hierarchies. In a sense, they have a relationship with the age honorifics yet they are a little different in that the familial honorifics do not necessarily signal an age hierarchy. Such familial honorifics are **M ba**, ‘my father’, **M ma**, ‘my mother’, **M piriba**, ‘my father’s sister’ (aunt), **M ŋahiba**, ‘maternal uncle’, **M bapira**, ‘paternal uncle’ (my father’s younger brother), **M ba kpema**, ‘paternal uncle’ (my father’s elder brother). When the researcher visits home, the children run to him expecting some presents and a ride in his little car. To politely call for my attention,

the children in the house often call out to the researcher: **M ba pira! M ba kpema! M nahiba! M yaba**<sup>2</sup>!

From the perspective of the children, they are simply establishing their family relationship with him by using those family honorifics even though some of them actually mark deference. This category forms a core aspect of the communicative competence of Dagbamba. They are so much valued that they can be extended to unknown people, just by virtue of their imagined age and to show respect to them as members of society.

#### 4.2.1.3 Occupational category

This category relates to the occupation that the addressee does. They are job or occupational hierarchies and sometimes even known societal positions. These occupational honorifics can further be divided into smaller and specific groups in the areas of religion **Pasita** ‘pastor’, **Faara** ‘priest’, **Maalam** ‘mallam’, **Shehu** ‘Sheik’, **limam** ‘Imam’, **Buyu-lana/Tindana** ‘Fetish Priest’. There are also Academic honorifics including **Chicha** ‘Teacher’, **Profesa** ‘professor’, **Injinia** ‘engineer’, **Looya** ‘lawyer’, **Jilima-lana** ‘Owner of honour/Honorable’, **Asambuliman** ‘Assembly-man’ etc.

In the campaign towards the General Elections in 2016 in Ghana, these titles were heard in the local FM Stations in political discussions and campaign messages. In most cases, an occupational rank can be used as an honorific. For instance, **Limam**, ‘Muslim leader’, **Sooje** ‘Soldier’, **Saaje**, ‘Sergent’; **Mijo**, ‘Major’ were generally used as

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<sup>2</sup>The researcher happens to have both Parents hailing from the same section of town and from very close location of mother and father’s families. In Dagbamba culture, the two families claim strong relationship with a person. That is why the children run to welcome the researcher in their numbers.

politeness markers. It is generally observed that ranks of white-collar jobs and even blue-collar jobs are easily used as honorifics.

However, many terms that refer to low paying jobs which are socially ranked low were hardly found in the data for sake of face saving. Terms that refer to low paying jobs like **kuku**, ‘cook’, **waasiman**, ‘watchman’ etc were hardly used by people. Since it is people of lower rank that show politeness to their superiors through honorific terms, the terms which refer to the lower ranks are hardly heard in the data. However, the people in occupational lower ranks could equally enjoy honorific reference in familial circles if they are in such positions that would make them deserve such honour as **M ma**, ‘my mother’; **M ba**, ‘my father’, **M ŋahiba** ‘maternal uncle’ **m bapira** ‘paternal uncle.’

Honorific terms normally precede the first name of the subject in both formal and informal situations in Dagbani. But honorific names could also be used without any name attached in informal situations like in a home environment, For example, **M ma Mburidiba**, **M baYirior** alternatively **M ma** or **M ba**. In a sentential context, the honorifics may come at the beginning or at the end of a sentence as the example below shows with differing effect. Only rarely does the honorific come in the middle of a sentence.

14.

- a. **Sojee, Dasiba**  
NP morning  
Soldier, Good morning!
- b. **Dasiba, Gomda,**  
Morning NP  
Good morning, Governor!

c.           **Malinja      Neindoo      ka      m      bo-ra.**  
                  Manager      Neindoo      FOC    1SG    want  
                  It is Manager Neindoo that I am after.

d.           **M      bo-ri            la      Malinja.**  
                  1SG    want            FOC    manager  
                  I am after Manager.

Example (14 a.) an address or call for attention but with the honorific at the initial position. But in (14 c.), the honorific precedes a name of the person. Notice that the English gloss has the honorific in the middle but not in the Dagbani version. It is important to further note that (14 c.) has both the honorific and the name of the person. Example (14) is done basically for two reasons; to differentiate between two or more persons with the same honorific or for emphasis thus flattery, most at times. The power that Neindoo weilds as a result of his manager position could also account for the use of the honorific and the personal name in 14 c above.

#### 4.2.1.4 Combinations of honorifics

Striking to note is the fact that it is possible to combine these honorifics in Dagbani. Combinations of honorific references are usually a combination of familial and occupational honorifics intended to reinforce the face saving act in the African languages such as Kiswahili (Mutunda, 2010). But the commonest found in the Dagbani data were the combination of familial plus religious, on one hand and familial, and religious and occupational on the other. The examples that follow were got from people making public reference to people in good standing in society. The context usually was when the speaker expected some favour (remote or immediate) of any form. At other times, it was meant to put the referent person in a favourable position in the eyes of the public. It was very frequently used during the 2016 Campaign in Ghana. Opponents

simply used either the surname or the first name. For example these honorifics were frequently applied by followers of the running mate of the opposition New Patriotic Party.

15. a. **Alahaji Doyita Bawumia** ‘Alhaji Doctor Bawumia’
- b. **Jilimalana Alahaji Doyita Bawumia** ‘Honourable Alhaji Doctor Bawumia’
- c. **Kpema jilimalana Alhaji Doyita Bawumia** ‘Elder Honourable Alhaji Doctor Bawumia’.

All these were meant to tell the Ghanaian electorate that the running mate was in good standing and merited their votes. On the other hand, communicators for opponents simply referred to him as **Bawumia**, or **Doyita Bawumia**, ‘Doctor Bawumia’ taken as his name but not necessarily as his surname.

This was to make him as ordinary an individual as possible.

16. a. **M ba Alahazi<sup>3</sup> Gombila**  
1<sup>st</sup> father Alhaji NP  
My father Alhaji Gombila

- b. **Alahazi Prufesa Asuro**  
Alhaji Professor NP  
Alhaji Professor Asuro

The Dagbani experience seem the opposite of the Kiswahili one as reported by Mutanda, (2010) where it was noted that in some contexts, such clusters of honorific markers may be used pejoratively, and for the purpose of mocking the person being referred to as was the case in the time of Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya . Sometimes, Moi

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<sup>3</sup>Note that Alahaji and Alahazi refer to the same honorific the former used mainly by the literates and the latter by the illiterates and some of the literates.

was referred to by using honorific terms such as *mtukufu*, ‘the holy one’ which was traditionally reserved for God Almighty.

When such honorifics are used in a cluster, the honorifics have a sense of focus – the most preferred honorific preceding the rest in the same way they do in Kiswahili as reported in Mutunda (2010). When interlocutors use other politeness strategies, for example, tact, sometimes they use these strategies alongside honorifics. Honorifics complementing other strategies possibly strengthen the esteem and politeness being expressed. This is well exemplified in the next data that was taken from the Gbewaa Palace in 2016 when I visited in the process of data collection.

17. **N duuma n dana bia gbuyinli, a ba pira**  
 My Lord my master child lion 2SG father small  
**Gurindow ni o ni suhi solo labi Tamali**  
 Gurindow That 3SG FUT beg road return Tamale  
 Son of my Lord and Master, the Lion, your uncle Gurindow asks  
 whether he is permitted to ask for a leave to return to Tamale?

The politeness strategy employed in example (17) is that of a question) which is duly introduced with an honorific intended to attenuate impoliteness because there is a direct intrusion on the King’s rights by asking for a favor. This calls for the need for a combination of a question and an honorific reference. This is with respect to the power and status of the King of Dagban for which this strategy is appropriate.

#### 4.2.1.5 Formal and informal situations

Dagbani honorifics cut across formal and informal situations. They are used in both contexts with the familial honorifics being used when the context is informal such as in the home. The same is true for formal situations where originally familial honorifics are seldomly used and in their place occupational honorifics like **Chaamani**, ‘Chairman’ **Malinja**, ‘Manager’; **Masa**, ‘Master’ are used instead.



### 4.3 Chieftaincy Titles as Honorifics

In the data, there were many instances of chieftaincy titles used as honorifics. This is not surprising because the chieftaincy institution is one of the most revered and cherished institutions in Dagbaŋ. People with chieftaincy titles are therefore, treated with lots of politeness. The reader also needs to note that younger brothers with titles are accorded more recognition than their elder brothers who have no titles. Persons within the title range of age without it are considered abnormal. Chieftaincy titles such as **Mba Gundaa-naa**, **yipiel-naa**, **kpana-lana**, **Duli-naa** were heard in the conversation that the participants engaged in. The titles can represent a head of a community or just for a single part of the chiefdom. Read the following conversation captured in Savelugu;

18 a. **Dingoni-naa: Kpana-lana, yi gorim be wula?**

Title/NP : Title/NP 2PL journey is what  
How was your journey?

b. **Kpana-lana:Naa**

NP Response

Fine

c. **Dingoni-naa: Nayili Wahu?**

Title/NP: Palace horse

How was the Chief?

d. **Dingoni-naa: Doo! n ŋo doo di yaa kuli pu la o nam gbana zugu**

Title: Man! Like man APS INTEN lying big 3SG royal PREP  
I think the great man would have been lying majestically in his royal skins.

e. **Kpana-lana: Ah ah; so n lahi yen yeli?**

Title/NP: ah ha; nobody DEF REPEAT ASP talk  
Ah, Ah; you do not need anybody to tell you that. (That the chief was resting majestically on his royal seats.)

**f. Kpana-lana: Botiŋ-naa bea; A bi nye sheli**

Title/NP: Title/NP where 2sg NEG see nothing

Botiŋ-naa You lost a lot for not being there to see the chief.

The chieftaincy titles seen in the data above were used instead of the first names of the elders. The informants and information gathered from the Focus Group Discussions suggest that the titles represented power and dignity. Further information was that if those title holders are addressed without using their title names, one could be summoned at the Palace and fined.

#### **4.4 Politeness in Dagbamba Greetings**

One other linguistic politeness strategy identified in the data was greetings. According to Firth (1972:30), greetings are ‘a system of signs that convey other than overt messages.’ Greetings are important daily routines which occur very frequently in social interactions. Appropriate greeting behaviour is therefore, crucial for the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Participants in interpersonal interactions need to interpret messages that greetings convey using their knowledge of social belief and convention (i.e. the intention or goodwill of the speaker). Firth (1972:29-30) suggests that greetings should not be treated as spontaneous emotional reaction to the coming together of people. For the most part they are highly conventionalized and follow patterned routines.

Espousing Firth’s view, Laver (1981) asserts that greetings as conversational routines are part of the linguistic repertoire of politeness. They are tools of polite behaviour and

their use is guided by polite norms. Laver explains that from pragmatic point of view, greetings can be regarded as illocutionary acts.

Greetings are so much valued among the Dagbamba of Northern Ghana. So, the people take every opportunity to greet as it performs a number of functions in maintaining cordiality and mending relationships. But most importantly, the act or its absence is interpreted to mean one being polite or impolite respectively. Greeting does not necessarily initiate a conversation; it can be done at a far distance as one can be heard. It was established from the field work that failure to greet others or failure to respond to them when greeted constitutes gross impoliteness. It was also found out that there are rules/norms that govern greetings. Both linguistic and nonlinguistic forms of greetings were also established. It is recommended that the norms and forms of greetings be mastered and preserved. An example of the reaction of one not greeting was observed at a car mechanic shop at Hill Top. At the auto mechanic shop, the master, Masa Ibrahim complained bitterly about one of his apprentices who had the habit of not greeting him, and other people he came to meet at the shop thus:

19. **Aburaman, o yi kuli kana, pa puhigu,**  
 Abdramani 3SG COND PRT come NEG greeting
- di pa sheli o zoo mi gbaai niriba ka tehi ni**  
 NEG nothing 3SG grow FOC catch people CONJ think that
- ti sayi mi. N yen kari o mi.**  
 1PL be.same FOC 1SG FUT drive away 3SG FOC
- By this time Aburamani, the said apprentice had returned. Then his master now addressed him).

20. **Yi yi kuli yihi bini maa nyin**  
 2PL COND INT remove thing DEF 2SG EMPH

**kuli ma. Di lahi kana**  
go home DIRM NEG again come

Whenever Aburamani reports, no greeting, nothing. He has grown to our size and so he thinks we are colleagues. I am going to sack him.  
(Addressing Aburamani)

When you finish removing the thing, you should go home. Don't come here again.

#### **4.4.1 Forms of routine greetings**

Routine greetings in Dagbani are categorized mainly into three based on time of the day. There are greetings in the morning, afternoon, and evening. In the discussion that follows, the data showed that each of the greetings is coded in such a way that they have a correlation with the time of the day.

##### **4.4.1.1 Greetings in the morning**

The concept of time in Dagbani is heavily dependent on the rising of the sun, and therefore, brightness in the day. Of course, presently the chronometer is used by many to determine time which will inform time of day and the appropriate form of greeting to use. Apart from the time of the day which forms the main criterion for this form of greeting, it is also the case that the 'weather conditions of the area' also informs what forms of greetings can be used. For instance, because it is generally cold in the morning and warm during the afternoon, greetings within these times may reflect these weather conditions among the Dagbamba.

Routine greetings are generally not sensitive to gender, the reason for which both females and males use the same greeting patterns. Routine greetings for morning are mainly: **dasiba** (greeting) or **ni ti maasim** (how is our cold?). However, there is gender categorization regarding the response in that where as males are expected to respond by saying **naa**, females say **n-naa**.

#### 4.4.1.2 Greeting in the afternoon

The lexemes used to greet in the afternoon are **antire** or **ni ti wuntanga** (how is our sun?). Note that the latter form of greeting is a reflection of the climate in Dagban where the afternoons of the days are generally very warm with high temperatures. There is no difference in the response to greetings based on the time of the day and for that matter, the response is still **naa** for males and **n-naa** for females. As pointed out already, whereas the former is a generic form of greeting for the afternoon, the latter is only used when there is scorching sun and thus reflects the weather condition of the afternoon. Greetings are generally initiated by the younger ones, when they meet elders in passing. But when younger ones have something to do with older ones (on errands t), they are expected to be on their knees when greeting. In this case, once the younger one squats o kneels down before an elder, it is the elder who initiates greeting and the younger or female only responds. Social status, gender, ad age play very important roles in greetings in Dagban society.

#### 4.4.1.3 Greetings in the evening/night

The greeting is **aninwula** which is responded to with the same **naa** for males and **n-naa** for females. (Here we should be careful not to say: **Ni ti yuŋ**, 'how is our night'? as we have had in the morning and afternoon above. This will suggest that there is a fresh death in the community or somewhere else which has been officially announced.)

#### 4.4.2 Occasional greetings

From the data, it is also important to note that the greetings of Dagbamba can also be determined by the occasion that triggers this ritual. The occasion could be one of sorrow or joy and in each case, there are prescribed greetings that are used in Dagbani. This is what is discussed in the subsection that follows.

#### 4.4.2.1 Mourning greetings

To be polite and respect oneself and others is to be able to greet appropriately in consonance with the situation or conditions operating at a given time in Dagbaŋ. There are various forms of greetings for all occasions especially in time of death or pain of loss. These are kind of metaphorical/idiomatic expressions that are intended to tone down the effect of the ‘bad news’ when greeting. These are illustrated in (21) –through (23).

21. **Ni ti nye-bu**  
 that 1PL see  
 And our seeing: Lit: ‘How is our bitter experience?’
22. **Ni a nye-bu**  
 that 2SG see  
 How is your bitter experience?
23. **Ni yi nye-bu**  
 That 2PL see-N  
 How is your bitter experience?

It is advisable to use the greeting in (21) because it is inclusive in approach with the speaker involving him/herself in the pain of loss. It is also an inclusive pronoun as a way of sharing in the pain of someone else although you are not directly a part of the loss. This is a reflection of the communal life of the Dagbamba. This is because there is a communal life in Dagbaŋ where one person’s problem is a problem for all. The occurrence of death is an attack by death on all the people in the community. It is therefore not polite enough to use (22) and (23) which appear to isolate speaker from the bitter experience. This applies to even the passerby who has no relationship with the community.

These greetings are used when the death is sudden or when it is a painful death. For example, a young distant daughter of mine passed on while in labour at the Tamale Teaching Hospital on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2017. When the family arrived from the village this the greeting form in (24). below, that they were greeted with. they responded. And also greeted thus: **ni yi nyebu**, ‘how is your bitter witnessing?’ This was her first chance of becoming a mother after waiting helplessly for nine years after marriage.

Study the data in (24) which is a polite way to greet people in mourning who travelled from a distance to the location where the death has just occurred.

24. **Ni a/yi wumbu**  
That 2SG/2PL hear  
How are you who heard it (death)?

This is the greeting used by people who travel from a different location to the place of death after they have been informed. So the people from Chirifoyili, my village who responded to the screams of the Tamale family where the death occurred were greeted by those who were in town using (24). In this greeting, the number of the persons is usually indicated as we see in (24). If the corpse is not yet buried<sup>4</sup>, and it is in the night, the appropriate greeting is:

25. **Ni ti yuŋ**  
that 1PL night  
How is our night?

Another occasional greeting in times of fresh death is

26. **Ni ti biejuni**  
that 1PL tomorrow

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<sup>4</sup> The Dagbamba bury the dead as soon as possible especially when close relatives who must see the body before burial arrive. This is partly religious in recent times, but more likely because there were no storage facilities to preserve the body from decay.

How will tomorrow be?

Examples (27) and (28) demonstrate a non-time restrictive greeting which occurs when the corpse is not yet buried. This is irrespective of whether it is really night, morning or afternoon.

27. **Ni ti nangbani tom**  
That 1PL mouth bitter  
How is our grief?

28. **Ni ti ninsabiya**  
That 1PL dizziness  
How is the hunger that we are in?

This indirectly explains or acknowledges the fact that once the corpse is not buried, food cannot be prepared and coupled with the sadness, the people now feel dizzy. This greeting is politely used either on the day of the death or after a reasonable time lapse. This indicates and informs people who might not have known about the sad event.

29. **Ni ti soyibu**  
That 1PL burial  
How is the burial?

This greeting of grief is politely said after burial within the same day.

30. **Ni ti soha maa**  
that 1PL yesterday DEF  
How was the death yesterday?

The greeting in (29) is politely used to refer to a death that occurred a day before that day that the greeting is done, and (30) two or more days after the death.

31. **Ni ti dali maa**



that 1PL day DEF  
How was the death?

So even after ten or more years, if a friend lost a parent but you have not met since, the first time you meet, you need to greet the friend **Ni ti dali maa**. Failure to do so suggests two things, that you did not hear of the death and so you are not aware or you are not concerned about the death. Note also that the use of **ti**, 'we' shows the person greeted that the one greeting shares or is touched or concerned that the person lost a relative. This marks the communal responsibility and good will that one man's trouble is trouble for all others and one man's joy is joy for all in Dagbani society. The presence of **dali** makes this greeting refer to any day from two days after the death occurred.

#### 4.4.3 Greetings of joy

The Dagbamba also have particular greetings used on happy occasions such as naming ceremonies, weddings, coronations, festivals etc.

32. **Ni ti zuyu suŋ**  
that 1PL head good  
We are lucky / how lucky we are!

In (32) is a greeting used in times of joy as in naming ceremony or deliverance from danger, success at something etc. on the other hand, (33) is used for festivities, and occurred in the data, many times, when they were collected on festive occasions.

33. **Ni ti yuuni palli**  
that 1PL year new  
How is the New Year?

Note that there are a number of festivals in Dagbaŋ, and the greeting as exemplified in (33) was used during such festivities. Note that this is irrespective of time of the day specially if you are meeting for the first time in that day.

One can, as well, greet **Ni a zuyu suŋ**, ‘How is your good luck?’ or **Ni a yuuni palli** ‘How is your new year?’ But these forms are impolite as one will be suggesting he/she is not part of the joy but only for the person involved.

But **Ni a zuyu suŋ**, is used mainly at naming, and wedding ceremonies. Below is an encounter at a naming ceremony in Kumbuyili, a suburb of Tamale.

34. Jubilant women: **a maraaba! a maraaba!**, ‘you are welcome! you are welcome!’

Woman: **N gonya; yi vieli vieli hali**

1SG visit 2PL beautiful beautiful INTEN

I have only visited; you people look so beautiful<sup>5</sup>

To the woman whose baby girl was being named:

35. **N zo, ni ti zuyu suŋ**

My Friend that 1PL head fine

My friend, how is your good luck/ my friend, you are lucky.

In data (34), the woman arriving resorts to compliments of the other ladies in the group before even greeting appropriately with (35). Note that the women have not responded. Recipients of compliments in the discourse recorded either were quiet or they politely rejected them when they were in the mist of other people outside of their in-group and will not want their compliments to be heard by ‘outsiders’. There appear to be no such

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<sup>5</sup>Such compliments have recently found its way in Dagbani conversations. It was rare to hear that, and the one so praised was very uncomfortable. Now it is common place.

response in Dagbani or out of shyness, the response is not said to accept the compliment.

#### **4.2.4 General greetings**

General greetings are greetings that are used daily and not specified for some occasions. As already pointed out, there are varied variables that regulate who starts the greetings and to whom which greeting can be used. Below is a discussion on some forms of greetings that are not sensitive to situations and for that matter different from the previous ones discussed in the preceding sections. Let us consider the greeting in (36).

36. **Ni a tuma**  
That 2PL work  
How is your work?

The greeting in example (36) is a polite greeting done by superiors to their subordinates or people older to younger ones. The vice versa is considered impolite. In the conversation below, the village chief on the way to his linguist's house meets the village young men, and some elders busy constructing a mud room. From a little distance and at the blind side of the workmen, the chief shouts out a greeting:

37. Gbarinaa: **Ni yi tuma na**  
And 2PL work DM  
How is work?

Workmen: **Naa, n dana**  
Response 1SG Lord  
Fine, my Lord.

Gbarinaa: **Yi dan, yibu**  
2PL early out  
You are at work so early.

Workmen: **iin** ‘yes’

Gbarinaa: **Gbuba ya lala**  
Hold 2PL that  
Continue that way.

Gbarinaa: **Nawuuni ni soŋ ya**  
God FUT help 2PL  
God be with you.

The townsmen could not greet him with **ni a tuma** ‘how are you? (casually) although some of them were older than the chief. This greeting is also commonly used appropriately when the person/s is at work, but could be used even when the person/s is not at work. In the latter context however, it must always come from a superior to a subordinate: older to younger or any kind of social status in which the initiator is assumed superior. Because this type of greeting is a little demeaning, it is not commonly used in work places or formal sectors in our time. The normal greetings in the morning and afternoon are used rather. This data supports the claim that power sometimes, influence the politeness strategy used on particular occasions and contexts.

38. **Ni a jelinsi**  
That 2SG tiredness  
How is tiredness?

Similar to the greeting in (37), the greeting in (38) came from people of higher status or age. That it is meant to acknowledge, and appreciate the hard work of the target audience. People of lower status and age do not greet in this way. They resort to the normal daily greetings.

39. **Ni a wuntagna**  
That 2SG sun  
How is the warm weather?

This basically is a greeting to acknowledge the warm weather with the sun shining. So people in transit extend this greeting to those sitting down under shade. Those idling in the shade also can greet those riding or walking in the hot sun in like manner. For example, when I was growing up in the village, there was a major footpath that passed through our outer compound. There was a very big and shady fig tree under which most of the males (young and old) sat in the afternoons resting in the dry season when they had no work in the farms. The people using the path would stop by, take some water and continue. This type of greeting was the one usually used as in (40) below:

40. **Ni yi woligu**  
that 2PL sweat  
How is the sweat coming from the heat and our labour?

This is used in two situations; to acknowledge warm weather, and to acknowledge hard work. When the weather is warm, **ni a woligu** (glossed in (41d)) can be used. But it is significantly appropriate to use it for people who are working or who have just finished with some work. Especially, when the beneficiary of the labour is happy, then he uses that. For example, in Dagbaŋ, communal work is cherished in farm work and domestic work. One such communal weeding was done for **Tugu-kukuo-naa** in his maize farm in July, 2016. This was his response<sup>6</sup>:

- 41.a. **Ni yi daboniya**  
And 2PL hard work,  
How is your hard labour?

- b. **Ni yi kpaŋmaŋa**  
And 2PL hard work

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<sup>6</sup> The normal response is politely done through another person with some amount of social standing but this person was too happy not to express it even after his agent had done that.

How determined you have worked!

c. **Ni yi wuntaŋa**

And 2PL sun

Your sun/warm weather

d. **Ni yi woliyu**

And 2PL sweat

Your sweat /hard work

e. **Ni yi anniya**

And 2PL diligence

Your diligence

f. **Ni yi jillinsi**

And 2PL fatigue

Your tiredness

g. **Oii! Yi dihi ma**

EXC 2PL feed 1SG

You have fed me.

h. **Naawuni ni yo samli**

God FUT pay debt

God pay you the debt.

i. **Naawuni cheli ti n ti taba**

God spare 3PL INF give other

May God spare us for one another, so that  
we help one another.

This is what one of the young men who did the weeding said:

**Tugu-kukuo-naa ŋuna a yi tum o tuma, o ni puha hali n**



How is your misfortune?

(43). is an example of greeting and response in a scene where there were more than two people involved at a funeral. One other thing worthy of mention is the fact that there seems to be another variable that influences greetings and particularly among the youth. This is more of an in-group form of greetings which is very casual and reflects social or group identity among the people involved in the context. It was in the form of a question different from all other greetings in Dagbani as exemplified in (45)

44. **Ka wula?**  
CONJ why  
How are you?

This is probably the direct translation of the English 'How are you?' However, it is only used among peers and disallowed in context where the interlocutors are not colleagues. The response was '**di so**' (It is better/ It is fine). This section gave an account of the patterns of greetings that are available among Dagbamba and how they signify politeness (when well used) and impoliteness. It also examined the various criteria that underpin the choice of greeting forms. In the next section, the responses that are offered for greetings are considered.

#### **4.5.1 Response to greetings**

Responses to greetings constitute a core component of the social set-up of Dagbamba. Not only is one expected to respond, but also the response is expected to be appropriate. When to respond or offer the appropriate response is considered a signal of impoliteness among the Dagbamba. This section shows that there are some variables that regulate response to greetings including (i) gender and (ii) situation of the addressee.



Response to greetings is principally gender base; males respond with **naa** and females with **nnaa**. However, greetings that revolve around health are politely responded to with **alaafiee**. This does not matter whether the person whose health condition is enquired really sick or healthy. The respondent must be polite enough not say that he/her or the person is sick. If it involves close relations or friends, you can only report the ill health after the greetings. It is simply impolite and poor upbringing to respond indicating poor health.

#### **4.6 Importance of Greetings**

This section discusses the relevance of greetings among the Dagbamba. The discussion here is based on the findings from the interviews that were conducted purposely across Dagbaŋ. The reasons respondents gave for placing such a heavy weight on greetings in politeness were very fairly similar. The following reasons were given.

##### **4.6.1 A mark of respect**

Dagbamba greet to mark respect for the listener. It is a two directional honour for the one greeting and the recipient of the greeting irrespective of rank, age or distance. Mba Kpanalana of Gumbungu had this to say about greetings as a mark of honour:

**45. A yi nye nira, ka puhi o, a daa la jilima n ti o maa o ni nye ninsala la suyu. Dinbo ŋo wuri o ni a ti o jilima ka kali o n pahi ninsalinima ni. Lalaniramaayisayi, dindina o gbalabisi a jilima n ti a.**

If one meets another and greets the person, one is only acknowledging that fact the person who is greeted is a human being just like the one greeting. This tells the one who is greeted that the person greeting respects him/her and regards him as a human being.

If the person responds to the greeting, then he/she has also reciprocated the honour done him/her, and that is what is expected by the Dagbaŋ Society.

#### 4.6.2 *To appreciate a Person*

One other reason which participants identified as relevance of greeting is that it is a way of appreciating a person. It indicates that the initiator of the greeting has the recipient at heart. This is what in the first place, motivates the person to extend this gesture of friendship. If the intended recipient does not appreciate the good will, he/she may not respond. Please note that non response to greetings is very rare especially in public unless the enmity is known by all. Non response could also be for trial issues or for joke among playmates<sup>7</sup>. In such a situation, the recipient may even openly say, “I will not respond to your greetings for this reason or the other”. On the other hand, the recipient just remains silent, and the one greeting will quickly find out the reason for this bad gesture. From here, the issue is resolved and the two go on peacefully.

M ma Pakpaŋ of Kumbungu, had this to say:

46.   **A   yi   puhi   nira,   a   wuhi   o   la   yurilim**  
       2SG COND greet person 2SG show 3SG FOC love  
**maa   ni   a   puni   beri   o   zuyu**  
       DEF that 2SG stomach pain 3SG head

If one greets a person, one is showing love for the person, and that you care for the person.

#### 4.6.3 *For Solidarity*

In addition to the above, it was also found among the Dagbamba that greetings could also be for solidarity. To show concern for people in difficult situations as in physical or psychological pain etc. This is clearly exemplified in Dagbaŋ when someone has an

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<sup>7</sup>There are recognised customary categories of persons that a person can conveniently play with even at serious levels without any problem no matter the seriousness of the matter at stake.

occasion such as funeral or naming ceremony. Family and friends visit the person on the day of the occasion to solidarise with him/her. They usually say that they are going to greet the person as in (47 - 49).

47. **Ti chama n ti puhi Aburamani**  
1PL go and FUT greet Aburamani  
Let us go and greet Aburamani.

48. **Ala ka ti yen puhi Aburamani suuna?**  
HowFOC 1PL FUT greet Aburamani outdoor  
How much are we going to donate to Aburamani towards the naming ceremony?

49. **Ala ka Adam puhi Asana kuli maa?**  
How FOC Adam greet Asana funeral DEF  
What is the amount of money that Adam donated to Asana towards the funeral?

Examples (47) to (49) demonstrate the fact that greetings among the Dagbamba serve as a solidarity gesture.

#### **4.6.4 For phatic purposes**

Apart from the above, the phatic role of greetings in Dagbani society is prominent. With this, greeting has no other special social meaning but only to maintain social connectivity in small talks, and social pleasantries. In modern Dagbani the Phrase: **Ka wula?** 'How?' with the response **alaafee** 'fine' or **sheealaafee** 'except good health' is often heard in this regard.

#### **4.6.5 Opening a conversation**

A very important role of greetings noticed was that the Dagbamba usually will open a conversation with greetings. Of course, even though there is a proverb that: **Yetoya**

**kalinsi n nye puhigu** (We greet only when there is nothing important to discuss), conversations, as much as possible, open with greetings.<sup>8</sup>

#### **4.6.6 For leave taking**

In a similar way, greetings are used for leave taking in the following ways:

50. **Puhi mi yiŋa nima**  
Greet FOC home people  
Greet those at home (your family).

51. **Naawuni ni kundi**  
God FUT send home  
God will send you home.

#### **4.7. Address systems**

From the data, politeness was observed to have been realized through the address system of the speakers of Dagbani. Address system, is understood in the study as referent elements through which a unique identity for a given object, person etc. is achieved. In this case, it is the reference to a human being that is at stake. (see Salifu, 2010 for details of Dagbani address forms). The polite use of the address systems was constrained by age, kinship relationship, gender and social status in line with the observation made by Brown and Levinson (1978). They noted that address forms are largely influenced by the age, power and social distance between a speaker and listener. The address forms were personal names, royal titles, and kinship terms. Every Dagbana has a personal name which is acquired at birth. The names were of three kinds;

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<sup>8</sup> For details on this, readers may want to consult (Asuro and Gurindow, 2014).

traditional names, Christian<sup>9</sup> names, and Muslim names. This is the name a person is addressed with until the person acquires a royal title after growing reasonably old.

The address system in relation to the family included **n dana** ‘my Lord’, **nduu-lana** ‘owner of my room/my wife), **N yiŋa-lana** ‘owner of my house/my husband or landlord’, **n yidana**, ‘my husband’, **m paya**, ‘my wife’, **n shiri**, ‘my honey/husband’, **n yura** ‘my lover/wife or husband.’ These are not direct addresses but names used in the third person situation. The polite address observed to have been used for male adults who are unknown to the speaker was **N ŋahiba**(Maternal uncle) and that for females was **m piriba** (my aunt). If the unknown person is elderly, **m paya** is used for females and **N yaba** for males.

In Tamale and the urban places, **m ba** for males and **m ma** were also used in addition to **m paya** and **n yaba** more than in the rural places. The commonest address form that husbands used for their wives were mainly the first names of the wives but when the wife had a nick name, the nick name was used. (Read Salifu 2012, for address systems of Dagbamba).

#### 4.8 Proverbs as politeness strategies

In addition, proverbs were also seen as one way that the Dagbamba mark politeness in their day-to-day activities. The proverbs, according to the key informants, forcefully reinforce the message in a mild but in a thought provocative manner. The problem, however, is that the speaker must usually have high language competence level in order to rightly situate the proverb in the right context. Achebe (1967) describes proverbs as palm oil with which words are eaten.’ This finds expression in the use of proverbs as polite ways of marking reverence. Some examples are below:

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<sup>9</sup>Majority of Dagbamba are Muslims, however, there is a significant Christian Minority.

52. **Nakpayili tilaa, ɲuna baŋ li ɲuna n bori li.**  
NP herb RP identify 3SG RP INF search 3SG  
In Nakpayili town, the person who prescribe a herb that can cure a person's disease is the person (prescriber) who looks for it from the bush for the cure.
53. **Sana wayiŋli doli la tiŋa bia jiya ka o wuhi o tiŋa**  
Stranger tall follow FOC land child short CONJ 3SG teach 3SG land  
**maa**  
DEF  
A tall stranger must follow a short native in order that the tall stranger shows him round the town.
54. **Sana ku tooi baŋ kabira sayim.**  
Stranger NEG able identify NP NP  
A stranger cannot identify tuozaafi prepared using grains reserved as seeds for sowing.
55. **Duu lana n mi di ni yindi sheli.**  
Room owner INF know 3SG FUT leak where  
It is the owner of the room who knows where the room leaks.
56. **Jerigu zi gbeligu nagi la zukogili.**  
Fool NEG eye except FOC knock  
A fool will never understand eye signals but only a knock on the head.
57. **A yi nyebi paya kpema ka yo, papasaribila zuyu**  
2SG COND fuck woman old and pay, young lady head  
If you fuck an old lady and pay, it is in expectation to fuck a young lady.  
(Lit: If you accept nonsense of today, it is because of a potential benefit that awaits you tomorrow)

The use of proverbs as in (52) – (57) also lends explanation to power relations between the speaker and addressee especially where the addressee has power over the speaker and speaking directly becomes uncomfortable for the speaker. (57) in particular also hinges on the gender as the female is treated with less politeness given the vulgar about the female.

#### **4.8.1 Indirectness**

When a face-threatening act is involved, people employ conversational implicature and often violate the cooperative principle of conversation. In order to keep face, people use positive politeness or negative politeness, both of which are representations of indirectness in conversation. In conversational interaction, indirectness is realised in various ways such as avoidance of confrontation, joking, overstating, or understating. When there is no face-threatening act involved and people share the same values or background, understatement is highly appreciated. But when face-threatening acts and the power relation are present, indirectness hinders people from communicating effectively.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987; Leech 1983), there is a correlation between indirectness and politeness. For example Leech is of the view that when indirectness is used in a conversation, it offers the hearer some amount of optionality. With this, the degree of politeness can be increased “...by using a more and more indirect kind of illocution” (1983:108). In Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory, in contrast, the correlation between indirectness and politeness largely stems from viewing politeness as deviant from Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principles. Brown and Levinson distinguish between three main levels of directness in performing a face-threatening act: Off-record strategies explicitly flout Grice’s conversational maxims and focus on

face-redress, while on-record strategies combined with redressive action have the advantage of being clear and polite at the same time (Brown and Levinson 1987: 72). Bald on-record strategies, in contrast, focus on clarity and efficiency, conform to Grice's maxims, and pay no attention to face (1987: 95).

The data produced some indirectness being used by Dagbamba to signal politeness. These were found mainly in requests, and offers. Nevertheless, it must be noted that when an offer is made using negative indirectness, it is considered impolite because it suggests that the giver is not giving wholeheartedly.

This was done using negative questions and the attitudinal past tense.

58. **A ku beli ma baanjire?**

1SG NEG accompany 1SG.OBJ toilet

Won't you accompany me to the toilet?

59. **Pahimi suyiro a ku gbaai bua ŋo n ti ma?**

Add patience, 2SG NEG catch goat DEM INF give 1SG

Be patient and catch my goat for me.

In the case of the attitudinal past, the data from M ma Alima show it all in (60).

60. **N di yen suhi a mi ka a che**

1SG ASP MOOD beg 2SG OBJ CONJ 2SG let

**Ka ti na be kpe bela.**

And 1PL TM live here little

I wanted to beg you for us to stay here for a little while.

In the data in (61), offers were done in question form. They were used to signal politeness as was recorded during the socialisation following the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of priesthood, and Departure Mass Service by Rev. Fr Oliviere Lecestre after a successful Priesthood in Dagban on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2017 at Holy Cross Parish



in Tamale, Ghana. One of the Dagbamba ladies from the Choyu community said to a friend who had gone to their shed where some food and drinks were served.

61. **Fuseina: A ku ŋubi nyonbeeka maa?**  
 2SG NEG chop food DEF

Won't you eat the nyonbeeka?

It is imperative to state that this form of invitation to eat is suitable and permissible only among friends but none else. If another person is offered food in this way, it will amount to impoliteness and the person will reject the food even when very hungry. This is because the one offered will feel disrespected.

The negative question could also be an instruction from a person of higher social status to another with a lower status as mothers usually instruct their children or those under their care :

62. **Asana, a ku moni sayim maa?**  
 Asana 2SG NEG stir TZ<sup>10</sup> DET  
 Asana, won't you stir the TZ

When the researcher visited his father in March 2017, he went with some soft drinks and foodstuff. The old man was so excited about the gifts and he asked the researcher, his son, to invite his uncle from across the road to come and take some of the drinks. When they poured the drink and were drinking, the father asked him:

63. **Nyini bi nyu-ri ka zi-ya?**  
 2SG.EMPH NEG drink and sit  
 You are not drinking and are just sitting down?

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<sup>10</sup>TZ is the staple food of the Dagbamba prepared from maize, guinea-corn, millet etc.

The researcher then poured himself some of the drink even though he did not really need the drink. In this case, his father used a question to offer him the drink as indicated in (63) and it would have been impolite to tend down the offer.

#### **4.8.2 *Approbation***

Approbation is a strategy whereby the speaker maximizes praise and glorifies the addressee, and minimizes criticisms of the person. With this strategy, negative things about the listener are not said only his/her strong sides are projected. It is an approval or praise showered on the addressee by the speaker. The approbation maxim states: a) Minimize dispraise of other [(b) Maximize praise of other] It is found in expressives (thanking, congratulating, pardoning, blaming, praising and condoling) and assertives (stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, claiming and reporting). Akin to flattery, this maxim advises that if one cannot praise an individual then it is better to side step the issue or to give a minimal response through the use of euphemisms for example or by being silent. This strategy was not frequently seen in the data. On the few occasions it occurred, it was to flatter the addressee, or it was about the dead. There is a practice, in Dagbaŋ that does not encourage bad things to be said about the dead. The belief is that the dead have no opportunity to speak to the issue, and more importantly, the more bad things are said about the dead who are believed to be with God, judgement by God becomes harder and can lead the dead to eternal condemnation.

The other situation that conditions approbation is used largely by the traditional drummers and singers. They are professional praise singers and will never say anything bitter about their client. They wish to please their clients who get excited and doll out money to them. They always make use of this strategy. An example is in (64) below.

64. **Duniya-lana**

World owner  
Owner of the world.

**Noma balim balim ka tiŋa maa**

Walk careful careful CONJ land cool  
Walk carefully so that the land will be become peaceful.

**Di damdi kpeeni kpeeni**

NEG shake strong strong  
Don't walk roughly.

**ŋuna di ka che n ti ma**

Person eat CONJ leave INF give 2SG  
He that eats and leave some for me.

**Niŋ mi a yubu**

Do 2SG wish  
Do whatever you want to do.

**A kpeei kani**

2SG type NEG  
You have no equal.

**Duniya lana dimi a maŋa**

World owner eat 2SG self  
Owner of the world, enjoy yourself.

Here, the praise singer was singing the praises of the King of Dagbaŋ. He therefore could not afford to say anything negative to the dignity of the King but rather everything that would please him. This clearly has some power relations as indicated in the data in (64) above.

### 4.8.3 Modesty

Modesty is one of the most used politeness strategies by the Dagbamba. It is the quality of not being too proud or confident about oneself or one's abilities and even as freedom from boastfulness. The modesty maxim is encompassed by the statement: a) Minimize praise of self [(b) Maximize dispraise of self] It is also found in expressives (thanking, congratulating, pardoning, blaming, praising and condoling) and assertives (stating, suggesting, boasting, complaining, claiming and reporting).

There is an inherent character in Dagbamba where a speaker consciously admits guilt and freely expresses it. But saying good things about oneself is regarded as arrogance, and hardly will you hear this in Dagbamba conversations. Those who break this maxim are thought to be 'mad' and impolite. An instance is this Alhassan of Chirifoyili who was reporting of how he single handedly organised his father's funeral to gain admiration from his hearers. The conversation is as follows:

65. a. **N Oliman ni daa kuli kpi ka be dii bori ni kuli**  
 1SG old man FUT TM ADV die CONJ 3PL ADV want that funeral  
**maa doni ka be mali sheli n ku ma**

DEF lie CONJ 3PL prepare ready INF kill 1SG

When my Oldman (my father) died, they (my family elders) wanted to delay performance of the funeral so that they would prepare well and kill me.

**b. Man yeli ni kuli maa ni mali**

1SG say that funeral DEF will make

Then I told them that the funeral would be performed without delay.

**c. Ka daa dii bo binyera maa zaa n ti ba.**

And TM ADV get material DEF all INF give 3PL

Then, I just provided all the things needed for the performance of the funeral to them.

**d. N daa ti ba kwanakpaliŋ pishi**

1SG TM 3PL corn bag twenty

I gave them twenty bags of corn.

shinkaafakpaliŋ pia

rice bag ten

Ten bags of rice

**e. Niyi pia**

Cow ten

Ten cows

**f. Apataashe durum dibaayi**

Local gin drum two

Two drums of apatashe (local liquor)

**g. Ka be daa dii fahi ka dii mali**

And 3PL TM ADV shut and ADV make

And they just kept quiet for the funeral to be performed.

This is apparently an exaggeration. In the conversation above, Alhassan clearly broke the Modesty Maxim especially in (65d - 65g). By doing that, he lost the respect from others in the community as this kind of attitude is loathed in Dagban society. Modesty is expected from the people in the society.

In an interview, N yaba Andani Mahamah had this to say about the position of Dagbamba on self-praise:

**66. Ninvuyu so ŋun kpuyi o maŋa lala, Dagbamba bi tiri o jilima.**

Person RP person raise 3SG that Dagombas NEG give 3SG respect

**Lala nira fuhiri mi maa. Dagbamba mi bi dii je ŋun fuhira.**

That person brag FOC DEF Dagombas FOC ADV dislike brag

**O filindi la o maɲa maa. Di bi niɲ.**

3SG brag FOC 3SG self DEF 3SG NEG do

Dagbamba do not respect a person who raises him/herself this way. Such a person is arrogant, and Dagbamba do not like that. The person is disgracing him/herself. That is not good.

#### 4.8.4 Compliment

Dagbaɲ politeness principle does not support open acceptance of compliments. They have to be humbly received by pointing out the contrary. Study the conversation in (67) below:

67. Fulani man: **A dapala ɲo vieli pam. Tohi mi o shikuru.**

2SG child DEM fine INT. send FOC 3SG school.

This child of yours is very fine. Send her to school.

68. Afa Yisa: **Fulani jerigu ɲo; bia maa bi viela. Yima o yela ni**

NP fool DEM child DEF NEG fine. Leave 3SG matter in  
Foolish Fulani man; my child is not fine. Leave her alone.

**Be bi yeri lala. A yi yeri lala be ni ku bia maa**

3PL NEG say that. 2SG FUT say that 3PL FUT kill child DEF

**N bahi ma.**

INF give 1SG

They (Dagbamba) do not say that. If you say that they will kill the child for me.

The conversation starts with a compliment from the Fulani man about the how beautiful Afa Yisa's daughter is. The father gets angry and getting afraid that the compliment could lead to the death of his daughter. Then, he advises his friend not to say that again. This indicates attitude of the father of the child, who is subject of the compliment. It is fear for attracting the envy of listeners which can lead to spiritual attacks on the innocent

child. So, compliments do exist in Dagbani but they are not openly and freely used for fear of negative consequences.

#### **4.8.5 Euphemisms**

Euphemism is a lexical process or a phrase used to tone down certain concepts deemed unfit for normal linguistic usage, but also as a more comprehensive phenomenon with a primarily discursive dimension. Therefore, euphemism is not only a lexical phenomenon but a verbal behaviour which takes place in a social discourse. Given the close interrelationship at the linguistic and social levels, euphemism is a phenomenon intrinsically linked to the conventions of politeness and social tact expected in interpersonal communication. To resort to lexical euphemism and discursive strategies of verbal mitigation tends to avoid or, at least, reduce the potential conflict that certain speech acts may involve in a given communicative context. In this regard, euphemism functions as a powerful linguistic tool to smoothen communication and preserve interpersonal relationship in non-hostile verbal encounters. Thus, euphemism undoubtedly constitutes a faithful linguistic politeness marker within the approach followed by Brown and Levinson (1987), Lakoff (1977) and Leech (1983).

In the field for data collection, euphemism was dully identified as one of the strategies employed by speakers of Dagbani to create and maintain cordiality in Dagban society with its mitigative quality. An example is: **Bini munli**, ‘A cylindrical object’. This is a mall form of: **Jeriyu** ‘fool’. So instead of insulting someone: **Jerigu ŋo** ‘you fool’, one has an option of saying it using the mall form: **Bini munli ŋo**. Both forms are glossed below.

69. **Jerigu ŋo**

Fool DEM

You are a fool.

**Bini munli ɲo**

Thing cylindrical DEM

You are a fool.

**ɲmariya vuyi ya**

star uproot ASP

A star has fallen.

Euphemism is aptly exploited in Abu Sadik's song entitled, **M bia**, 'My child'

70. **Doo do duu. Doo saha paa ya**

Man lie room, Man time reach

A man is lying in the room, his time has come.

**O saha paa ya ni o chebisi duniya**

3SG time reach for 3SG good bye world

His time has come to bid farewell to the world.

**Buga noonsi kumi ya**

Shrine bird cry

Birds of the gods have sang

**N kunda ka yeri yela**

1SG cry and say matters



Singing and prophesizing

**Begu sheli di ni yen neei no, doo vagu ni togusi**

Day this which FUT FUT open DEM man leaf FUT plug

The next day, a leave will be plug

**Dama, doo kom naai ya**

Because man water finish

Because the drinking water of man has finished.

**Ka o bidirigu naai**

And 3SG food inish

And his food has finished.

**Ka koma te n gili o, bindirigu tagitagi**

And water spread around 3SG, food also

Although he is surrounded with water and food.

**Doo saha paai ya**

Man time reach

Man's time is up.

**Ka o paga kumdi ka yeli: ning mi ya kom**

And 3SG cry and say: make FOC water

And his wife is crying saying: put water

n bahi o long ni ka o naai yi bahi

INF drop 3SG throat PREP and 3SG before FUT die

down his boat before he dies.

CHORUS: **bia bia labimi na, dimi sugiro ka n talim a**

**Child child return ADV eat patience and 1SG 2SG**

Child, come back, be patient and I will send a message through you

**Doo saha paai ya ka o lagisi bihi n zili**

Man time reach and 3SG gather children sit

A man's time has reached and he gathers children around him.

**N yeli ba: n gorimi n cheni ting sheli**

And tell 3PL 1SG travel 1SG go town some

And tells them that he is travelling to some town.

**M mi ku llahi kuna**

1SG FOC NEG again return

And I will never come back.

**Ben kpahinda bana bang ya; bana mi bi kpahinda bana bi bang.**

DEM observe 3PL know 3PL FOC NEG observe 3PL NEG know

It is those who observe and reflect who understand this.

**Amaa bia ngun nua viela, ngu na n samdi kpema dori**

But child DEM hand neat DEM INF mash elder dawadawa

It is child with clean hands that is privileged to mash an elder's

dawadawa for him.

**Di ku yuui, sanbani ni ku, n sabigi lugili kam**

It NEG long yard FUT gather INF black everywhere

It will not be long when my yard will be fill with people like the

heavy clouds of rain ready to fall.

**Gbubi ya nangbani yini, dina n maani dang**

Hold mouth one DEM INF maintain family

Be united for that keeps a family together.

**Doo diri fiila ka o paga wum ka yeli**

Man eat talk and 3SG woman hear and say

A man talks and his wife listens and asks

Ka yepolo ka nyini gora n chena ka ku lahi kuna?

But where that 2SG travel go and NEG return

But where are going, and will not return?

In data (70), the songster severally refers to eminent death of a man but which his family has not noticed. So, the man alerts his family by resorting to euphemisms of death by saying he was going to travel but will not return. He says that tomorrow the leaf will plug and drop, and that his yard will be filled with people soon, and the people will be as thick and black as the clouds pregnant with water which will soon be poured upon the earth. He warns the family that it is only those who think deed who will understand what he is saying, and that it is only a child with clean hands that gets the privilege of smashing an old man's dawadawa for him to drink. In effect, the warning he has given has been understood by only the wise who can interpret well.

#### **4.9 Linguistic hedges.**

In the data were some linguistic hedges even though they had rather minimal influence on marking linguistic politeness in Dagbani. A linguistic hedge is a pragmatic term denoting a mitigating language item (lexeme, sound or a grammatical structure) that is used to lessen face threatening impact of an utterance between interlocutors. They are considered as epistemic structures, a word or phrase that makes a statement less forceful

or assertive. Hedges are also sometimes, regarded as epistemic modality enabling the user to signal the degree of confidence in a connected assertion. Hedges in this study are considered in their epistemic modality quality as the data indicate.

Hedges were used as politeness strategies in the Dagbani data. A hedge is a marker of uncertainty in language.

The linguistic manifestations of hedges were mainly **di ŋmanila**, ‘it seems’ **ŋŋo**, ‘probably’ **n tehiya**, ‘I think’ **di nitooiniŋ**, ‘it is possible’ **nzilisiya**, ‘I suspect’ **n zahimya**, ‘I consider’ **amii**, ‘perhaps’ **manisani** ‘from my perspective’. These are illustrated in examples (71) –(78).

71. **Di ŋmani la saa ŋo yaa kuri mi maa**  
 It seems FOC rain this MOD threaten FOC DEF  
 It seems it is as usual threatening to rain again.
72. **N ŋo o bi di**  
 Maybe 3SG NEG eat  
 Maybe he/ she has not eaten.
73. **N tehi-ya ni o yi-ya**  
 1SG think-PERF that 3SG go  
 I think that he/she has gone out.
74. **Di ni tooi niŋ ka saa mi**  
 It COND AUX do CONJ rain fall  
 It is possible that it may rain.
75. **N zilisi-ya ni Adam go-ya.**  
 1SG suspect-PERF that Adam travel  
 I am afraid that Adam has travelled.

76. **N zahim-ya ni ti ni di nasara**  
 1SG think-PERF that 1PL FUT eat success  
 I think that we will be successful.

77. **Amii n ni paa bieguni bee**  
 Hedge 1SG FUT reach tomorrow QM  
 Will I reach tomorrow?

78. **Mani sani Jon Mahama kpaŋ o maŋa.**  
 1SG place Jon Mahama try 3SG self  
 To me, Jon Mahama did well.

The hedges became clearly manifest when they were used at the end of the sentence as I illustrated in (79b). In this way, they forcefully demonstrated the noncommittal and hesitational stance of the speaker as in examples (79) to (81).

79. a. **O bi kuna, n tehi-ya**  
 3SG NEG return, 1SG think  
 He/She has not returned, I think.

b. **Ti ni bu bihi maa, n tehiya**  
 We FUT beat children DEF I think.PERF  
 We will beat the children, I think.

80. **Jebuni da loori, m pasheli**  
 Jebuni buy lorry, 1SG guess  
 I guess Jebuni has bought a car.

81. **Vikuba naa-ya nŋo**  
 Vikuba finish probably  
 Vikuba has probably finished.

It must be noted that this construction pattern is rarely used but only for a situation where the speaker begins with confidence on the subject matter, but quickly decides to play it safe.

Some commonly used hedges in everyday discourse include; **Di mi suguro**, 'be patient, **Pahi mi suguro**, 'be patient'; **n suhira mi**, 'I beg you'; **Jaande**, 'I urge you'; **gafara**, 'please'; **Nij mi ania**, 'try your best'

#### **4.10 Interim Summary**

This chapter set out to offer an account on the politeness strategies of Dagbani with focus on verbal strategies of politeness marking which was systematically discussed. There was a discussion on honorifics which were grouped into various categories in Dagbani and the forms discussed included the age category, familial category, occupational category, and formal and informal situations each of which was argued to have its unique way of expressing politeness in the Dagbamba culture. It was also shown that chieftaincy titles are treated as honorifics in the society and their use signified politeness. Also discussed in detail are the importance of greetings, and the use of proverbs, euphemisms, linguistic hedges, approbation, the modesty maxim as well as other forms as politeness markers in Dagbani. These forms all in essence constitute the verbal politeness of Dagbani. This chapter is relevant as it has given systematic details into the politeness strategies of Dagbani. Again, it is one of its kinds to have delved into this area of study, as much has not been done particularly in this aspect of the language by earlier scholars. The next chapter discusses the non-linguistic strategies of marking politeness.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### NON-LINGUISTIC POLITENESS STRATEGIES

#### 5.0 Introduction

Having presented the linguistic strategies of marking politeness in the preceding section, this chapter focuses on a discussion on the non-linguistic strategies which are also employed to show politeness. Section 5.1 discusses the ‘doables’; sitting arrangement at the palace or important gatherings as a non-verbal strategy of marking politeness. Key to this discussion is the claim that there is a hierarchy in the chieftaincy system of the Dagbamba and one must always be sensitive to this and sit at the appropriate place as a way of showing respect. In section 5.2, ‘prohibitives’ as another form of non-verbal strategy of marking politeness is looked at; for instance, the idea of not offering someone something with the left hand. Other forms of prohibitives such as the ban on publicly pointing to an elderly person that s/he is wrong, putting a hand on an old person’s head, lifting up an adult, bluffing, grumbling or talking while an older person is addressing you, failing to respond to a call by an elderly person, sweeping while an elder is nearby / passing by, failure to invite a visitor to table, dressing code and knowledge of verbal taboos are discussed. Section 5.3 focuses on dressing codes; showing that wearing the right code and in the right manner is also a way of showing respect. In section 5.4, knowledge of verbal taboos as a mark of respect is looked at while 5.5 provides an interim summary of the chapter.

## 5.1 Categorization of Non-linguistic Politeness Strategies

The non-linguistic politeness strategies are classified into two types – the doables and the prohibitives. These two categories are discussed in 5.1.1 and 5.2 respectively, with ample illustrations from the Dagbani cultural setup.

### 5.1.1 *Sitting arrangement in the palace*

One non-linguistic strategy that is used to code politeness among Dagbamba is seating arrangement in the palace. As a structured society, this constitutes a salient aspect of marking politeness because where one sits may either portray one as being polite or impolite. There is a strict sitting arrangement at all levels of the Chieftaincy institution in Dagbani. All other major divisional skins have similar arrangement but that of the **Sayim-lana** ‘metaphorical owner of tuozaafi (TZ) i.e. owner of life’ **Duniya-lana** ‘owner of the world’ is different. The common thing however is that, for any of the elders to miss his or her position and sit in another’s in the palace is deemed a mark of gross impoliteness especially, if the place taken is for a higher ranked elder. But this vary with the sub-chiefs in their own unique way. For example in the case of **Tolon** Skin, Wulana, Kpanalana etc sit directly in front of the **Tolon-naa (Wuniyuri-naa, Gbewaa Kpana-lana, Duŋ kuruyu-naa, Tobu zira-naa)**. Some of the elders on his right are: **Luŋ-naa, Nakoha-naa, Mba Gunu, Nachin-naa**. Those on his left include: **jahinfo, Kikaa**, in addition to the Princes of the skin such as **Tali-naa, Fihini-naa, Tiboyu-naa**.

Nobody makes a mistake to sit at another elder’s place because it will be deemed an insult to the rightful elder. Readers need to know that the elders sit right on the floor.

Figure 4 shows the King, sub-chiefs, and elders seated. Seated in front of the King is the linguist. The king is flanked on his left by **Naa Bieli Zohi-naa** who sits next to the King, **Naa Ba-kpema Kariya-naa, Yoo Kuya-naa -naa, Mion-lana, Tolon-naa,**



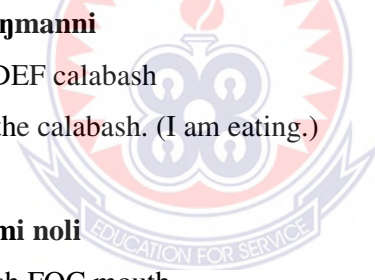
**Gukpeyu-na, Sunsoŋ-naa, Yelizoli-lana, Kunbunŋu-naa.** On the right hand side is who sits next to the King, **Gaa-naa, Tuyiri-nam, Namo-naa, Nantŋ-naa.** Sitting right in front of the **To-lana**, ‘King of Dagbaŋ’ are **Nyankpala-lana, Naa Dachie Woriboyu-lana, Naa Bapira Kpan-naa, Moyulaa-lana, Mba Duyu** who sits directly next to the King in front. He is the Chief of Staff of the **Gbuyunli**, ‘Lion’. The Sub-chiefs and elders sit in locations prescribed by the roles that each chief plays. The roles are not explained here since the politeness strategies are the purpose for this study.



*Figure 4:* The Regent of Dagbaj sitting in State with his Elders in their Various Positions

### **5.1.2 Inviting a visitor to table**

Being a communal society, one is always expected to do things that are suggestive of this philosophy of life. Accordingly, to show sign of politeness, one is expected to invite others to table when one is eating in the presence of other people. One is even more expected to invite a visitor passing by when one is eating. Even if the food is not enough, one should stop eating and give the rest to the visitor or the person coming around. 82 – 85 are a few linguistic ways of invitation to table. The item calabash is used rather than any other item because it is the food was served in prior to to come of metallic bowls. It therefore remains a symbol of food/eating among the Dagbamba.

- 
82. **N be la ηmanni**  
1SG is DEF calabash  
I am in the calabash. (I am eating.)
83. **Tipagi mi noli**  
1PL wash FOC mouth  
Let us wash our mouths. (Let us eat.)
84. **Mi ri mi na**  
Near FOC LOC  
Get near the food.
85. **Pagi mi a nua**  
Wash ASP 2SG hand  
Wash your hand. (Wash your hand and come and eat.)

Just as it is incumbent for one to invite another to table, it is equally important for the invitee to honour the good will. A morsel of T. Z. or one spoonful of the food will do.

But if the invitee cannot do this, then s/he has the option to politely respond thus;

86. **N ku lahi di**  
1SG NEG again eat  
I cannot eat again.

87. **Di ni ka n kuliya na ɲo**  
DEM and 1SG come out DEM  
I just finished eating.

89. **Naawuni ni che ka di do ni**  
God FUT allow and 3SG lie down  
May God make the food be accepted by your body.

90. **Di na wum ma mi**  
1SG tire 1SG FOC  
I am satisfied now.

The participants warned that it is impolite for females to accept the invitation from males and sit with males to eat together. Females eat separately from men not even a spouse. This is gender sensitive.

### **5.1.3 Honouring elders**

A key politeness strategy is to consciously honour people who are older than the actor. For example, there are occasions when there are not enough seats in a room, office, bus, social gathering etc. Dagbamba politeness expects a younger person to leave a seat for an older person who does have a seat. This shows disrespect on the part of the younger person sitting on the seat. This means that the fellow has not been brought up well thus, the impetus of impoliteness towards the older person. For this reason, society questions

the poor ill-mannered upbringing that the person got from home. It is considered impolite for younger ones to take up seats while adults stand up. Closely linked to this is the fact that when addressing someone, one is expected to use the appropriate title. This could be chieftaincy titles or family titles. Addressing someone with 'hey' is a sign of disrespect and is not encouraged in the society. It means that the one addressing has looked down on the one she/he is addressing. This act is regarded as an insult, and the addressee would not respond even when the person knows that she/he is the one being addressed. In furtherance, when people are working, for example processing of shea-butter and an old person, especially an old man, is passing by, they have to pause and politely seek permission from the person before they continue. It is deference that is extended to such a person. The old man would just tell them to go ahead and continue. But if they don't seek his permission, he could spoil the butter (through spiritual means) and it will go bad leading to a loss for the owner.

### ***5.1.3 Offer not done using left hand***

From the interviews, it was also clear that the Dagbamba do not offer a gift or anything using the left hand. This is because the act is considered as disrespect to the one who is being offered the gift. The left hand is not dignified, and culturally assumed as dirty among Dagbamba culture. To use it is interpreted as relating the recipient to dirt and insignificance. Even persons who are naturally left handed, try hard not to use the left for this purpose. The only exception to this might be among colleagues, play mates and places where people are well known for being lefties, they may use the left.

In the same vein, there is no deference shown when gifts are received using a left hand. It is observed to exhibit gross disrespect to the one offering the gift. It is the same with pointing at someone, greeting, raising a left hand to ask a question or pass a comment, or contribute in a discussion.

In relation to this is that gifts which are countable must not be of odd number. The items must be in pairs. For example, tubers of yam offered a friend must be either two, four etc. This counts a lot in official circles such as bride price, or situations where there is no familiarity. On the other hand, one piece can be offered or even breakable pieces such as kola-nut. A friend can have a bite at a kola-nut and offer to the next person who may also share with another. In the image below are paired tubers of Yam that we used to show our gratitude at the Tampe-Kukuo Palace when the researcher led a delegation to pay the bride price for a friend's son in the village.



*Figure 5: Presenting tubers of yam as a gift*

#### **5.1.4 Being Addressed/Addressing an Older Person**

One other important non-linguistic politeness strategy is the posture one takes while greeting or being greeted. As noted earlier, failure to greet is considered impolite in Dagbaŋ. One must learn to greet people whether or not they are known to you. But the posture that one takes while greeting can make the greeting serve its purpose or otherwise. The determining variables that condition greetings are basically, age, status,

and gender as rightly observed by Salifu (2014). These same variables condition one's posture while greeting.

The younger person must squat or bow low while greeting or while being greeted. Elders sit on the floor (covered with a mat or skin at the foot of the raised platform of their lords). Females bow or squat before adult males who may even be their own children. For example, my aunt (my mother's elder sister) always bows while greeting me. This is same with all others especially among the non-literate women. It is observed by women who serve food and water and send food to the males wherever they are in the compound or nearby farms. They must squat to place the food down for the men to eat. The special aspect of serving water is that the woman keeps on squatting until the water is drunk, and she takes the empty bowl or what remains of the water back into the compound. Although squatting is the polite way of greeting in Dagbaŋ, women are expected to squat to greet even males who are young enough to be their children. This custom among others shows that the Dagbaŋ society is a male dominated one. When a young person squats in this way, he/she does not get up until told to do so by the older one. Failure to wait for the go ahead to get up amounts to impoliteness.



*Figure 6: A woman in a greeting posture*

#### **5.1.5 Publicly pointing to an Elderly Person that s/he is wrong**

When an elder person and a younger person are in a conversation especially in argument and the elder person happens to say that which is not true, the younger person cannot say s/he is telling lies. Even if they are all adults, they cannot say to each other ‘you are lying’. The issue is that, it is believed that adults do not lie. So even if an adult accuses a younger person of something he or she has not done, the younger person cannot tell the adult that he is telling lies. It is believed that when a young person tells an adult that he is lying or if he is found of doing that, that young person will not live long because the young person is fond of disrespecting elders by disgracing them. This is in consonance with the social set-up where elders or people of higher authority are assumed always to be right. Children can therefore, not point at the wrongs of adults openly. It is therefore impolite to publicly point out the faults of an elderly person.

#### **5.1.6 Putting a hand on an old person’s head**

When a younger person puts his/ her hand on an elder person's head, it is seen as a sign of disrespect. So for a younger person to remove something or just do anything on an elder person's head, s/he has to seek permission from the elder person before doing so. A young person putting his/ her hand on an elder person's head means the young person has looked down on that elderly person. Also, because some Dagbamba elders have some spiritual powers, when you touch their head without permission, something bad can happen to you.

### ***5.1.7 Lifting up an adult***

Out of excitement or otherwise, a younger person or anyone cannot just lift up an adult. It is a belief that an elderly person is weighty and cannot just be lifted up like an object or a child. So lifting an elderly person is a disgrace to the elderly person. If it is out of anger that a younger person lifts up an elderly person, that young person would not live long to grow old up to the age of the one he lifted. When a young person or any person lifts up elders with spiritual powers, s/he would not be able to put them down again. You would carry him/her till you get tired. There was a scenario in my village (Chirifoyili) where there was a smallish looking elderly woman called Sana Tia (she was my little distant paternal auntie but we did not live together in the same compound). There are usually fierce rains at the beginning of the farming season. One of such rains started late in the night when everybody was resting in the yard because the weather was warm. Because the people were asleep, the rain was not noticed in good time for the people to take cover. In the process of the rush to take cover and carry children who were still dozing, one of the ladies mistakenly took Mpiriba Sana Tia up and sent her to the room safely. In the process, she woke up but was very angry at the lady who lifted her like a child. But when she put her down on the sleeping mat, Mpiriba Sana



Tia shouted at her, and instructed her to carry her back and put her down in the rain where she took her from saying;

**91. A ni kuli kpuɣi ma shem n kpehi maa na,**  
 2SG INT take 1SG way INF inside DET PREP  
**kuli lahi kpuɣi ma lala n labisi a ni di kuli**  
 INT repeat take 1SG same INF return 2SG TM INT  
**kpuɣi ma sheli maa.**  
**take 1SG place DEF**

The manner in which you took me inside, take me, in that same manner, to the place you took me from'. No amount of explanation could convince Mpiriba Sana Tia that the lady carried her by mistake.

So, she had to carry her back through the fierce rain, and put her down in the water before she got up and ran by herself back to the room. This demonstrates the gravity of that action. This is considered as gross disrespect to an adult.

### **5.1.8 Bluffing**

Showing-off of one's riches, strength, age, especially beauty/handsomeness etc, is considered a show of impoliteness in the eyes of the Dagbamba. This is because all of these are gifts from God and one does not have them because of who one is. Dagbamba believe that these things are temporal and when one boasts of them it is disrespect for God, and man. Besides, there are evil people in the society who do not want to see others prosper so when they see a person boast of what one has, they get an excuse to harm the person. To the beautiful ladies who boast about their beauty, some end up getting themselves impregnated by men and their future is messed up.

### **5.1.9 Grumbling or talking while an older person is addressing you**

This act is a kind of impoliteness/disrespect on the part of the younger person. It means that she/he does not regard the elder person at all. It also shows that the younger person

has not been well brought up by his parents. That is the reason she/he cannot be polite enough to manage his/her emotions well. This kind of young people mostly end up getting cursed from elderly people.

#### **5.1.10 Failing to respond to a call by an elderly person**

This act is not common but it does happen mostly between two people; old or young who have axes to grind between themselves. The Dagbamba say that **bɛ zayisirila boliygu gbunni bɛ bi zayisiri boliyu** 'It is the purpose of summons that is rejected but not the summons itself.' This means that when an elder person calls a younger person no matter the differences, the younger person has to go and listen to the purpose of the call. It is after listening to the purpose of the call that the person can decide how to react to the call. But if the person refuses to even go and listen to the purpose of the call it shows how impolite/disrespectful the person is to the elderly. Even though the person may be right not to respond to that call, society would still consider it as a sign of disrespect on the part of the young person.

In a similar light, a younger person does not sit in his/her house and call an older one to come over for anything irrespective of the fact that it may be for the benefit of the older person. That is gross impoliteness and an affront to the reputation and age of the older one. The impoliteness case becomes even more aggravated if the invitation is for the benefit of the older. The conclusion is that the younger one is demeaning the older one because 'his hand is in the mouth' of the younger one.

But note that in contemporary urban Dagbani society, the older ones even pray that they be invited by the richer and younger ones to their homes. They therefore respond promptly for their problems to be solved for them by the young rich. This anomaly however, does not happen in the traditional Dagbani society.

#### **5.1.11 *Sweeping while an elder is nearby / passing by***

This is a kind of disrespect on the part of the one sweeping. Women or ladies are those who sweep especially inside the house. So when an elderly person is nearby or passing by, those sweeping halt for the person to pass before sweeping continues. In the event that the fellow refuses to stop sweeping, it is a sign that the sweeper does not respect the elder/person passing. It is believed that some wicked elders have the spiritual power to make the sweeper keep on sweeping against her will till she gets so exhausted. Other punishments could be barrenness or some disease of a kind. Dagbamba also believe that when a broom touches a man or any male person the fellow would become impotent. So to avoid all these side effects on both sides, it is advisable to stop sweeping when someone is standing or passing by.

#### **5.1.12 *Turning Down a Request***

It is also the case that turning down a request is also a mark of impoliteness. This signals poor upbringing and dishonor for one's family. The family and society will not have it kindly at all with the offender. A request is regarded as something beyond the means of the person making it. Carrying it out is a deed for God and humanity, and therefore, obligatory if one has the means. In this vein, refusal is seen as disrespect not only to the one making the request but the one refusing to do it. In the situation where one does not have the means to honour the request, it must be politely turned down so that the person requesting does not get offended.

#### **5.1.13 *Taking off One's Foot- ware before the Presence of a Chief***

The data showed that for one to get into the hall of a chief or walk to the chief when he is in the (sambani) open court is a mark of gross disrespect not only for the chief but also his subjects. A polite way is for one to remove one's sandals when getting close to the presence of a chief. But the possibility exists that a visitor with some amount of

dignity may be asked to put the sandals back on. A similar politeness strategy is to unwear sandals before going into any room where humans live. This is a common politeness strategy that was found in the data. The foot wares are left at the entrance of the door as in



*Figure 7.* Sandals removed before Entering a Room

### ***5.1.13 Looking an elder straight in the eye***

This is an unacceptable act because it is regarded as very impolite. This is because it means the younger one does not regard the addresser, to say the least. The person is nobody. A polite and an expected thing is for the person to look down and listen without interrupting. An example is shown in Image figure 8.



*Figure 8. A young lady greeting an elderly man without looking at his face*

## **5.2 Posture in Greetings**

In the data, bowing came out as one of the non-linguistic forms of marking politeness in Dagbani society. To show politeness to people, bowing is done in the direction of the person so honoured. The one bowing bends the trunk from the waist forward up to about seventy degrees. But the best posture of honour is as in 5.2.2 and 5.2.10. Usually it is the very old, and people with titles (most of them are normally advanced in age) and elderly women who are bowed to. This may be accompanied with verbal greeting. In the instance where a person is unable to squat due to an illness, ageing, convenience or pressing time, the person can bow to show politeness.

Squatting was mentioned by the participants as a mark of politeness. Squatting to greet an elder or somebody with a title or a highly ranked person in society is widely practiced. Like in the case of bowing, squatting is also meant as a form of greeting. But

this is done for elderly and highly placed persons in society such as chiefs, elders, and people far older than the person greeting.



*Figure 9.* A young man greeting an elderly man.

But females are expected to be polite and show politeness to males, even those they are older than as far as in their intimation, the males have reached a certain stage when they must be accorded this respect. So it follows that women squat to greet their own sons or even males younger their own children. This does not mean that males do not squat before females. Males squat before women who are far older than them by way of being polite to them.

### ***5.3 Loudness in Speech***

The pitch of one's voice in speech, generally, is crucial in the perception of im/politeness. The data showed that the pitch of one's voice must be appropriate to the context and subject matter. The pitch necessarily needs be low in the case of talking with a listener who is older than the speaker. For peers, pitch can be either low or high

depending on the situation. For listeners who the speaker is older than, pitch can be level even though it could naturally go high in situations like anger.

### 5.3 Dressing Codes among the Dagbamba

Ibrahim (2014) has done a detailed work on appropriateness of dressing in the Dagbamba community. The data confirmed all that has been postulated in the work as illustrated in the succeeding sub-sections.

#### 5.3.1 Use of *ziligu gɔliyu*

The study showed that the Dagbamba mark politeness with the manner in which the hat (*ziligu goligu*) is worn. The most useful dressing pattern is done with the **zupiligu gɔliyu** (the traditional hat) to mark politeness in Dagbambaj. This is because its manner of wear communicates various messages; some peaceful others troublesome. It is long and can be folded in many ways. This is the most communicative of the Dagbamba male clothing. When it is worn pointing upwards, it shows that the person is a responsible person carrying a lot of responsibilities of his family's or community.



Figure 10. A Hat Worn with the Tip Pointing up

When it points back, it means that the bearer has a lot of following; that he is a head of a clan/family.



*Figure 11. A zupiiyu with the tip pointing/folded back.*

When he instructs, it shall be carried out by his followers/family members.

Furthermore, the hat can be worn folded forward, as observed in the figure 12 below:





*Figure 12. A Zipiliyu Folded Forward*

The bearer is telling people around that he has no equal and can do anything he wants with impunity. In other words, he has no regard for anybody in the vicinity. A person who says this would have had a grudge with somebody or the whole community. He would have been prepared to fight them/calling for a fight. The person may be only trying to undermine the authority of the chief/or leader in the community.

When the hat is worn folded to the left or right hand, then, the person is saying that he is for peace and does not like any trouble. With this, one can roam to any place without anybody challenging or troubling the person. In this vein, the hats of chiefs turn to be either upward or backward. The common men, who are the majority in all societies, have their hats folded either to the left or to the right. Thus most at times, the hats spotted are either to the right or the left. Rarely is a hat worn folded in front.

**5.3.2 *The use of towel when one's superior passes on***

Another way of expressing politeness among the Dagbamba is the towel wrapped around the head and worn as a hat as seen in Figure 12 below.



Figure 13: A Towel Rapped around the Head in Honour of a Dead Superior

As pointed out previously, being a hierarchical society, the chieftaincy titles are structured. In the event that one's superior passes on, all the sub-chiefs which are enskinned by that chief do not wear 'the traditional hats; again, but use towels to cover their heads. This is a mark of respect for the deceased 'boss' and is sustained until the funeral is performed and a new chief is enskinned. The picture below illustrates the situation under consideration.

On the other hand, when a male adult loses a father, or uncle he is also expected to wear the folded towel as observed in Figure 14 below.



Figure 13. A towel wrapped around the head

#### 5.4 Knowledge of Verbal Taboos as a Politeness Strategy

Another important non-linguistic strategy found in the data and worth considering is the knowledge of verbal taboos. A *Taboo* refers to a prescription of behaviour for a specifiable community of one or more persons at a specifiable time in specifiable contexts. (Allan and Burridge 2006:11). Etymologically, the word “taboo” originates from Tongan, (a language spoken in Asia). Its Tongan cognate is “tabu” meaning “set apart” or “forbidden”. It is worthy of mention that this word also has a Hawan cognate “kapu” which is used to refer to the avoidance of certain types of behaviour. A key point to note is that the prohibition is usually sensitive to the culture of a particular people in the sense that it is the cultural values of the people that prescribe what should be perceived as a taboo. For instance, expressions such as *fucking* –“a vulgar slang used for emphasis or to express anger, annoyance, contempt, or surprise” as well as *Ass* –

“...a person's buttocks or anus...” as generally unacceptable in English. Taboos are generally put into two major groups: behavioural taboos and verbal taboos. In the discussion that follows, the focus shall be on the latter.

In almost every human society, there are usually some words that are prohibited from being used in certain contexts and lack of knowledge of this, often results in threatening one's positive face in communication. This subsection closely examines the characteristics of Dagbani verbal taboos as they occurred in the data. The strategies that are employed by speakers of Dagbani to avoid verbal taboos called verbal taboos avoidance techniques (VERTAT) are discussed.

Verbal taboos, in this study, are viewed as the linguistic expressions and lexical items that a particular society prohibits except only under some particular socio-cultural contexts. It is assumed that although verbal taboos are a universal concept, it has culture-specific manifestations. The argument in the literature is that verbal taboos are generally societal prescriptions and so are usually reflections of the social and cultural values or beliefs of a particular group of people.

As argued by Farb (1973:91) “any word is an innocent collection of sounds until a community surrounds it with connotations and decrees that it cannot be used in certain speech situations. It is the symbolic value the specific culture attaches to the word and the expressions that make them become taboos”. Verbal taboos are very fundamental in shaping a society since they generally prescribe some particular lifestyle within a speech community. Adherence to verbal taboos could thus be seen to go hand in hand with morality since they make people comply with the norms, values and modes of behaviour of the society in which they find themselves at any given moment.

It is also argued in this study that verbal taboo is a form of indirection where the real object is not usually what is forbidden but the cultural or social circumstances that may be affected by the prohibitions and the consequences that may be associated with their violation. Taboos usually would have certain features/characteristics associated with them. Such features may include their being sacred, important, dangerous, nasty, and unmentionable. This section basically considers the unmentionable category of verbal taboos and how their violation may be perceived by the Dagbamba of the Northern Region as impolite. It investigates some lexical items and linguistic expressions that the Dagbani speech community prohibits and what the implications of violating them may be.

#### ***5.4.1 Some Unmentionables among the Dagbamba***

As the name would suggest, this category of verbal taboos refers to the various kinds of verbal taboos that form part of the daily interactions of a particular speech community. These are called unmentionables because the society or speech community generally frowns on the use of those expressions with their bare terms, and considers that as impolite. Accordingly, use of those terms would usually not attract any ‘material punishment’, but would be seen as a face-threatening act. Since every human being seeks to maintain some positive face, communicative knowledge of these unmentionables in society becomes a cardinal element of the communicative competence developed by every user of a language. Unmentionables may be considered as nasty, or dangerous to be talked of. This section of the work shall take a look at some of these unmentionables in Dagbani as the Verbal Taboos Avoidance Techniques (VERTAT) that are adopted by the Dagbamba to avoid face-threatening acts.

#### 5.4.1.1 Snake bite as an Unmentionable among Dagbamba.

According to the key informants, the Dagbamba regard snake bite, and snake itself, as unmentionable. Accordingly, it is prohibited for one to talk of snake bite in its bare form in the Dagbani culture. When one does use the bare form, it is an indicator of lack of communicative competence and would generally attract a frown from other interlocutors. Accordingly, one does say:

*Bare form:* **wahu n-dimi o**, that is “He or she has been bitten by a snake” without any criticism from the society. In line with the need to avoid social stigma since every language user seeks some level of positive self-image and show politeness in discourse, there are some euphemistic expressions in the language which are used to tone down the gravity of this unmentionable verbal taboo. Indeed failure to use these euphemistic expressions is considered as a sign of disrespect in society. Some expressions which are used as Avoidance Techniques when talking of snake bite among the Dagbamba, from the data are:

**O tuui la tiŋa**, ‘s/he has used the foot against the ground.’

**Buŋa n-shihi o**, ‘ a dangerous animal has touched him/her.’

These two expressions tone down the force or the gravity of snake bite and sort of polish it up. They are thus seen as euphemistic expressions which are used to tone down the effect of an utterance aimed at maintaining a positive self-image within a given speech community. Listen to Tolon Luŋa-naa when asked about how snake bite is announced in Dagbani:

Luŋa-naa: **tinvirigu ŋuna, beni biegu n bala**

Snake RP thing bad DM that

A snake is a bad thing.

**Ti dii bi booni o yuli, dinzugu, o yi dim nira,**

1PLINT NEG call 3SG name so 3SG COND bite person

We don't like mentioning its name, so when it bites a person,

**Be yeri mi ni buɲa n shihi o**

3PL say FOC that thing DM touch 3SG

They say that a terrible thing has touched that person.

**Bee tinvurigu n nye o**

Or snake(acceptable name) DM see 3SG

Or the animal that pulls itself along the ground has seen that person.

Though there are other animals that could bite it does seem the case that only the bite of the snake is so far discovered by the researcher to be an unmentionable. The data do not offer any plausible cultural explanation this observation, but it is hoped that future research into the area would shed more light on it.

#### **5.4.1.2 Death as unmentionable verbal taboo among the Dagbamba**

Just like a snake bite, talking about death in plain language is also considered as lack of knowledge in communicative competence and as such is impolite among the Dagbamba. For the Dagbamba, death is a separation between one and the physical world to reunite with the ancestors. They have so much respect for death that, it seems the case that one would not far from the truth to assert that Dagbamba respect the dead more than the living. However, talking of issue of death is a verbal taboo except otherwise, when it is polished up by the speaker. However, it is essential to note that there exists a difference in the type of euphemistic expression that can be used for different people when they die. This difference is along the lines of social status, manner of death and the circumstances surrounding the death. Accordingly, a chief would have a particular expression that is used to refer to his death; a person who also

died through sickness may also have specific expressions used to refer to his or her death.

### **5.5 Social Status and Euphemistic Expressions for Death.**

As mentioned earlier, euphemisms are one major communicative strategy that is employed by the Dagbamba to avoid verbal taboos. The social status of a person also determines the nature of the euphemistic expression that the Dagbamba adopt to tone down the gravity of death as a verbal taboo. Based on this social parameter, three social classes are identified, which are, chiefs, '**nanima**', ordinary people '**tarimba**' and children '**bihi**.' That means that whether one is a child or an adult, whether one is a chief or not, and also the age of the fellow at the time of death could prescribe certain euphemistic expressions that may be used when referring to death in the context of such people. Among the Dagombas, when a child dies at the early stage of life, they say: **bia maa labi mi**, 'the child has gone back.' This saying should be a reflection of the people's belief that 'we have come from a particular world-the spiritual world and that there comes a day when we shall all go back to that place'. This euphemism is restricted purely to referring to the death of children and would never be used for an adult among the Dagbamba.

#### **5.5.1 Ordinary People (Tarimba) and Euphemism for Death.**

Among the Dagbamba of Ghana's Northern Region, social status is an essential factor in determining the sort of euphemism that one uses to refer to death when one passes away. When an ordinary person (an ordinary person is one who does not hold a high traditional political office among the people) dies among the Dagbamba, there are several ways of expressing it euphemistically. Some of them are:

**O lebi Naawuni dini**'s/he has become God's.'



**O kuli tiŋ kurigu** ‘s/he has gone to the old land.’

**O chaŋ o yaanima tooni** ‘s/he has gone to join the ancestors.’

**O zaŋ o nuu dihi buya tiŋa** ‘s/he has used his hand to press the land of the spirits.’

It is seen from these four euphemisms listed that they just do not tone down the gravity, but also are reflections of the beliefs of the people about the physical and spiritual world or belief in the existence of the ancestors. It does not also seem the case at least, from the findings of this work that gender affects the type of euphemism that the Dagbamba choose in referring to issues of death. Owing to the cultural prescription that these euphemisms are restricted to only ordinary people ‘**tarimba**’ within the Dagboŋ social set-up, it would be communicatively unacceptable for one to use any of these on any occasion of death except in the context of the ordinary person.

In an instance where **tarim** ‘an ordinary person’ dies after some period of sickness, they Dagbamba would have a different form of euphemism that is used to encode this. The expression that is used in referring such deaths is: **doro maa nyaŋ o**: which means, ‘the sickness has conquered/defeated him or her.’ When a chief dies even after some period of sickness, it is strictly a cultural prohibition to use the expression above as an euphemism to refer to the death of such a person. In this case, the euphemism is regulated by social factors within the speech community.

### **5.6 Chiefs<sup>11</sup> and death.**

A chief among the Dagbamba as in most other Ghanaian cultures, constitute an important aspect of the political and religious life of the people. Accordingly, they are

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<sup>11</sup>Though Dagboŋ is basically a chauvinistic society with men holding traditional political powers, a few towns are exclusively ruled by queen mothers. In this paper, chief is used to include the few women who serve as traditional political rulers. These euphemisms to be discussed hold for both sexes in the language.

accorded so much respect in the society and as such have certain lexical items and expressions which are reserved for them only. This section discusses some of the euphemisms that are used to refer to death in the context of chiefs among the Dagbamba below. Some of those expressions are:

**Kom bori ya** ‘water has been muddled.’

**Tiŋa vubigi ya** ‘the ground has cracked opened.’

**O che nam sama** ‘he has left the debt of chieftaincy.’

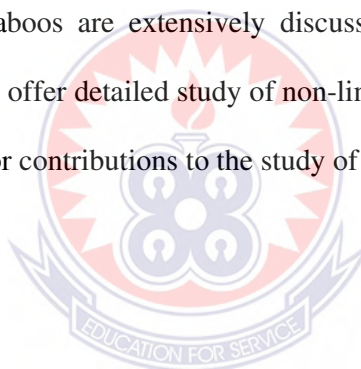
**O lebi o nyaŋa biri salanima/duniya** ‘s/he has turned the back to the world or human beings.’

Unlike the earlier forms of euphemisms, which dealt with referring to death of an ordinary person within the social set up of the Dagbamba, these four forms of euphemisms instead of talking about death or belief in existence of the ancestors, rather seem to portray the might of the chief. For instance, the second euphemism refers to the death of the chief as “the ground cracking”. It is inferred that this could be used to imply that no one within the social set up qualifies to lay the chief to rest and so the ground naturally opens up for the chief to enter after death. In the first euphemism, the death is equated to the muddling of water. Water (as I all know) is an essential component of man’s life and for it to be muddled is an indicator of chaos and disorder in a society.

It is shown that even euphemisms which are used to tone down the effects or unpleasantness of death, is not devoid of social considerations. This assumption is arrived through the comparison between the euphemisms used to tone down the death of an ordinary person as opposed to those used in instances of death of chiefs.

### **5.7 Interim Summary**

This chapter offered a systematic investigation into the varied non-linguistic strategies that are used for the marking of politeness in Dagbani. It broadly classified these non-verbal politeness strategies into ‘doables’ and ‘prohibitives’ referring to those that are allowed and disallowed respectively. Under the ‘doables’, sitting arrangement at palaces and gatherings were analysed, while under the ‘prohibitives’, the ban on publicly pointing to an elderly person that s/he is wrong, putting a hand on an old person’s head, lifting up an adult, bluffing, grumbling or talking while an older person is addressing you, failing to respond to a call by an elderly person, sweeping while an elder is nearby / passing by, failure to invite a visitor to table, dressing code and knowledge of verbal taboos are extensively discussed. This chapter is important because it does not only offer detailed study of non-linguistic politeness strategies, but remains one of the major contributions to the study of Dagbani politeness strategies.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **INFLUENCE OF POWER, GENDER AND AGE IN DAGBAMBA**

#### **POLITENESS STRATEGIES**

##### **6.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the influence that gender, power and age wield on Dagbambaim/politeness is examined. It adapts a different approach from previous research on politeness which assumed a stereotypical correlation between masculinity and impoliteness and femininity and politeness. The approach further deviates from Brown and Levinson's (1978) model, in which individual speech strategies are considered to be inherently polite or impolite. It draws the role of gender, power and age on politeness by examining the attitude in the conduct of day to day business by the Dagbamba, bearing in mind the role of culture and urbanisation in the community of practice. This is done by studying the data presented in chapters four and five. Graham (2007:743) notes that 'perception of im/politeness vary from one individual to another and there are multiple gradations of more- or less- (im)polite behaviour'.

##### **6.1 Correlation between power and Dagbani politeness strategies**

Brown and Levinson (1987:74) discuss a number of variables which might affect the level of politeness, such as power, distance, and rank of imposition whereas Holmes (1995) opines that there are three dimensions which have proved useful in analysing linguistic politeness, namely 'solidarity-social distance dimension', the 'power dimension', and the 'formality dimension.' Therefore, power relations are important in politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987:77), power is 'the ability of one person to impose their will on another' whereas according to Holmes (1995:17), the power dimension refers to the ability of the participants to influence one another's

circumstances. Therefore, one person may be said to have power over another to the degree that he or she is able to control the behaviour of the other. Power is a relationship between at least two persons, and it is nonreciprocal in the sense that both cannot have power in the same area of behaviour. Power establishes asymmetric relationship thus creates hierarchical structure which varies according to many factors such as gender, race, age, ability, sexuality, economic status, class, religion, and so forth (Burrow, 2007). Power in Dagbani is found at different levels of strictly prescribed either mainly by the conventional culture. These are at the family level, and along a highly honoured chieftaincy structure.

#### **6.1.1 Power at the family level**

Parents have a near absolute power over their children no matter the status that the child attains in the society, wealth, wisdom anything that one can imagine. For example, if a Dagbani (SG) is the President of the Republic of Ghana, and his/her parents are the least in the society without education or wealth, the parents still wield power over the President, and can give instructions to the President when he visits home especially on family matters.

Readers need to note that it is not only the biological parents who have power over the child but uncles, aunties, elder brothers, and to some extent, elder sisters. The power at this level relates with instructions to carry out assignments and offering of pieces of advice. If parents wield power over children, the head of family equally does over all family members. The Head of Family has authority over the affairs of members in terms of their welfare. At some level, power is interrelated with age as well. But this power is not overwhelming as the one by parents as presented above. The general belief is that whoever is older even by a second, has power over the younger one. Even twins have

an elder one who happens to be the one who was born last. The idea is that, the one who came out first, was sent to go ahead so that the last one, elder twin followed. An example of the power relationship is seen in the dialogue below between a father and son, during one of his visits to the family.

Father:

92 a. **Ka wula ka a yuui kandi nalala?**

Why that 2SG long visit Loc

Why has it taken you so long a time to visit?

b. **Ka a kubohi a suhi n kana ka ti**

2SG NEG reason 2SG heart INF visit that 1PL

**nima lahi boli a ka a yuui lala?**

1PL yet call 2SG yet 2SG long

And you won't think and visit and when we ask you to visit, it has taken you so much time to come.

Son:

93 a. **Ti tuma maa.**

1PL work DEM

Our work

b. **Ti ka ti yubu**

1PL NEG 1PL independence

We are not independent.

Father:

94 a. **Yi nima tuma ŋɔ maa lahi paai tariga pam; wula?**

2PL work DEM DEM INTEN reach end INTEN INTERRO

Your work is too much; why?

b. **Yela maa yagi-ya.**

Problems DEM great

The problems are too many.

One can notice the protest in the father's tone which underscores the father's perception that his son's failure to respond quickly to the father's summons to come home is disrespectful and challenges the father's power over his son who is an adult, and better placed than his father in the village who even depends on his son for his livelihood.

It is expedient to note that there is a little exception to the power relation at the family level. This has to do with holders of Chieftaincy titles in the family. (This will be discussed in detail in the next section). The level of power reduces a little in favour of the child who has a title. It is an anomaly for a son to have a title while the father has none. In the same vein, it is considered abnormal for a son to have a higher title above a father<sup>12</sup>. So, when it does happen, the son though under the father at home, the power is expected to reduce over the son. But when it comes to Chieftaincy issues or at the palace, the one with a title or higher title wields more power. In the case that the father is titleless, then he is not even acknowledged.

#### **6.1.2 Power at the chieftaincy level**

The chieftaincy structure is hierarchical, with the King, Yaa-naa (King of Power) at the head. The Yaa-naa is therefore the singular source of power, and any power exercised in Dagbaŋ is just a little part of the King's power delegated. The Yaa-naa is also in charge of enskinning other sub-chiefs in the Dagbaŋ. These sub-chiefs are described as the King's Ba piranima (Younger uncles). They have the potential of becoming the Yaa-naa someday. They have the right to the Dagbaŋ throne. There are also the King's Yaannima (grandfathers) who form part of the core of the chieftaincy structure but

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<sup>12</sup> Father here goes beyond biological father to include all paternal uncles.

never aspire to be Yaa-naa. Another group of titles are the Tindaannima (Fetish Priests), and commoners titles. Each of these has power over their sub-chiefs who pay homage directly to them. These must pass through their divisional chiefs before they can deal with the Yaa-naa. Every issue at these levels is dealt with at those levels. It is only when the issue is beyond the divisional chief that it is referred to the Yaa-naa, the overall power. The line of power can extend to very long ranges as there are subordinate titles. New titles are always allowed to be created at any level.

But there is a little exception to the power of the King and chiefs as far as the Tindaanba (Fetish Priests) are concerned. They have a lot of say regarding issues of the gods of the land. They sometimes, even give instructions/advice to their bosses, and there are certain exceptions that they enjoy. One such privilege is that the priests do not work on the chief's farm as other people do neither do they pay levies. Even if they do voluntarily, the chief returns it to them through his elders.

## **6.2 Gender and Dagbamba politeness strategies**

Gender, understood as the roles society prescribes for males and females has a very strong influence on politeness strategies in Dagbani society as seen earlier in the data. Females are the main players in applying the strategies of honorifics, address system, greetings and other variations of the linguistic politeness as well as the non-linguistic politeness strategies. See the case of younger brothers and their elder brothers' wives in section 4.2.1.1

95. Alidu:

**Pagasaribila kami na**

NP            come LOC

Young girl come



96. Sibiri:

**N ŋahiba cheka n kpugi bini ŋo ka kana**  
1SG Honorific let INF take thing DEM and come  
My uncle, let me take this thing and come.

Sibiri responds to the call by Alidu and the conversation continues.

97. Alidu: **antire!**, 'Good afternoon'

Sibiri: **N-naa** 'female response'

**Daabaŋdiba?** 'Phatic pleasantries'

Sibiri:

**N-naa** (female response)

Alidu:

**A kohiri la a sima maa?**  
2SG sell FOC 2SG peanuts DEF  
Are your peanuts for sale?

Sibiri:

**N ŋahiba, so n pun dali**  
1SG Honorific somebody DM already buy  
My uncle, somebody has already bought them.

This is a similar conversation between a young lady and a man but this time in a joking manner between Dawuni and Puumaaya at the Katinga market.

98. Dawuni:

**M piriba, daa nima?**  
Honorific market people  
My Auntie, how is the market?

Puumaaya:

**Aalaafiee, 'fine'**

Dawuni:

**Ka a yidana be wula?**

And 2SG husband is how

How is your husband?

Puumaaya:

**Ka a gba paga be wula?**

COH 2SG also wife is INT

How is your wife too?

Dawuni:

**N ka paga**

1SG NEG wife

I have no wife.

Puumaaya:

**N ŋahiba, nyini zagikurili ŋo?**

Honorific you old DEM

My uncle, an old person like this?

Dawuni:

**Ka nyini, ye ka a yidana be wula?**

And you repeat DM 2SG husband is how

And you, how is your husband?

Puumaaya:

**Afulo; N dabisa a la?**

unthinkable 1SG day how much

How old am I?

Dawuni:

**Ka biha pali nyogu n ŋo?**

And breast full chest this

And how is it that your chest is full with breasts like this?

Puumaaya:

Zaŋ mi a yela n chema ha ka che ma.

Take 2SG trouble go LOC and leave 1SG

Take your trouble away from me.

Chieftaincy titles are all male affair except in some few cases where some titles are reserved for females. One such title is **Gundayu** reserved for daughters of Yaa-naa only. It should be noted that though women do not hold titles, they have a lot of influence in decision making behind the scenes.

Even in greetings, which is considered as "basic oil of social relations" (Spolsky1998: 20), there is gender difference between male and female. As seen in 4.4.2.1, the initial greeting does not make any gender distinctions. But there is surely gender distinction in the response. The female usually has the distinguishing prefix /N/ as in **Nnaa** while the male response does not have it as in **Naa**. It must however, be noted that besides this prefix, no other response marks gender as in **alaafiee, gom beni**, 'good health, we sleep well'

See the interaction between Hannah, Franziska and Mohammed on one hand, and a native Dagbana woman called M ma Azima. Hannah and Franziska are Germans who came to Tamale on a programme. They work with Mohammed who is a native speaker. They paid M ma Azima a visit resulting in the data below.

- |     |                       |   |
|-----|-----------------------|---|
| 99. | M ma Azima:           | <b>Dasiba</b> , 'Good morning'                |
|     | Franziska and Hannah: | <b>Nnaa</b> , (Female) 'Fine'                 |
|     | Mohammed:             | <b>Naa</b> , (Male) 'Fine'                    |
|     | MmaAzima:             | <b>Ni ti wari</b> , 'How is the cold'         |
|     | Franziska and Hannah: | <b>Nnaa</b> , (Female) 'Fine'                 |
|     | Mohammed:             | <b>Naa</b> , (Male) 'Fine'                    |
|     | M ma Azima:           | <b>Yi yiŋa be wula?</b> 'How is your family?' |

Franziska/Hannah: **Alaafiee**, 'Fine'  
Mohammed: **Alaafiee**, 'Fine'  
M ma Azima: **Yi gbihira?**, 'Do you sleep well?'  
Franziska, Hannah and Mohammed: **Gombeni**, 'We sleep well'  
Mohammed: **Gombeni**, 'We sleep well'

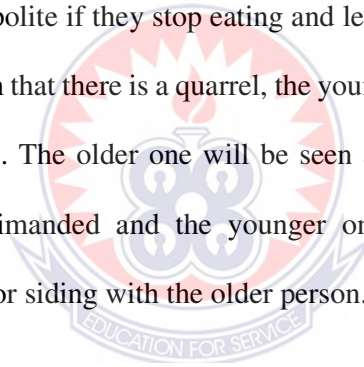
On another occasion, this greeting exchange occurred between them and Mr Munkaila, one of their guides. This was in the afternoon.

Mr Munkaila: **Antire** (Good afternoon)  
Franzis and Hannah: **Nnaa** (response)  
Mohammed: **Naa** (response)  
Mr Munkaila: **Ni ti wuntaŋa** (Good afternoon)  
Franziska and Hannah: **Nnaa** (response)  
Mohammed: **Naa** (response)  
MrMunkaila: **Ka tuma be wula?** (how is work?)  
Franziska/Hannah: **Bela bela** (small small)  
Mohammed: **Bela bela** (small small)  
Mr Munkaila: **Ma yi gbihira?** (I hope you-PL are fine)  
Franziska/Hannah: **Gom beni** (We are fine)  
Mohammed: **Gom beni** (we are fine)

In exhibition of power in Dagbaŋ, gender again plays a very important influence. Power relates closely with titles, and titles, to a very large extent, are the preserve of males. It is only in few exceptions that one or another skin is reserved for top Princesses of the **Gbewaa** skin. In a similar manner, succession to power is patrilineal. Therefore, males are again favoured and females disadvantaged. This was clear during collection of the data as most elders and chiefs who were interacted with were males.

### **6.3 Age and Dagbamba Politeness Strategies**

Age is the most important factor that influences Dagbamba politeness strategies. The younger is expected to mark politeness in all dealings. This shows that the younger person is supposed to be polite and to show respect to elderly persons. As already explained earlier, age difference in a matter of minutes matter a lot, and once a Dagbana gets to know this, the person is expected to show deference to the older one. For example, a younger person does not take a seat while an older one stand, and an elder one must leave part of the food for the younger one, satisfied or not. If both eat to the end, the older one is not seen as polite and does not deserve be respected by the younger one. Younger persons are impolite if they argue with older persons. And younger persons are deemed impolite if they stop eating and leave an older one still at table. In the unfortunate situation that there is a quarrel, the younger person will never be openly declared right in public. The older one will be seen as right but in private the older person is heavily reprimanded and the younger one who was right is talked to understand the reason for siding with the older person.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 7.0 Introduction

The major aim of this thesis was to offer a systematic investigation into the issue of politeness strategies in Dagbani, a Mabia (Gur) language of the South-Western Oti-Volta subgroup language family spoken. It is predominantly spoken in the Northern part of Ghana (West Africa) and constitutes one of the major languages studied in schools in Ghana. The thesis focused on politeness strategies in Dagbani, including the non-linguistic politeness and linguistic strategies that are employed for the marking of politeness. The thesis was structured in seven chapters. This current chapter focuses on a summary and conclusions of the work. In section 7.1 I provide a general summary of the thesis whereas section 7.2 outlines the relevance of this current research to scholarship. The potential areas for future research are discussed in section 7.3.

#### 7.1 Summary of the Findings of the Dissertation

The main focus of the thesis was to offer a socio-pragmatic account of the politeness strategies that are employed in Dagbani in everyday interactions. It is thus best described as a socio-linguistic investigation which is tailored towards the correlation between politeness and interpersonal interactions among speakers of Dagbani. Given that the distinction of linguistic and non-linguistic strategies of politeness is salient in understanding the notion of politeness, the work focused on these varied strategies. The major themes that were discussed in the work include the notion of politeness in the context of Dagbani speaker, the various strategies that are employed on the coding of politeness, including the linguistic and non-linguistic strategies. It is noted that the notion of politeness constitutes a core component of the communicative competence of

speakers of Dagbani. The discussion that follows highlights the major conclusions/findings that have been made from each of the core chapters.

Chapter 4 offered a critical examination on the linguistic strategies that are employed in the coding of politeness among Dagbani interlocutors. Very central to the discussion in this chapter was the notion of verbal politeness drawing data basically from the Dagbani speaking communities. There is particularly an account of honorifics which is cast within the theoretical framework of politeness and face of Brown and Levinson (1987). It was noted that honorifics constitute a key politeness strategy among the speakers of Dagbani and that their choice was a reflection of varied social variables including: age, familiarity occupation, and setting (level of the discourse setting).

The chapter also provided an exhaustive discussion on greetings as a politeness strategy. It showed that greetings constitute a salient politeness marker among the Dagbamba to the extent that it is not only people whom one knows that one is expected to greet, but anyone one meets or has contact with. It establishes rapport among people and could be a reflection of the time of the day, the occasion among several other social variables. The use of proverbs as a politeness strategy was also discussed and it was shown that like most other African societies, users of proverbs are honoured as people with good level of communicative competence. The chapter also considered issues of approbation. Finally, it discussed hedges as another strategy that is used by the Dagbamba to show politeness. It is noted that most of these strategies have been reported in the literature of African cultures as modes of expressing politeness. This chapter is important, given that it serves as one of the first major contributions to the investigations of politeness strategies in Dagbani. It also employs a theoretical framework that is quite known in the domain of politeness studies.

In chapter 5, the non-linguistic politeness strategies that are available in Dagbani are elaborately examined. Some of the major conclusions drawn in the chapter included: (i) there are available non-linguistic strategies that are employed by the Dagbani speakers to code politeness (ii) knowledge of verbal taboos is considered as an indicator of politeness among the speakers of Dagbani (iii) there are varied taboos avoidance techniques that are available in Dagbani and (iv) the knowledge of these non-linguistic strategies is crucial in minimizing cultural mistakes.

This chapter also proved that non-linguistic expressions such as sitting arrangements, the ban on publicly pointing to an elderly person that s/he is wrong, putting a hand on an old person's head, lifting up an adult, bluffing, grumbling or talking while an older person is addressing you, failing to respond to a call by an elderly person, sweeping while an elder is nearby /passing by, failure to invite a visitor to table, dressing code and knowledge of verbal taboos are some of the non-linguistic ways in which politeness is expressed in Dagbani. It further showed that knowledge of this is so crucial for societal harmony and that violating any of these can result in various degrees of punishments ranging from warning, to severe punishments in the form of presenting some items or cash. Given that Dagban is a highly spiritual society, some violations can also result in spiritual punishments especially regarding the interaction between people of different societal ranks. For instance, failing to take one's right seat at the Palace or failing to put on the right code or wearing it wrongly.

This chapter is an important scientific contribution to the study of Dagbani, because it does not only provide a detailed study of the non-linguistic strategies of coding politeness, but remains one of the major scientific contributions to the study of Dagbani non-linguistic politeness strategies. This chapter does not only explore a key



communicative component of Dagbani socio-linguistics, but also serves as the first of its kind and ultimately opens up the way for further research into this domain. This is particularly important, given that most linguistic works on Dagbani have focused on the core aspects of the language to the neglect of the other areas in the domain of applied linguistics.

Chapter six is devoted to a discussion on influence of power, gender and age in Dagbamba politeness strategies. The concept of power was discussed within the framework of Brown and Levinson (1987:74) concept of power, gender and age. It was opined that gender plays a key role in the manifestation of politeness in Dagbani. Dagbani is a male dominated society and females are for that matter, are expected to show men some level of respect by being polite. Also discussed was the fact that age is vital since adults expect their children to be polite towards them in everyday life. However, in instances that a younger one is assigned some societal status (eg becomes a chief), there is a shift in the paradigm and the elders are expected to show respect and always be polite towards such a young person.

## **7.2 Summary of the Contributions/ Significance of the Dissertation**

There are several contributions of this thesis to the study and documentation of aspects of applied linguistics of Dagbani that are outlined below. Specifically for the study of Dagbani, some of the contributions of this thesis include: a major contribution to the study of sociolinguistics in Dagbani, a crucial attempt to document the values of the language in the face of threatening facts of modernity, and also a key study into an aspect of language that constitutes a core component of communicative competence and for that matter, forms a salient aspect of the daily interaction of the Dagbamba of northern Ghana. This thesis is important because it gives a systematic analysis of an

aspect of Dagbani applied linguistics that has not received much attention, and of course, adds to our knowledge of this domain of Dagbani. The discussion that follows briefly outlines the significance of the thesis.

As it stands, majority of the studies in Dagbani have focused on core linguistics domains without anything significant on the applied linguistics and particularly sociolinguistic studies. This current study, therefore, constitutes a significant contribution to the study of the applied linguistics aspects of the language. Though there are several scholarly works on the attempt to document/study Dagbani, they are nevertheless focused on the core grammatical aspects of the language to the neglect of the applied linguistics aspects. Accordingly, this work remains one key attempt to document the applied linguistics of the language. This work is therefore crucial in contributing to the knowledge of sociolinguistics of Dagbani by presenting new empirical findings.

In addition, one of the key issues in linguistic investigation is the need for documentation which is meant to fight language death. Ideally, it should be holistic in the sense that it must cover the various parts of the language. Given the influx of Western cultures, (eg religious beliefs and education) which have tendencies of changing the dynamics of the language, it is important to document the key aspects of the language beyond core domains. This work is thus important in the realm of documentation especially at a time when a lot of cultural values are being threatened by foreign cultures.

Finally, also crucial in this dissertation is the theoretical contribution and probing that may be triggered by the Dagbani data. Although the work of Brown and Levinson has often proved crucial in the study of politeness, it appears that the theory ignored the fact

that cultural variety may also affect the notion of face. It thus therefore observed that some facts of the Dagbani politeness strategies could not be easily accounted for within the theoretical tenets of Brown and Levinson's framework. Such examples include the use of proverbs, songs, sitting arrangement at the palace, and body posture as politeness strategies.

### **7.3 Potential areas for Future Research**

The major focus of this thesis was to offer a systematic discussion on politeness strategies in Dagbani, cast within a socio-pragmatic approach. The work of Brown and Levinson (1987) was particularly very salient in the discussion of the pragmatic notion of politeness in discourse although it was admitted that there are aspects of politeness in Dagbani such as pitch as a determinant of politeness that might not be handled within the work of Brown and Levinson (1987).

Notwithstanding the efforts to offer this fine-grained account, there are of course, some puzzles that could not be readily addressed and for that matter, remain fertile areas for further studies beyond this current thesis. This subsection outlines these open issues that I think will require studies in future.

One of the open issues that was noted as a potential area for future exploration concerns the study of politeness and women's language in Dagbani. Although it was shown that gender plays a key role in the marking of politeness and that women are particularly expected to mark deference before men, because of the cultural prescriptions (Dagban being a chauvinistic society), the researcher was not able to pin down to specificity of the language of women in the context of politeness. That is to say that, the register of women remains unexamined and further studies will be required to show this important aspect of language uniqueness of men and women in the context of politeness.

In addition, although it was noted that Dagbani is a male dominated society for which respect is mostly gender-relational (that is from females to males), the work did not explore the dynamism of this trend in the face of formal education that has got several women into positions of societal relevance. Thus, it might be interesting to investigate how formal education has affected the notion of politeness in a society that is mainly male dominated given that several men now have to change roles in the face of educational achievements of women. It might even be necessary to further investigate this phenomenon not only in Dagbani but in the genetically related languages.

In addition, it is also admitted that the current work solely focused on varied determinants of politeness without a consideration of the role religion is likely to play on the possible differences in politeness strategies. For instance, the three major religions practised in Ghana may assign different ideology-driven notions of politeness and especially within the light of the male/female genders. Although to the best of the researcher's knowledge, religion and politeness as a field of study have not attracted the attention of socio-linguists within Ghana for some time now, this could be a fertile research area in future in Dagbani sociolinguistics. Such a piece of research will especially have the potential of contributing to the understanding of religion and politeness which remains largely investigated by scholars.

Finally, it was the observation that one noticeable distinction between male and female speech was in the response to greetings where women will invariably prefix the alveolar nasal /n/ to **naa**. The relevance of the alveolar nasal may also require further investigation to understand what role it plays in the distinction between female and male language in the Dagbani.

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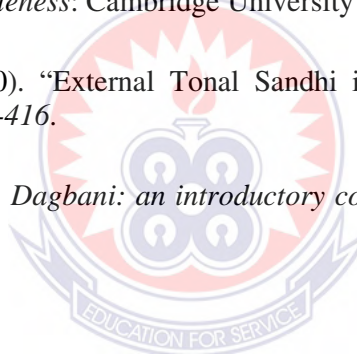


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## APPENDIX A

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Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	Jilimanyela a yi “respect” (tijilima) Dagbanli kaya nitayada “tradition”	Respect is if you honour somebody in the Dagbamba tradition.
Interviewer	Wahab di saha a gbanidoliti	Wahab you can also follow us
Respondent	Hali sana n-yinye a ka a chaŋ n-ti be luy’ sheli polo “but” ka lee “respect” be “tradition” ma di saha a zaŋba mi n-lee a mabihimaa.	Even if you are a stranger living somewhere but respect their tradition you have become part of them like that.
Interviewer	That is it.	That is it
Respondent	Di gbanyelabinsheli din kpaŋsiri...	It also strengthens...
Interrupter	Dee... suhudoo	Err... peace...
Respondent	Suhudoo... mmhmm...	Peace... mmhmm...
Interviewer	Tɔ, M ba (...) a bɔrimini a yelinijilimadinaeɛh... Puhigu din nyaɔɔ, binsheli din lahiwuhiriniratorijilimanyela a yitiri kaya nitayadajilima m-balamaa?	Ok, my father (...) you want to say that for respect... Apart from greeting, one thing that also shows that you respect is to respect tradition is that right?

Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	Jilima... eehee	Respect... err...
Interviewer	Mmm... tɔ...	Mmm... ok...
Respondent	Tɔ... a yichan̄ n-ti be sheli polo, benidirishelika a kpaŋ a maŋa m-gbabɔhim di dibu.	Ok... when you go to stay at a certain place, whatever they are eating you should also try to eat it.
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	Di saha a zaŋba mi n-leei a mabihimaa	That shows that you have become part of them.
Interrupter	A mabihimaa	Part of them
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	Amaa a yichan̄ti be sheli polo kagan̄diba	But if you go somewhere and begin to disrespect them
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	M-bi bɔrini a timdibɛ “tradition” nibɛ bimbo nimani, bɛ kaya nitayadani, di saha a siŋdiba mi maa. Di sahabiehigukutooiniŋnyayisim n-ti a. Ni binsheli din lahipahijilima polo, di tunidaadambenikamaliyelimaŋli.	Not ready to mingle in their affairs, in their tradition, it means you are not regarding them as anything. At that moment you will not enjoy your stay there. One other thing that is part of respect is that one should be truthful.

Person	Dagbani	English
Interviewer	Yɛlimanli...	Truth...
Respondent	"Because" a yiɲmariziri di bi yɛnsabi pa a gbɛyuzuyuni'zi' ɲmari n-nyɛ a	Because if you are a liar it will not be written on your fore head that you are a liar.
Interviewer	Mmh	Mmh
Respondent	But niri yitibaŋkamaniyaakaza o yiyɛliyeltɔya di bi paanato di saha a jilimaboomimaa.	So when people get to know that whenever so so and so say something it is not true the fellow has lost his respect like that.
interviewer	Aba... Aba...	Aba... Aba...
Respondent	A nyaya boo? Jilima mi bi yirishelipahi la wula? Daadam yi mi vi. Tɔ, o yɛn malila jilima. "Because" ɲun ka vi ɲuna n-ɲiɲdi binsheli din yɛn niɲ ka niriba galimi o. Vi maa ni kani maa, di saha maa ɲun baɣa kani. Dun bi lihiri "whether" n ni niɲdi binsheli ɲɔ bɛ ni galimi ma bee bɛ ku galim ma	You see that? Respect is nothing but what? Someone having shame. He/she will have respect. Because it is only a person without shame that will do something for people to blame him/her. Because he/she has no shame, he/she does not care. He/she does not care whether what he/she is doing if shameful or not.

Person	Dagbani	English
Interviewer	Mmh... Aba...	Mmh... True...
Respondent	Amaa vi maayenchemi, kayeltɔy' sheŋabenika o kutooiniŋ li. Hali di yinyelazamaatunika o yiyenyeliyeltɔya, ladabisi be la di puuni. N ŋma la ziri?	But the shame will prevent you from doing certain things. Even if it is in a gathering that you are going to speak you will be conscious. Is it a lie?
Interviewer	Aayi	No
Respondent	Tɔ, din nimamaagbakpaŋsiri la daadamjilima	So, all these strengthens one's respect
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	Mmhmm... Hali... halitiniyeriŋɔkamanidaadamchandini, di gbapahijilimamaani. Kamani, tiyilihikamanibilichina, di bi sayitinibilichinachanakagahiri o boŋiriayiŋɔzaa.	Mmhmm... Even... even as we speak, in one's walking, there is respect. Like we looked at a person with integrity, it is not good for a person with integrity to walk swinging all his or her arms.
Interviewer	Lala	I see
Respondent	Di tu mi ni a chanakagbubi a maŋa	You should hold yourself when walking
Interviewer	N-gbubi a maŋa. Aba...	Hold yourself. True...



Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	“So” a yilihiti mini tinzunnima, a yennya la “difference”	So when you observe us and other tribes you will see difference.
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	Ban yenchanimikamaachira, amaa, tinima bi chanilala.	They walk like they are matching, but we do not walk like that.
Interviewer	Aba...	True...
Respondent	Soli chandigbamalila di yeltɔya. Ni tilahimalibinshelibiehiguni, kamaninɔkurugu mini biayichana, di malilabeniyenchanishem. “Either” biamaa be niɔkurugumaagobigaka bi sayisi o, kakpemɔ be toonika o doli.	Walking also has its language. We also have something in life, like an old person is walking with a child; it has a way they should walk. Either the child will be at the old person’s left handside not walking by his side or the elder person will be in front while the child follows.
Interviewer	Mmhmm...	Mmhmm...
Respondent	Amaa “a situation” ka a tinyakabia be nudirigutoonika o mini kpem tom sayisitabato, jilimakani m-bala.	But a situation where you see a child in front of an elder person and they walk side by side of the other, it

Person	Dagbani	English
		means that there is no respect.
Interviewer	Aba...	True...
Respondent	Aminijunnitooisayisitabanye la, a mini gunsayi n-nitoidolitaba. Amaajilimani be luy' sheli polo, di nye la kamaniwaliginsimbelayisunsuuni, di tuni so m-be toonika so dola.	You can walk side by side with your co-equal. But where there is respect, there should be some space. Some one should be in front.
Interviewer	Aba...	True
Respondent	Mmhmm... "So" di zaa be la tibiehiguni.	Mmhmm... so all of them are in our life.
Interviewer	"Ok... Ok..."	"Ok... Ok..."
Respondent	Mmhmm...	Mmhmm...
Interviewer	M-bo, Naawuninisabilaara. M baAmiru.  M payiya pam.	Well done, God bless you.  My father Amiru. Thank you very much.

AUD-20190506-WA0053 -----04:29

Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	Hali a yiyenbaɲnibilichini n-nyɛ a	To know that you are a person of integrity
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	A puhiguni	In your greeting
Interviewer	Mmm... Tɔ...	Mmm... Ok...
Respondent	A mini ɲunsayipuhigu be la di ko. Kaɲungari a ka di puhigugba be di ko. Hali a yinyɛbia, a puhigunikabeyenbaɲ, aminbianɔmaadahinshelinira n- sayennyɛ o.	The way you greet your colleague is different. The same thing applies to someone older than you. If you are a child, through your greetings they can tell if you will become a great person in future.
Interviewer	Mmhmm...	Mmhmm...
Respondent	A gbailalabebo?	Do you understand that?
Interviewer	“Yes”	Yes
Respondent	A mi yinyɛbiaka a puhiguwaligikachetiDagbanli, be pun yelinibiaɲɔmaa, o tikutooiniɲdahinshelinira. Kamanipuhigu, dina n-kuziribiehiguni a yinɲbabiehigu, bewumsi a gbaai.	If you are a child and your greetings happen to vary from the Dagbamba norm, they will conclude that you cannot become a great person in the future. Greetings encompass your

Person	Dagbani	English
		life and the life from your home, whether you have been well trained.
Interviewer	Mmm..	Mmm...
Respondent	A yinyɛbia a puhiguni, benitooibaŋnibewumsi a gbaai, a mi yilahinyeniŋkurugu, a puhigunigbabenitooibaŋnibewumsi a gbaai.	If you are a child through your greeting, they can tell if you are well trained and if you are an elder person through your greeting they can tell if you were well trained.
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	Puhiguniziriyeltɔya... di ziriyeltɔy' karana pam	The things greetings carry... it involves a lot.
Interviewer	Tɔ... Hmm... ka di nyaɲapuhigu .... Puhigumaa, di lahitooiwuhiribinshɛlipahi bee?	Ok... Hmm... apart from these does greeting... Greetings does it mean other things?
Respondent	Iin.Puhiguniziamaa di tirijilima pam.	Yes. Greeting brings so much respect.
Interviewer	Mmm... Aba...	Mmm... True...
Respondent	Ka a kulipuhinira, kabeyɛli a, oh aminbiaŋɔmaatirijilima bee Afaŋɔmaa o yikulipuhi a, o kuliyɛnpuhi a mi n-	You can just greet someone and they will tell you that oh this child respects a lot or for

Person	Dagbani	English
	damditiŋa. Bewumsi o pam... bewumsi o pam. Din saha a yiŋa, di nitooitinyinmaŋmaŋajilimaka naan lahitooiti a yiŋnimajilin' shelidamabeniwumsi a kati a.	this guy when he is to greet you he will greet you kneeling to the ground. He has been trained very well. It can bring respect to yourself and your family for bringing you up well.
Interviewer	Kati aba...	And it gives...
Respondent	Dinzuyu, puhiguniziriyeltɔy' shelina m-bala.	So that is what greetings bring to us.
Interviewer	Kadimisuyulo, puhigu din nyaanabiehi' bonimakaniranitoolahi be ka di wuhini, zayilanizianɔ, o malijilimabiehigu pam. Biehigu... biehigu din nima n-lee lahiwuhi?	Please, apart from greeting what other things can one do and you will be classified as been respectful. Life... which other ways of life shows?
Respondent	Jilimaŋun' yaa...	For respect...
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	Nyindeeyinyɛdaadammanli	If only you are a good person
Interviewer	Tɔ...	Ok...
Respondent	Jilima n-kuliyen kana, nyindeeyikaniribaninziɛŋ	There will always be respect if you do not disrespect others.
Interviewer	Ninziɛŋ...	Disrespect...

Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	Iin	Yes
Interviewer	Tɔ...	Ok...
Respondent	Anitooipiriti a maɲa n-niɲdiniriba bee n-duhiri a maɲa. A yi kana tinyanira, a gari ohoo, o gari ahoo, nayila a gbaai la a maɲa.  A nyayabebo?	You can be boastful to people or proud of yourself.  When you meet someone whether he is older than you or not you have to humble yourself. Do you see that?
Interviewer	Tɔ... Mmhmm...	Ok... Mmhmm...
Respondent	N niɲkamani a ti o...a ti o la jilima. Di saha a yigbaai a maɲa.  Ma a mi gbaai maɲa maa?	To do like you are giving... you are giving him or her respect. So if you humble yourself. You do know what humble yourself means?
Interviewer	Mmm... M mi gbaai maɲa.	Mmm... I understand humble yourself.
Respondent	A dii bi yenkpuyu a maɲa, m-piri a maɲa n-ti...	You do not need to be proud, full of yourself about...
Interviewer	A yensiyisi la a maɲa.	You humble yourself.
Respondent	Mmhmm... n siyisi a maɲa.  Benitooitishinikamani, biaɲɔmaa o tirijilima pam.	Mmhmm... you humble yourself. They will think that oh this child is very respectful.
Interviewer	Mmhmm...	Mmhmm...

Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	A yiyennyayeltɔya... a yiyentɔyisinirayeltɔya di yiɣisi a suhu, a kulisoŋdila a zinlitiŋa. A garinira bee o gari a.	To understand things... to speak to somebody you should not be angry, you speak with a low tone. Whether you are old than the person or not.
Interviewer	O yigari a	If the person is older than you.
Respondent	Kasoŋ a zinlitiŋa, di sahabenitooyɛlini , amin , lala n zoŋɔmaa o tirijilima pam.	Lower your tone, so that they can say that this guy is very respectful.
Interviewer	Mmm....	Mmm...
Respondent	Ka bi mihiri a ninini...	And do not frown your face...
Interviewer	Ninini	Face
Respondent	Ninini. A bi yenmihi a nini n-niŋniriba.	Face. You should not frown your face to people.
Interviewer	“Ok...”	“Ok...”
Respondent	Jilimagbanipahiri.... N nilahi mi jilimanitirisheli m-bala.	That is what respect also brings... that is another thing I know respect gives.
Interviewer	Mmm... Aba... Aba... Din ŋuna m payiya, m payiya. Naawuni ni sabilaara. Naawuni ni deeisuhigu	Mmm... True... true... Thank you, thank you. God bless you. God bless you.

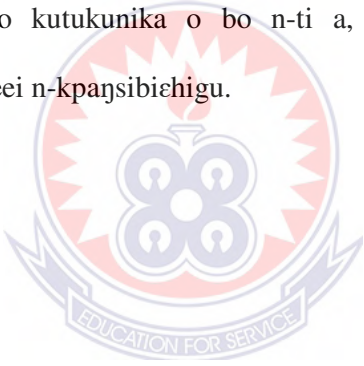
Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	Hali nirayititsuuna, di dii palaarizichika a zaŋdinantitiri di lana.	Even a gift in an outdooring, it is not just big money you bring for the fellow.
Interviewer	Mmm... Aba...	Mmm... True...
Respondent	Kaarizichi, nyindeeyikulinyakaniraka a suhupielliyayika a siyisiri a maŋanidaadamnima. Beyenyelimiooi... Zayilaŋomaatirijilima pam. Hali so nitooikperitakakperigumaaviela, kabeyenyeli o mi, wa! Zayilaŋomaa o tirijilima pam o yela ne nini pam. A gbailalabebo?	Not worth, if you see someone happy and humble to humanity. They will say oh... this person is very respectful. Someone can be a good joker and they will say about him or her that the person is respectful. Do you understand that?
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	Ka di nyɛ la o kperiguni.	It will just be from his jokes.
Interviewer	Kperiguni...	Through jokes...
Respondent	Kperiguni... Kajilimamaa, o kuliyenkperitimikashintanika di ni. Jilimagba... di gbatoolahipahi.	Through jokes... Is it not the respect, he/she will just be playing without evil in it. For respect... it is also part.
Interviewer	Mmm... tɔ...	Mmm... ok...




<b>Person</b>	<b>Dagbani</b>	<b>English</b>
Respondent	Mani ni mi li shem m-bala.	That is how I understand it.
Interviewer	Tɔ... m payiya, m payiya pam.	Ok... thank you, thank you very much.
Respondent	Tɔ, amaabia n-nye man' gba...	Ok... but I am also a child...
Interviewer	Aba...	True...
Respondent	N ninabohimshelitariga m-bala. Jilima di yeltɔyagalisiya.	That is my level of understanding so far. Respect is a broad topic.
Interviewer	Galisiya... Tɔ...	Broad... Ok...
Respondent	N ni mi shem tatariga ka n tɔyisi a maa.	I have told you my level of understanding.
Interviewer	Din nuna, m payiya pam. Naawuninisabilaara.	I thank you very much. God bless you.


AUD-20190506-WA0054 -----04:27

Person	Dagbani	English
Interviewer	Dasiba Masa	Good morning master
Respondent	Naa...	Good morning...
Interviewer	Dimisuyulo Masa n di b̄rimini a s̄ɔŋ ma niyelt̄ɔy' sheli polo. TiDagbamba, tinyakapuhiguniŋtalahi pam biehgupuuni. Kabo n-lee chekatinimaDagbambatinyapuhiguka di niŋtalahi?	Please master I want you to help me with something. We Dagbamba value greeting so much. Why do we regard greeting that much?
Respondent	Puhiguniŋtalahidomiwula? Puhigu n-tahirisuhudoonazilielipuuni. Tuuli, a yipuhikasayibu bi sayi, suhudoogbakubeni. Dinzupuhigu mini sayibu n-dolitaba. Din' mi n-kuli tahiri suhudoo na zilieli puuni. Domini, din che ka n yeŋi lala bi yi la sheli, tinima Dagbamba zimi ni bieyu yi neei asibaashi	Greeting is important because of what? Greeting brings peace in the society. In the first place, if you greet without response, there will be no peace. So greeting and response move hand in hand. And that is what brings peace in the society. What made me to say that is we Dagbamba

Person	Dagbani	English
		holds that every morning
Interviewer	Tɔ...	Ok...
Respondent	<p>Di simdini a puhi a laambadasiba. Kamani a ba, di simdini a puhi o dasiba bee a ma pɔika naanyiniɲyɛllikam din doli di nyaana.</p> <p>A yiyenkpahimnipuhigutahirisuhudoona, di yi lee ka a puhi a badasiba n-sapuhi o dasiba n-daalahipuhi o dasiba. A ninyakabiɛl' sheli din be o kutukunika o bo n-ti a, ni a gbazaadei n-kpaɲsibieɲigu.</p> 	<p>You are supposed to greet your parents good morning. Like your father or mother, you are supposed to greet them good morning first before you do anything else.</p> <p>To observe that greeting brings peace, if you happen to greet your father good morning, the following day good morning and continue to greet him each day good morning. You will see that whatever he has from his treasure he will give it to you to also help you in life.</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
Interviewer	Lala.	I see.
Respondent	<p>Tɔ, dinzuyuchemikatinima ban zanpuhiguzalinidina n-kulichekasuhudookaninabiehigupuuni.</p> <p>Di yilahi lee ka a mini niramalitaashinhaḅkali.</p> <p>Taashinihaḅkalimaanyelakamandezabilibiela be yisunsuuni.</p> <p>Di yi pa nipuhigumaa n-kana tuulimaligukutooimaliyisunsuuni.</p> <p>N ni mi shembielazaḅkpapuhigu polo m-bala.</p>	<p>This makes us to believe that greeting is what brings peace. If it happens that there is a misunderstanding – a problem between you two, if it is not greeting that comes first the problem cannot be solved. That is the little I know about greeting.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Tɔ, m paɣiya, m paɣiya.</p> <p>Kadimisuyulopuhigu din nyaḅḅa, biehi' bonimakaninsalinitooilahi be, ka di wuhini o malijilima o biehgupuuni?</p> <p>Puhigu din nyaḅḅa, tiDagbambasanibiehi' bonimakaninsali lee yen be ka di wuhirinidaadamḅo o malijilima o biehiguni.</p>	<p>Ok, thank you, thank you. But please, apart from greeting what other ways of life can one live and it will be accorded to him or her as respectful?</p> <p><b>REPEATED</b></p>
Respondent	<p>Poikabetinyaninsalijilimaka di yi polo, suyuloka a mali. A yikasuyulo a kutooimalijilima.</p> <p>Din tahlilika n yeḅilala m-bḅḅo;</p>	<p>Before people say that someone is respectful, you must have patience. If you are not</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
	<p>Di yileei... Hali tini di yeripuhigu la, ka a yipuhiniraka o bi sayi, a yikasuyulo, a kulahipuhi o. A nikulahipuhi o maa, di yinye la a ba bee a ma jilimaŋkai m-bala. Di saha a kajilima m-bala. Tɔdinzuɣujilimakulidumi n-tamla a yimalisuyulo, tinitooiboli a jilimalana.</p> 	<p>patient, you can not have respect. The reason why I say this is that even if it happened that like we talked about the greeting, and you happened to greet some one without response if you are not patient you will not greet that person again. If you will not greet that person again and it happens to be your father or mother that will be disrespect. Hence you are not respectful. So respect is built on you having patience, then we can call you a respectful person.</p>
Interviewer	Mmhmm...	Mmhmm...

Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	<p>Domi di nitooicheka a nyaŋungari a, kabaŋni o gari a. Din tooilahicheka a nya a nigari so kabaŋni a gari o, di lanagba mi yimalisuyulo, o nibaŋni a gari o.</p> <p>Amaasuyulokalinsinitooicheka a nyaŋungari a kakpehiri o nini. Bee ka o gbanyaŋungari o ka bi sayitini o gari o. Di zuyusuyulogba n-kulizirijilima. Suyulo n-kulinyejilimadaantalikpieŋ.</p> 	<p>Because it will help you know who is older than you when you meet people. It will also help you to know those you are older than and they will also know that you are older than them. But lack of patience can also make you not identify who is older than you and make you to play with them. Or you will also meet someone you are older than and the person will not also accept that you are older than him/her. So respect depends on patience. Patience is respect's strong pillar.</p>
Interviewer	To....	OK...

<b>Person</b>	<b>Dagbani</b>	<b>English</b>
Respondent	Ti Dagbanli puuni, n ni mi shem biela m-bala	This is the little I know in Dagbani.
Interviewer	To, m payiya pam, m payiya pam, m payiya pam m be Osimaanu. Naawuninisabilaara.	Ok, thank you very much, thank you very much, thank you very much brother Osman. God richly bless you.
Respondent	Ami, Ami.	Amen, Amen.

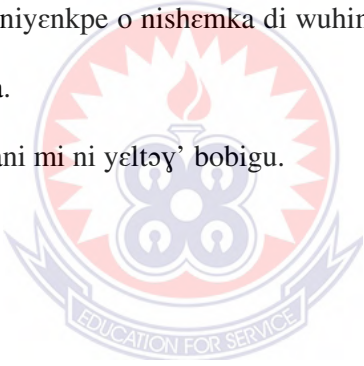


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Person	Dagbani	English
Respondent	A mini nirayizabibuŋkam, ka o tikulipuhi a, toshintanimaakpimimaa.	No matter a fight between you and someone whenever the person greets you the fight goes off.
Interviewer	Aba...	True...
Respondent	DinzuyukaDagbambakpaŋsilalayayilimaa. Di ziri la suhudoo n-tiriDagbambaŋuna.	That is why Dagbamba emphasize on it. It brings peace among Dagbamba.
Interviewer	“Ok” Di sahaŋilimapiligu n-nyɛpuhiguŋɔ. Kapuŋigumaa mi nyaŋa, biɛhi’ dinikaninsalinilahi be ka di wuhirini di lanatirijilima/ o tirijilimabiɛhigunitinimaDagbambasani?	Ok, so it means the beginning of respect is greeting. Apart from greeting which other way of life will one live to show that you are respectful or




Person	Dagbani	English
		he/she is respectful among Dagbamba?
Respondent	Di yiri la jilimayay' sheɲabeni, di nyɛla zaɣ' bobigu. Di yiri la zinli maa sani	It comes from certain kinds of respect. Some are from the tone
Interviewer	Zinli...	Tone...
Respondent	Mmm... Kamani a yiyentɔyisikamaniɲungari a yɛltɔya, di malila a niyenyeli o shem. A gbaai li?	Mmm... like you are going to speak to someone older than you, it has a way you will present it. Do you understand?
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	Ka di wuhiri ni o tiri jilima. Di malila lala yɛltɔya nima maa. N-naan yi lahi mali, kamani a yi kana ɲun gari a sani, a zinibu bee a damdibu, di gba be la di puuni, ka di yen wuhi ti a ni a tiri niriba jilima.	To show that he/she is respectful. It has those ways of talk. There is also times when you come to someone

Person	Dagbani	English
		older than you, your sitting or squatting is part of what shows that you are respectful.
Interviewer	Jilima.... “Ok”	Respect... Ok
Respondent	<p>Bee a yiyenkpejungari a sanika o be duuka a yenkpe o sani, di gbalahimalila a niyenkpe li shem/ a niyenkpe o nishemka di wuhini a tiri o/ a tirijilima.</p> <p>Din’ chani mi ni yeltɔy’ bobigu.</p> 	If you are going in to meet someone older than you in a room, it also has a way you will do it to mean that you are respectful/to the person. That goes with a lot of implications.
Interviewer	<p>Bobigu? Aba...</p> <p>Tɔ, n tiehiyajilimapiligu n-nyɛpuhiguninyinbia a niyentooi...</p> <p>Daadamzinli n-lahiwuhinidilanamalijilima/ tirijilima. Tɔ, din nuna m-payiya.</p>	<p>A lot? True...</p> <p>Ok, I think respect starts with greeting as a child...</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		The tone of a man shows whether the person is respectful/to others. Ok then, thank you.
	Tɔ, aninwula M baDiyelilana	Ok, good evening my father Diyeli chief
Respondent D	Naa. Yiŋa be wula?	Good evening How is home?
Interviewer	Naa	I am fine
Respondent	Ka tuma be wula?	How is work?
Interviewer	Naa... Naa... Tɔ, dimi suɣulo, m bɔrimi ni a pahi ma haŋkali zaŋ chaŋ tiyeltɔy' sheŋa polo Dagbanlini. Tuulimaanyela, tiDagbambatikpuyilapuhiguzuyusaaka di wuhinipuhigu, yeltɔy' kpeeni n-nye li. AmiitinimaDagbambasani, bo n-lee kulichekapuhigunyeyeltɔy' kpeenizaŋtiti?	Fine... fine... Ok, please I want you to help me concerning certain things in Dagbani. The first thing is; does Dagbamba

Person	Dagbani	English
		value greeting as an important concept. Why among us Dagbamba do we value greeting so much?
Respondent D	<p>Tɔ, din chekaDagbanli, kapuhigunyeyeltɔy' kpeeni, hali a nitooipuhiridaadam, a Dagbanakpeeka bi tiri o binsheli, a puhigumaazuyu di nitooiti a pini o sani. Dinzuyu di nyelajilin' titalitiDagbanlini.</p> <p>Tɔ, a nitooilahipuhiri so, ka a nipuhiri o maa di wuhirimini a mini o be shemmaa, dinitooicheka a nipuhiri o maakayelimuyisirilitigbaai so zaŋchanlalaniramaa polo kabeyelini oh. Ni beyi bi nyazayila di kugbaainidama o mini o m-be. Duna n-tooipuhiri o dasibanianinwula.</p>	<p>Ok, the reason why greeting is important among Dagbamba is that you can even just greet someone, your colleague Dagbana without given the person anything and because of your greeting you can get a gift from that person. Ok, you can be greeting someone and</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>your greeting can mean that when someone has a problem with that person they will have to see you in order to meet that person you are close to. He is the one who have been checking on him morning and evening.</p>
Interviewer	Aba...	True...
Respondent	<p>Tɔ, di zuɣu, di yi di nyelashintani, to o yichan...beyiwuhi a ka a chan n-tipaai o, nun' nigaritooonimaashintanima. Oyichanshintanimaani di yen be shemmaa di loyunikpi</p>	<p>So if it was a fight, when he goes... when they show you and you go and meet him he will lead you to resolve the problem. if he go</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		with you the misunderstanding will be minimal.
Interviewer	Ni kpi... Aba...	Minimal... True...
Respondent D	DinzuyupuhigunyelabintitaliDagbanlibiehigupuu ni.	So greeting is very important among Dagbamba people.
Interviewer	Mmm... M payiya. Tɔ, M baDiyelilanakapuhigumaa din nyaɔɔ, bon-lee yenwuhiniDagbana o tirijilimapuhigu din nyaɔɔ?	Mmm... I thank you. Ok, my father Diyeli chief apart from the greeting what again can show that a Dagbamba person is respectful?
Respondent D	Puhigumaanyaɔɔ, din yenwuhiniDagbanatirijilima, daadamyikaninaka a kulizi a yiɔɔ, ka o kanina, o nɔbupuuni...	Apart from greeting the thing that can also

Person	Dagbani	English
		show that a Dagbamba person respects is sometimes through one's walk. If you are sitting in your house and someone happens to walk in, through his walks...
Interviewer	Tɔ...	True...
Respondent	O yipirinamda n-kulichanina o nɔbupuuni, oyimalihaŋkali a yenbaŋmi.	If the fellow is wearing sandals, through his walking you can tell if he/she is sensible.
Interviewer	Aba...	True...
Respondent	O chandi maa n-yen wuhi	His/her walking will tell


Person	Dagbani	English
Interviewer	Hmm... Ninsalichandi	Hmm... someone's walking
Respondent	<p>Mmm... ninsalichandi, di yenwuhiri mi ni a malijilima a biehgupuni.</p> <p>Kaninsalichandika di wuhini a kajilima a biehgupuni.</p> <p>Dina kashebayelini o bi nyewumsibuka di nye la o nobuzuyu.</p> <p>A benya, a yipirinamdakanina n-tipaari ban gari a, a namda yi di kumda di lahichekabewumnamdamaakumsi.</p> <p>Di chekabebangbani a pirinamda.</p> <p>Balee a yitimiribanakabenyezay' kura. Din nuna di kutumigbani a dii pirigi a namdamaakapaaiba.</p>	<p>Mmm... one's walk shows whether you are respectful or not. Some will even say he/she did not get good training because of his walk. If you were walking towards people and your sandals is making noise you do not need to let the noise continue. Do not let them even know that you are wearing sandals.</p>





Person	Dagbani	English
		Especially when you get closer to them and they are adults. You need to even remove the sandals before you get to their place.
Interviewer	Ooo...	Ooo...
Respondent	<p>Tɔ, a yipaaibana, a yipuhibanaai, ban maŋmaŋayɛnbɔhi a mi; zɔritɪŋkanika a yina? Ka a yɛli. Yilidinika a yina? Ka a yɛli. A biehgumaawuhimini a malijilima bee a tirijilima. Anyɛwumsibudina n-chekabɛkari a lalasariyaŋɔmaa.</p>	<p>Ok, when you get to them after greeting they will ask you; my friend where are you coming from? Then you answer. Which house? And you answer. Your life shows that you respect a lot or you have respect. You had good training that is</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		why you were asked those questions.
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	<p>Tɔ, dinzuyupuhigunyaara, tininiɔdishemkajilimabeninyela; halibiyikanina n-tituhiriniɔkurugu soli ɔngari o, kabiamanyawumsibu o yendaɔmidamditɔna o nidabitɔnamaakaɔngari o maachaɔna n-tipaai o. Pa biamaa n-yenpuhiɔngari o maa, ɔngari o maa n-yenpuhibiamaadomi o nipaai o naka o dabitɔnamaa. Di wuhiyanibiamaa bee lalaSalimaa, o tirijilima o biɔhigupuuni. Tɔdinzuyu o yipaanaɔna n-yenpuhi o. Oyipuhio naai o yenbɔhimi, eeh, M bapiratiɔkanika a yina bee m mabiatɔkanika a yina. Tɔnimaani, a ninyaka o wuhi o tiɔyaakaza. O niwuhinitɔnyaakazamaa, lalaniramaa o yimalimilinsitɔnamaani o yeri o mi, to a yikulinyinkpaɔ a maɔna m-puhizayila. Bee a bi mi o? Ka o yelini o mi o. O yikuna o shirinipuhi o di lanamaapuhigu.</p> <p>Di palapinika o zaɔti o. Ka di nakulikpaɔsiriɔnɔnɔlalaɔn di damditɔna' la o jilima. Kalalazuyutooichekabetirinirapini. N</p>	<p>Ok, so after greeting what we also do to maintain respect is when even if a child is coming to meet an elderly person, especially when the child is well trained he/she will squat before the old person to get to him. When he gets to the child squatting he will greet him because he was squatting for him to get to him.</p>

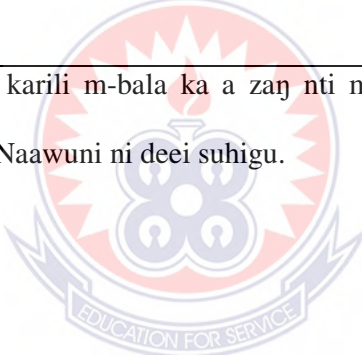
Person	Dagbani	English
	<p>niyerinipinimaa pa payako. Hali biŋkɔbiri, kamaninahu.</p> <p>So nitooipuhiri so lalaka o tiboli o tiyeli o, m malila m biniyaakazani n-yihikayenyeli a. Tɔ, a mi tooipuhiri ma pam a kɔreyi be di ni, di zuƴuka m boli a. Tɔ, nimaani, o kɔreyi be di nika o yeli.</p> <p>Di mi yigbaaigbani o kɔre naan be di niamaa o yiko bi saƴi o biehiƴupuuni, o niyelini din ŋunacheka o kulintizahim n-nya. Tɔ, cheka o kuli n-tizahimnyamaa, saawaraka o yenniŋmaa. To o yikuli n-tiniŋsaawaramaa a ninyaka o yiŋ' nimamaayelini oh, tiyi bi niŋ n-ŋɔ, ma dindina ma vi katiyen di maa. O yen zooi ti mi maa ka ti nima ti je zoosim? To, dinzuƴu kpaŋmiya yi maŋa ka ti chaŋ n-ti puhi o, o puhigu maa, tɔ daliri ka o yen dɔƴi ti maa.</p> <p>Tɔ, di saha a ni nya ka daliri maa yina ni maa ni.</p> <p>Tɔ, piligu yi la di ni na.</p>	<p>This shows that the child or that person is respectful in life.</p> <p>So when he gets to him, the old person will greet him. After greeting him the elder person will ask him my friend where do you come from.</p> <p>He will also then reply that so so and so community.</p> <p>When he is told and the elderly person has a relative there, he will tell him to greet that relative on his return. Or</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>you do not know him? Then he will say he know him. When he gets home he will actually greet that person. All this still talks about him the very person who squat for the elder person. This does help people to get gifts. For me saying gift not only wives. But also animals like cattle. Someone can be greeting another person like that and he can call that person and say I</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>have so so and so thing to sell but I want to imform you first. Because you have been visiting me frequently, if you are interested that is why I called you. In this case if you are interested you voice it out. Even if it is that you are interested but do not have the ability he will say it and ask for permission to go and work it out. For him to go and work it out, he is going to make</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>consultations.</p> <p>When he go and do his consultation, his house people will say; oh, if we do not do this then it is a shame. He is going to bless us and we do not want blessing? So let us try and go and greet him, through his greeting we will be blessed. At this time they will be blessed. Ok, that is the beginning.</p>
Interviewer	Puhigumaani	Through the greeting
Respondent	Jilima la, dina n-tiripinimaa. Ka naanyichepuhigumaabenika o tiyeli o, yaakaza a	It is the respect which is bringing


Person	Dagbani	English
	<p>nipuhiri ma shemṅomaakraṅ mi a maṅadabisiliyaakazadali n-nya a niṅkurakabe kana ka n titi a pini. Di sahapaya polo m-bala.</p>	<p>the gift. Apart from the greeting he can also say so so and so the way you visit me try and tell your people to come to me so that I will give you a gift. This one that is about a wife.</p>
Interviewer	Mmm...	Mmm...
Respondent	<p>Payā polo m-bala. O bi yenyeli a, kaminaka n titi a paya.</p>	<p>That is about a wife. He will not tell you oh come and I will give you a wife.</p>
Interviewer	Ka n titi a paya...	And I will give you a wife...
Respondent	<p>Yelimi a niṅkurakayibodabisili n-kana n-tipuhi ma ka n tinyapini. N nitiyi a bieḥigu pam. Tɔ din chekatiDagbanlitikpaṅsipuhibu m-bala.</p>	<p>Tell your elderly people so that you get a day and come and greet me so that I will</p>


Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>give you a gift. I like your character. This is why we encourage greeting among us Dagbamba.</p>
Interviewer	“Ok” tɔNaawuninisabilaara.	Ok, God richly bless you.
Respondent	Ami.	Amen.
Interviewer	<p>Haŋkali karili m-bala ka a zaŋ nti ma maa. M payiya, Naawuni ni deei suhigu.</p> 	<p>This is a great wisdom you have given me. I am grateful, God will bless you.</p>





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Person	Dagbani	English
Interviewer	Dasiba	Good morning
Respondent	Naa	Good morning
Interviewer	Tiwarini	How is the weather
Respondent	Naa	Better
Interviewer	Kayiq' be wula?	How is the home?
Respondent	Alaafeebeni	fine
Interviewer	Kpambamaa be wula?	How are the elders?
Respondent	Alaafeebeni	fine
Interviewer	Tidonivienyela?	Do we sleep well?
Respondent	Iin, tidonivienyela.	Yes, we are well.
Interviewer	Dimisuyulo, tidagbanlipuunitinyakapuhiguniŋtalahi pam zilielipuuni. Ka m bɔrini a sɔŋ ma ni a haŋkalininyesheli. Din chekaDagbambanyapuhiguka di nyeyeltɔy' kpeenitizilielini. Yelimaŋlipuhigukpa la talahitinvuy' so ŋunkam be o haŋkalini. Ka n nibɔŋɔ bee a nibɔŋɔ. Naawuniyicheka a yitigbihinee la bieɣuasiba, a badokurugu bee a ma	Please in Dagbani we have seen that greeting is very important in our social life. I want you to help me with your thought about it.


Person	Dagbani	English
	<p>paɣikpɛmayibeni, asibamaa di tumini a puhibadasibakanyabɛgom. Di nyaaga a yiyisambaninina n-tuui la nirakamɲungari a, di simdi ni a puhi o dasiba.</p> <p>A yilahigarithimi n-gɔrichan' la tiŋ'puunina bee n-tuhila nirakamɲun be... ɲun tom gari a, talahi n-nyelini a puhi o dasibakaniŋ o jilima.</p> <p>A nitooipuhi o kadamdiamaa a mini ɲunsayɲuna, yizaakulinipuhitabanaa... naa... kachana.</p> <p>Puhiguni kana n-tigbaaiti kali soli zuɣutalahiŋɛɲa m-bala.</p> 	<p>Why Dagbamba value greeting that much in our society. It is true that greeting is very important to everyone in his or her sound mind. Like me and you. If God permit that you slept and woke up well in the morning and your father or mother are alive, it is good that you greet them good morning and see how they are fairing. Apart from that when you come out and meet any</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>elderly person  you have to greet  that person.  Whenever you  are going to town  or you meet any  elderly person  who is... who is  older than you, it  is important you  that you greet  that person with  respect. You can  greet the person  squatting but if  the fellow is your  colleague, you  can all greet each  other and go  your ways.</p>
Respondent	<p>Kapuhigunyaanabiehi' bokaninsali lee lahiyentooi  be ka di wuhinininsaliɔjilimaninsali m-bala, o  biehigupuuni. Din wuhirini o tirijilima. Puhigu din  nyaana.</p>	<p>So apart from  greeting what  other ways of life  can one live so</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		that you will be seen as being respectful in his life. Apart from greeting.
Interviewer	<p>M mi gbani mi shelitatariga, a yikanina n-tipaaishebakabetumditumabezilielini, ka a go na n-tipaaiba, a yipuhiba, benitumdituun' shelimaa, a yimalisahani a kasahazaa a nitooitimbanuubiela.</p> 	To the best of my knowledge, when you are move and you happen to meet a group of people working, after greeting them whether you have time or not you need to give them a helping hand in what ever they are doing.
Respondent	Nuubiela... Aba...	Helping hand... True...
Interviewer	A yitimbanuukayeliba, ambanj n naba n-zazuusaa. N naan tum yitumanɔsɔnya. Katimbanuubiela, a bo	If you give them a helping hand


Person	Dagbani	English
	<p>la bihigujilimanimaanima. Tibiginsimzay' titalika a bo n-ti a maɲamaa, baleetuun' sheli din tinyetalahizaŋti a ka a di nyɛɲunyen be di ni, katinyeninvyu' so beniyentumdi li ka a ka di ni. Biɛhigupuuni, a bi zaŋjilima n-ti a biɛhigu</p> 	<p>you can tell them that you are late for something some where. I will have help you in your work. You giving them that push, you have created a good relationship with them. You have done a good job for yourself. Especially if it was a work that you were supposed to be a part of which by certain reasons you cannot be there. In that case you have not</p>


Person	Dagbani	English
		respected yourself.
Respondent	Aba... Tɔ, din ŋuna m-paɣiyavienyɛla, m paɣiya	True... Ok, thank you very much, thank you.
Interviewer	<p>Biehigu dariza, di chanimi ni...</p> <p>Di chani la toonikalabirinyaaga. Di ninviela m-bɔŋɔ, di nimbieri mi m-bɔŋɔ. Kamanitumtumsamaa, a yichanɗu li katimbanuu, di ninviela polo m-bala.</p> <p>A mi yi kana kabetumdi li ka a kulipuhiba mi kachana, amii a nyelanunnitooisɔŋba bee a pun kutooisɔŋba. Di sahabiehigumaanimbieri m-bala.</p> <p>A yigarinaaibenibahizu a nyaaga. Yaakazaŋɔ didinyɛla talahini a sɔŋti, katititumdigbakaŋunkuli bi timtinuukachana.</p>	<p>Integrity moves with...</p> <p>It goes up and comes down. It has both positive and negative effects. Like people working, if you come across it that is the good side of it. but if you come and they are working and you only greeted them and pass, whether you were someone who should have</p>


Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>help them or not, that is the bad side of it. If you pass they will talk about you. Oh this person you were supposed to be part of this work but he has not even given us a helping hand self and walked away.</p>
Respondent	Kachana. Tɔ, m paɣiya.	<p>Walked away. Ok, thank you.</p>
Interviewer	<p>M baMmoro m bɔrimini n wum a gbanolinizaŋchaŋtiDagbanli... TiDagbambasanipuhigudarizanichaŋtipaaishem, di talahinikulinyeshemtizilielipuuni. Amiiwulaka a malini a ti ma?</p>	<p>My father Imoro I want to hear from you concerning our Dagbani... The value of greeting to</p>

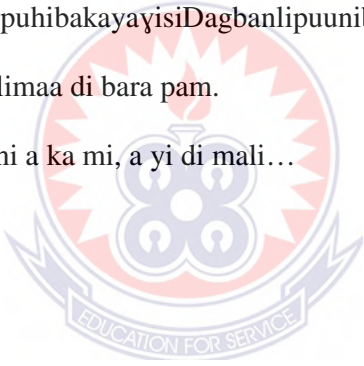
Person	Dagbani	English
		Dagbamba and its importance in our society. What do you have to give me?
Respondent	<p>Mani yeltɔya dii bi galisi, dinnimaka m be Dasana pun yelimaa. Dii yiniŋka a mali do' niŋkurugu bee payikpema, a ghubila a ba bee a ma zia, biɛyuyineeɪ, tiDagbanlini, di tuyaka a kpe n-tidamdipuhibadasiba. A yikpe n-tidamdipuhi a bamaadasiba. A yendabimi, di yi pa la a bamaa n-tibɔhi a, a sagbihiya? Nyinbia, nyinka soli ni a bɔhiŋgari a maa, m ba a sagbihiya? Tɔ o yibɔhi a lalaka ayeli, iin n sagbihiyakadabiya, o nimalisheli o nizaŋ n-ti a.</p> <p>O mi yikasheli o niyeli a ni a yiɣisma.</p>	<p>I do not have much to give, they are the very things my brother Dasana has already said. If you have an elder woman or man that is, you are taking care of your parents, in the morning it is important you go and greet them good morning. If you go to greet your father good morning, you will continue to</p>





Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>remain squatting till he asks whether you had a good night. You the child can not ask the elder one how was your sleep? When he ask you that then you will answer yes I slept well while you are still squatting. Whatever he have he will give to you. If he does not have any thing he will ask you to stand up.</p>
Interviewer	Tɔ, aba...	Ok, True...
Respondent	<p>Din nyaana, ninsalinunabieyuyineeiasiba... A yiniɲlala, di wuhirilanyini Dagbani maa bee nyinibiamaaani a yisabenikamalinyevulikayenpaai a</p>	<p>Apart from that, for a human</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
	<p>bamaa bee a ma maani be shemka a jemdibamaani a sakuanfaani.</p> <p>A gbaahi bee shebabihighbasaniti a lalajilimamaa n-yo. DinzuyukaDagbambabɔrini a yibiɛyu n-kpe n-tipuhi a badasiba. Bee a yibiɛyu, nyinyiyina n-kulichanijaajaa, amii a bamaagbihineei, o malialaafee, a bi mi. A ma gbihimalialaafee, a bi mi. Amaa a yipuhiri o dasiba, o malialaafeeni o kaalaafee a nibaɲ.</p> 	<p>being when day break...</p> <p>When you are doing that and you grow up to be like your father and mother and their age while honour them it will be a blessing on you. Your own children or other people's children will also honour you that much. That is why Dagbamba like you rising from your sleep in the morning and you to greeting your parents. Or you waking up in the</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>morning from your sleep and you start to move about living your life, as to whether your father slept well, wake up, you do not know. But if you greet him every morning you will know whether he is well or not.</p>
Interviewer	A nibaŋ...	You will know...
Respondent	A ni baŋ. Mani ni mali sheli m-bala.	You will know. That is what I have.
Interviewer	<p>Kapuhigumaa din nyaarŋa, biehi’ bokaŋinsalilahiyen be kabeyeli, oh... daadamŋo Dagbani n-nyε o, o malijilima. Puhigu dinnyaarŋa.</p>	<p>So apart from the greeting what other way of life can one live and it will accord</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		him a respectful person as a Dagbamba? Aside greeting.
Respondent	<p>Iin, puhigu din nyaanajilimamaagalisiya pam.</p> <p>N nitooikanina, n tiehabiehigupuuni, tinimieritana, tininiḡdisuuna bee ninsalisilipuunitinitooikuziakanangbantompaitika n kanina, halinikulikabinsheli n daaziifuni. KadamdipuhibakayayisiDagbanlipuunibeniyenti a jilin' shelimaa di bara pam.</p> <p>Beɓanyani a ka mi, a yi di mali...</p> 	<p>Yes, aside greeting respect still covers a lot. According to me, in life like we build, we do outdoor, or just as we are humans we can lose somebody and while we are mourning you come. Even if you do not have anything on you and you just come greet those sitting and you go, in Dagbani you will get great</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		respect for that.  They know that you just do not have, if you had...
Interviewer	A naan niŋ...	You will have done something...
Respondent	A naan niŋ. Amaa a yi kana tichanŋaribenibaŋni a yiŋa a bi nyawumsibu 	You will have done something.  But if you come and walk pass they will know that in your house you did not get good upbringing.
Interviewer	“Ok... Ok...”	Ok... Ok...
Respondent	Bee nyiniAsanimalituuni, ka m mini a nyezay’ yini, ka n yelinizuŋɔ di nina bi kpa ma maa, di bi nya ma. Biɛyini di saniyi a yiŋ’ gba n-kana n yiŋa. Amaayiyi be tiŋ’ yinini, ka m baŋninsalisilipuunizayilaŋɔtuuninya ma, biɛyini di yisapaai man gba, n ninsalisiliyengalisimi. Bee	Or you Asani have your work and I say that oh today that it is not my work it is not my concern.

Person	Dagbani	English
	<p>yelliyisapaai a, a biɛhigukabeyenzaŋbaŋ a ninyenivuy' so.</p> <p>Dinzuyu, ninsala, di tuni a yisambanini, biɛhigupuunikatirijilima, a taba mini niŋkurasani.</p> <p>Amaa a yi bi tirijilima, ma a mi a yikuligarishelikambeyenzurilaa nyaaŋa. Di mi pala din viɛla n-zaŋtitibiɛhigupullini</p> 	<p>Tomorrow it will move from your place to me. But if you live together and know that someone's problem is my problem, if get to me I can also be confident with my self. Or if you get problem tomorrow, they will get to know you through your actions. So as humans, it is good one goes out in the society having respect for your colleagues and to the elderly. But if</p>

Person	Dagbani	English
		<p>you do not respect wherever you go they will talk about you. This is not good for us in life.</p>
Interviewer	<p>Din ɲuna, m payiya, m payiya, Naawuninisabilaara.</p>	<p>Then, I thank you, I thank you, God bless you.</p>
Respondent	YikoniAnabi	In Prophet name.

