Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies in Hiv/Aids Discourse. A Case Study Of Kalenjin (Kipsigis) Speakers Of Kericho County (Kenya)

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ABSTRACT: Language is an important tool in transmitting information. It is a basic means by which human beings communicate.

Communication is an interactive process of exchanging meaningful messages and is a two way process. In combating HIV/AIDS, a number of strategies have been employed with varying degrees. The objective of the study was to identify kipsigis euphemisms used to achieve politeness in HIV/AIDS campaign and to identify age and sex differences in appreciation of euphemisms. According to Nation Paper (Kenya) July 4, 2019, an estimated 19.6 million people in East and Southern Africa are living with HIV/ AIDS. 1.5 million Kenyans living with HIV/AIDS. The study was carried out in Kericho County among the kipsigis. The Kipsigis are a Nilotic ethnic group. They are a sub tribe of the Kalenjin people. Kipsigis are the most populous of Kalenjin in Kenya. The kipsigis occupy the portion of the highlands in Southern Western Kenya specifically Kericho County. The kipsigis people like any other Kenya community are faced with life threatening diseases such as malaria, cancer and HIV/AIDS. The research used purposive sampling to collect information. The selected group was based on age and gender differences.

HIV/AIDS campaigns are done among the Kipsigis to create awareness and behaviour change. To achieve politeness euphemisms are used. Kipsigis interlocutors preferred to use euphemisms in order to communicate sensitive issues that would otherwise embarrass both the speaker and hearer.

Off record strategy violates Gricean Maxims by being indirect in order to reach out to the hearers without embarrassing them. It was also noted that the elderly appreciate use of euphemisms.

1.1 Statement of the Problem.

In the Kipsigis culture, there are words that are not supposed to be mentioned. More so when addressing relatives or people of different age groups.

This has become a hindrance in the health awareness and especially in HIV/AIDS campaign in which most issues are related to sexuality. Some words are considered taboo furthermore the way of socialization is well structured with rules and regulations that are to be observed strictly by members of the speech community. Words that are considered to cause unpleasantness to the hearer or speaker are avoided and instead there is use of euphemisms.

Euphemisms enable the speaker to pass information to the hearer using acceptable language.

Hill et al (1986) note that in conversation there is discernment. This is automatic observation of socially agreed upon rules and applies to both verbal and non-verbal behaviour. They also emphasized the speaker's ability to be polite by choosing from a wider range of possibilities

1. 2 Background of the Study

In combating HIV/AIDS, language plays a crucial role.

There has been concerted effort in spreading awareness on HIV/AIDS campaign.

Due to translation of terminologies from English to Kipsigis especially when addressing the less educated members of the community, correct information might be lost due to use of euphemism in an effort to save face for both speaker and hearer.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify kipsigis euphemisms used to achieve politeness in HIV/AIDS campaign.
2. To identify age and sex differences in appreciation of euphemisms.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Face in politeness strategies

Face, according to Golfman (1967) is the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.

Face is not a permanent image imposed on people, it is formed during a particular communicative event and emerges as a result of face work.

Whatever one does to be consistent with face is face work.

Euphemism is defined by Allan and Burridge (1991) as alternatives to dis-preferred expressions used in order to avoid possible loss of face.

HIV/AIDS campaigners find a way to help preserve listeners face needs and avoid face threatening acts.

2.2 Taboo words.

The term taboo language refers to words and phrases that are generally considered inappropriate in certain context. Taboo words are replaced by euphemisms.

When communicating on diseases, kipsigis speakers use euphemisms to refer to diseases that are associated with people's sexuality. Diseases such as:

-Gonorrhea and syphilis, have euphemisms, others such as malaria and cancer or asthma are named directly.

Euphemisms come in handy when one wants to censor or avoid mentioning taboo topics for fear of incurring the cost of violating the rules of communications. Euphemisms enable the speakers to sound polite.

Apte (1994) grouped linguistics taboos into four;

- Swear or curse words – Constitute damnation, misfortune or disrespect to hearer.
- Obscene words –Involve sexual organs and acts.
- Four letter words – fuck, shit.
- Dirty words – Sexual organs, urine and other words that are associated with biological functions of the body.

Jay (1996) came up with the following linguistics taboo words.

1) Obscene language- Words that are offensive.
2) Blasphemy – Misuse of religious terminologies.
3) Profanity – Words that portray irreverence to sacred things.
4) Insults – Verbal attacks using words that hurts the listener.
5) Expletives – Phrase fillers or interjections that show speakers emotions.

2.3 Politeness strategies

According to Searle (1975), an utterance consists of the following components.

i. Locution - This is the physical act of speaking. It is the grammatical structure of an utterance.

An utterance can have the following grammatical structures: - declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative.

ii. Illocution- This is the speakers' intention in uttering an utterance. The intended meaning that is the illocutionary force depends on the text. A phrase such as "I will see you tomorrow." can be a promise or a threat depending on the context.

Iii Perlocution is the effect of utterance. The speaker cannot control the effect of utterance on the hearer. For example "AIDS has no cure,'' can be understood to be a warning or a threat.

Direct speech act has a direct relationship between the structure and the communicative function of the phrase or sentence.

Direct speech is a straightforward utterance. Declaratives are used to make statements: Herpes is a asexual transmitted disease.

There are instances when speakers use indirect speech. In such cases there is an indirect relationship between the form and the function of an utterance.

An interrogative can be used to make a request. 'could you use condoms?' The speaker intends to sound polite by using interrogative instead of imperative.

A declarative such as ' getting tested is the only sure way', could be uttered in a context where the speaker intends to tell the listener to get tested.

Brown and Levinson (1987) pointed out four major types of politeness strategies as follows:

- **Bald on record**: These are strategies that do not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face in HIV/AIDS awareness. The hearers are told the facts on HIV/AIDS without fear of being impolite. If discourse requires the mentioning of body parts the campaigner does so without fear.

This strategy works well when speaker and hearer know each other closely. Because of sssbeing direct the audience may be shocked or embarrassed by what the speaker says.

- **Positive politeness**. This strategy aims to minimize the threat to the hearers face. When addressing people who are not close to the speaker, this strategy works well.

- **Negative politeness**. In this strategy the speaker imposes on the hearer. The speaker aims to maintain autonomous. For example the speaker could say "I know you have heard how HIV is transmitted but I want to teach you on this one method..."

This request shows respect for the listener

- **Indirect Strategy.** There are many instances when speakers achieve politeness by being indirect in their speech.

Searle (1975) defines indirect speech act as an utterance in which one speech act is performed indirectly by performing another. He gives an example of a speaker who requests hearer to pass salt by asking about the hearer's ability to pass the salt.

There are topics that can only be discussed indirectly in order to save face of the speaker and hearer. Topics that are considered taboo can comfortably be discussed indirectly.

Brown and Levinson (1987) notes that off-record strategy uses indirect language and removes the speaker from imposing on the listeners. Using euphemisms to refer to HIV/AIDS and some body parts conveys the intended meaning without being direct, hense threatening the face of both speaker and listener.

2.4 Flouting Grice maxims

This happens when Gricean maxims are flouted. Grice (1975) cooperative principle says that make your conversational contribution what is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

Maxims are grouped into the following: Maxim of manner requires that one; be perspicuous by avoiding obscurity of expression, avoiding ambiguity, being brief by avoiding unnecessary 'prolixity' and being orderly. The second maxim of quality requires speakers to be truthful. One should not say what he believes to be false neither should he say what he lacks enough evidence. The third maxim of quantity, demands that one makes contribution as informative as is required and be within the confines of the ongoing purposes of the exchange.

One should avoid making information more informative than required. Maxim of relation says that one should be relevant.

Maxim of manner can be flouted through use of vague terms, ambiguous terms and words that overgeneralize situations.

Use of contradictions, irony, metaphors and rhetorical questions violates maxim of quality. Maxim of relation is flouted when one uses words that are not relevant. A speaker who doesn't follow the conversational maxims is said to be flouting the maxims and this gives rise to an implicature.

2.5 Implicature.

In any conversation, speaker and listener are co-operating. Each speaker aims to be relevant. A speaker can imply a meaning implicitly, confident that the listener will understand

Horn, (2006) defines implicature as a component of speaker meaning that constitutes an aspect of what is meant in a speaker's utterance without being part of what is said. Implicature implies that the listener understands the speaker flouted maxims for a reason and infers meaning from this breach convention.

2.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory that the study is based on is politeness theory formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987). It asserts that we use politeness as a way of known deception. It ensures that we preserve each other's face needs and avoid threatening acts.

One can either lose or save a face. Face, as mentioned above is the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.

Politeness is expression of the speaker's intention to ensure that there are no face threats on the listeners.

2.6.1 Face

Being polite is a way of ensuring that the speaker saves his own face and that of the listener. This study identifies three concepts of face.

- Positive face

- Negative face
- Face threatening acts

2.6.2   Positive face
Face is also defined as the public self-image that every person tries to protect. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined positive face as the desire to be liked, appreciated and approved by others.

2.6.3   **Negative face**
Negative face on the other hand is defined as the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others.
Positive face is a desire for connection with others; negative face needs include autonomy and independence.
Positive face is characterized by the desire to be liked, admired, ratified and related to positively. It should be noted that negative face can be realized by imposing on someone. Brown and Levinson (1987) assert that positive face refers to one's self esteem, while negative face refers to one's freedom to act.
Positive face and negative face are the basic wants in any social interaction. When people are conversing cooperation is needed amongst the participants in order to maintain each other's face.

2.6.4   Face threatening acts.
A face threatening act is an act that is seen to damage the face of the listener or speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and the desires of the other.
These acts can be verbal, paraverbal or non-verbal.
A hearer can be threatened by an act that affirms or denies a future act of hearer or an act that creates pressure on the hearer to either perform or not perform the act. Such words are orders, requests, suggestion, advice, reminding, threats or warnings.

II.   METHODOLOGY
The section presents a description of the research design, the target population and sampling technique, data collection methods and data analysis.

3.1   Research design
The study used descriptive survey design with use of quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data from members of the population.

3.2   Population sampling
Purposive sampling was used to collect information as it selects typical and useful cases only. The target population was of Kipsigis Community. Age was considered as an important factor. Different age groups have different ways of perceiving the world due to education, language interference and contact with people from different ethnic backgrounds.
The adults (50 years and above) are perceived to be well conversant with their culture and values.
Campaigns done among the kipsigis aims to motivate men and women to talk openly about sex, sexuality, drug use and HIV/AIDS. The kipsigis are also encouraged to care for themselves, their partners and families. They should support and care for people living with, affected by, or orphaned by HIV/AIDS.
The research chose youth (15 to 30) years. The elderly (40-60) years.
The elderly members of the Kipsigis speakers are assumed to be conversant with euphemisms used in referring to matters of sexuality.
Men and women were also selected to ensure that differences in gender on interpretation of euphemisms are captured. Questionnaires were given to 20 youths, 10 men and 10 women.
Another set of questions were given to 10 elderly women and 10 elderly men.

3.3   Instruments used in collecting data
Structured interviews: this was used to capture information that would be used to compare with the results obtained from questionnaire.
Questionnaire: Random sampling was used to select respondents from Kipsigis speakers who would respond to questionnaire

III.   DATA ANALYSIS
4.1.1   Euphemism used in reference to HIV/AIDs.
Euphemisms are words that are used to soften the reality of information being communicated to a listener. They help speaker to express taboo words and expression. With euphemisms a speaker can express what is socially

difficult to express in direct terms. Terminologies used when discussing HIV/AIDS mainly relate to sexual activities. Among the Kipsigis speakers it is great taboo to mention directly words related to sexuality and death. All the youths and adults responded that they cannot mention sexual terminologies directly. The younger respondents were more enlightened and prefer to use English terminologies to refer to HIV/AIDS
The following table shows the HIV/AIDS Terminologies.

Kipsigis	Transcripetion	
Chelugui	One that swallow people	
Koroot	An unknown dangerous thing.	
Tiondi	A fierce and dangerous animal	
Kapchololit	An animal that swallows.	
Kutiet.	A flea	

Mapping is a process of projecting features of the target domain, in which process context plays an essential part, for it provides relevant background knowledge. In the word 'chelugui' the main domain is Chelugui and the target domain is the abstracted concept of the condition being fatal and non-discriminative. Kipsigis speakers use animal names as euphemisms for the HIV/AIDs condition. The reference to dangerous /harmful animals draws and image of scary disease. It shows that the disease traumatizes the victim.
The term 'koroot' is euphemistic. 'Koroot' is something unpleasant, that which can cause suffering. It can kill but it's not known.
Kipchololit: - This is euphemistic. It depicts AIDs as the one swallowing people.
Euphemisms commonly used:
Among the Kipsigis speakers the following terminologies relate to sexuality and are considered taboo words.
Body Parts: -   Penis, vagina, Breasts, Buttocks.
Sexual terms: -   Sexual intercourse, sperms.
Diseases: -   Diarrhoea, sexual transmitted diseases.
Qanbar (2011) says that taboo words bordering on sex can be found in almost all cultures of the world. The following is a list of words that are not mentioned directly.

English	Kipsigis	Euphemisms
Breasts	Kinaik	Tekeet (chest)
Buttocks	let	Patai (behind)

4.1.2   Euphemisms referring to death.

English	Kipsigis	Euphemisms
Death	**kimut**	**taken**
	Komuny	**rest**
	Koges	**finished**

IV.   Conclusion

Kipsigis interlocutors preferred to use Euphemisms in order to communicate sensitive issues that would otherwise embarrass both the speaker and hearer.
Off record strategy violates Gricean Maxims by being indirect but reaching out to the hearers.

Gender and Euphemisms
Women readily use Euphemisms than men. When a man is talking to another man they don't shy away from using direct words.
Women are modest and would always save face by using Euphemisms.

Age and Use of Euphemism
Among the Kalenjin speakers elders are respected so much such that some terminologies cannot be mentioned by the younger people in their presence. Use of euphemisms help to avoid situations that could cause embarrassment both to the speaker and hearer.
This study established that through the use of euphemisms speakers applied negative politeness and off record politeness in order to create awareness on HIV/AIDs. The elderly appreciate use of euphemisms while the younger members would rather use English terms.
The following is a summary of ways used to achieve politeness.

i.   Use of euphemisms
ii. Indirect speech
iii. Flouting of maxims
    Summary on use of euphemisms
i.   Women use polite language more than men.
ii. Men tend to be direct in their language use especially when addressing other men.
iii. Elder members of the kipsigis community avoided embarrassing words by use of euphemisms.

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