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**SINZANG**

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COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

**Peleforo GON COULIBALY University**

**Côte d'Ivoire**

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## EDITORIAL

Among the Senufos from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, the sacred grove is called "Sinzang". The first of these would date from the time of the patriarch and leader of Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). It is the tutelary space of the initiatory institute of the secret society: the Poro. These sacred forests exist in all the villages of the region and are highly protected and managed. The proof is that in their midst, adolescents perform the rite of passage leading them to the age of maturity. The "Sinzang" is also the centre of intergenerational knowledge transmission. Thus, the teaching of ancestral knowledge, ontology and cosmogony- contributing to the future spiritual, moral and social formation of the Senufo elite-is associated with this pantheon.

In line with this pedagogical and academic logic, the SINZANG Journal aims to promote African and Western humanities in Literature, Language, Communication and Education Sciences. To do this, it is part of a process of promoting the reflections and studies conducted by Teachers-Researchers and Researchers for the sustainable development of society.

As distinctive signs of "Sinzang", Jacqueline DELANGE, in *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifies among others the huts, earth cones and statues (masks). The visual identity of this magazine presents two masks, one symbolizing ancestral knowledge and the other Western science. The two facing the entrance of a sacred hut express the encounter of diverse knowledge put at the service of humanity. *In fine*, they export to other horizons, hence the idea of huts in perspective.

SINZANG is a pluridisciplinary and biannual peer-reviewed scientific journal. It is published in English and French but also accepts work written in German and Spanish. Moreover, depending on the requests made at the discretion of its review committee, it may issue special thematic publications and conference proceedings.

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#### **ÉDITORIAL**

Chez les Sénoufos du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, le bosquet sacré est communément appelé « Sinzang ». Les premiers du genre dateraient de l'époque du patriarche et chef de Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). C'est l'espace tutélaire de l'institut initiatique de la société secrète : le Poro. Lieux fortement protégés et aménagés à l'envi, ces forêts sacrées existent dans tous les villages de la région. La preuve en est qu'en leur sein, les adolescents effectuent le rite de passage les amenant à l'âge de la maturité. Le « Sinzang » est aussi le haut lieu de la transmission de la connaissance intergénérationnelle. Ainsi, l'enseignement du savoir ancestral, de l'ontologie et la cosmogonie-contribuant à la formation spirituelle, morale et sociale de l'élite Sénoufo de demain-est associé à ce panthéon.

S'inscrivant dans cette logique pédagogique et académique, la Revue SINZANG ambitionne de faire la promotion des humanités tant africaine qu'occidentale dans le domaine de la Littérature, des Sciences du Langage, de la Communication et de l'Éducation. Pour ce faire, elle s'inscrit dans une démarche de vulgarisation des réflexions et des études menées par les Enseignants-Chercheurs et des Chercheurs pour le développement durable de la société.

Comme signes distinctifs du « Sinzang », Jacqueline DELANGE, dans *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifie entre autres les cases, les cônes en terre et les statues (masques). L'identité visuelle de cette revue présentant deux masques, l'un symbolisant le savoir ancestral et l'autre la science occidentale. Les deux se faisant face à l'entrée d'une case sacrée expriment la rencontre de connaissances diverses mis au service de l'humanité. In fine, elles s'exportent vers d'autres horizons ; d'où l'idée des cases en perspective.

SINZANG est une revue pluridisciplinaire à comité de lecture et scientifique. Elle est bilingue : éditée en anglais et en français. Mais elle accepte également les travaux écrits en allemand et en espagnol. C'est une revue semestrielle,

tenant deux parutions l'an. Au demeurant, elle peut procéder, selon les demandes ou les sollicitations formulées à l'appréciation de son comité de lecture, à des parutions spéciales thématiques et à la diffusion d'actes de colloque.

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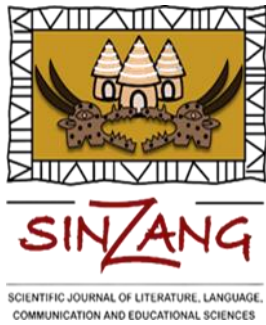
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## LINGUISTIC CARVING OF SOCIAL POSITION

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### Abstract

In this paper, I am attempting to show how linguistic forms can be a window through which people social position can be watched. In fact, when people communicate in a given situation, there is a need to select particular linguistic forms to address one another. The selection of such forms is conditioned by relationships among participants. Selecting an inappropriate form may probably lead to inconvenience. So, there is a need to use the right form for the right participant in order to avoid such situations. The question which is therefore raised here is whether there are forms that best sculpt the way to address among participants. The answer to this concern is based on the assumption that the forms that express social position best sculpt the way to address. It is important to have quite a good knowledge of such forms which contextual use depends on the type of relationship among participants.

Key words: *Language, deixis, relationship, participants, context*

### LA SCULPTURE LINGUISTIQUE DE LA POSITION SOCIALE

#### Résumé

Il est question dans le présent article de montrer comment la position sociale est révélée par les formes linguistiques. En effet, lorsque les gens échangent dans une situation de communication, ils sélectionnent des formes linguistiques particulières pour s'adresser à leurs interlocuteurs. Cette sélection est conditionnée par le type de relations qui existent entre les différents participants. De ce fait, le choix de formes inappropriées peut conduire à une inconvenance. Dès lors, la question qui se pose est celle de savoir s'il existe des formes qui permettent aux participants d'échanger sans conflits. La réponse à cette préoccupation se fonde sur l'hypothèse selon laquelle la bonne communication passe aussi par le choix approprié des formes qui révèlent la position sociale. Il est donc important d'avoir une connaissance de ces formes dont le choix de l'usage en contexte dépend souvent du type de relation qui existe entre participants.

Mots clés : *langage, déictique, relation, participant, contexte*

## **Introduction**

The starting point of the study is the observation that in speech community settings, people claiming to speak a language often fail to communicate successfully, with speakers of that language, in given situations. This especially occurs in situations when a given speaker does not have a good mastery of the social position underlying the relationship with a given participant. This state of affairs prompts to ask the following questions: what are participants taking to consider in communicative situations? What are they taking to use to communicate effectively? Responding the above leads to the following assumption: in communicative situations, participants consider social positions by expressing their relationships through linguistic terms such as social deixis. Hence, the study seeks, on the basis of successful communicative events, to present sculpture of social position through linguistic forms. This study is based on successful situations such as ceremonial events in the Mmaala community among the Yambassa people in Cameroon. From a pragmatic approach I attempt to define patterns of social position and then present variants of social deixis in the Mmaala community.

### **1. Patterns of social position: Fundamentals**

All communicative aspects that carve social position need to be met in order to understand selections of linguistic units. A better understanding of why, where, when and how of such selections by participants is a process surrounded by two major variants.

#### **1.1.Context**

Context here has to do with the communicative situation. This can be discerned in two ways: the linguistic context and the socio-cultural context.

##### **1.1.1. Linguistic context**

The linguistic context determines the process of conversing, interacting or simply conveying a message. It deals with aspects such as what has been said before, what is intended to be said and so forth. It is in framing the activity undertaken with language as means with regard to diverse social settings. Linguistic context is a well-defined unit, in which, a mixture of communicative components (linguistic and non-linguistic) get to meet. In any communicative act, this context is what determines the type of participant (sender/receiver) intervening and by so doing the type of language to be used.

##### **1.1.2. The socio-cultural context**

It is also a deep dimension in which social position can be carved in language use. It

is also known as physical context for it refers to anything surrounding the communication: place, time and actions that are undertaken among others. Ochs (1988) working on language socialization focuses on linguistic index. In the process of language use, one is faced with specifying more precisely the relation of language to socio-cultural context. To her, one is initially faced within explicating more precisely how form and content signal socio-cultural dimensions of specific communicative events (social identities of participants, speech acts, etc.). But the task of relating languages to socio-cultural context is not complete at this point. There is a need, as well, to account on how the sociolinguistic or organization of these specific communicative events in turn interferes with more general systems of social order and cultural knowledge. It is known that particular communicative events may take place in particular spots, in particular given moments with a particular behavior of participants. These factors are related to each other in systematic and complex ways within a defined speech community.

Language use takes place in a well-defined context which reveals quite a number of components: the way language is structured; how people are organized in their social, cultural or anthropological settings among others. All these factors build an environment that conditions the linguistic features to be used with regard to the participants involved in the communicative event.

## **1.2. Relationships**

The expression of relationships among participants is a relevant dimension of the understanding of their social position or status. When people communicate, they address one another by using address forms known as *social deixis* according to the nature of relationships among them

Social deixis can, be regarded as pointer of a given identity. Levinson (1983) defines it as aspects of language structure that are related to social identity of participants in the speech event or to relations between them or to relations between them and other referents. The selection of any form is based on the nature of relationship participants get to maintain in a communicative situation. In this vein, Fasold (1990) argues that it is a real conflict to find the right address form to use, when it is known that people can have several positions within the same society and with regard to the same participants. For instance, a son who has a father as his teacher at school or his boss at work, a woman who has a husband as a judge in a trial she is involved in, a man who can be now an uncle and now a chief of village, and so on. On all these social positions, people draw different relationships they undertake with their alter ego in different speech events. The choice of the right address form becomes a real puzzle. To Fasold, English speakers have it easy compared to speakers of many other languages in the world, for they need only to decide what name to use and can probably

even avoid using any name at all for quite a long while. Speakers of many European languages have to make a choice in the word for “you” as well. These languages have two forms for “you”: one is for people who deserve deference either because their social situation is above the speakers, or the speaker does not have a sufficient personal relationship with them; the other is used for people who are either close to the speaker or of lesser social standing. The address systems of even these languages are simple to use compared with the choice in many other languages around the world. Address forms are really part of complete semantic systems having to do with social relationships. Bean (1978) points out that it is not really sufficient to look only at addressing by name and second person pronoun; because there are languages in which many other devices are used for the expression of relationships such as kin terms as well as how people are referred to. Brown and Gilman (1972), state that power and solidarity constitute the relationships among participants to express their different social positions.

### **1.2.1. Vertical nature: power and authority**

Brown and Gilman (1973) develop that in French, German and Italian there are two semantics that govern the use of pronouns as forms of address within these social settings. The power pronoun semantic like the power relationship is non-reciprocal. A person has power over another person to the degree that he/she can control the other person’s behavior. This relationship is non-reciprocal. In fact, it is established in a situation when two people cannot have power over each other in the same social area. In the same way, the power semantic governs the non-reciprocal use of the two pronouns: the less powerful person says V (the term the authors use to designate the referential pronoun in any of the language taking the first letter from the Latin “Vos” to the more powerful), and receives T (the familiar pronoun from Latin “tu”) . Indeed, the basics of power are several. Older people are assumed to have power over younger people, parents over children, employers over employees, nobles over peasants, etc. The power semantic would be sufficient only if a society were finely stratified that each individual had asymmetrical relationship with every other individual. In other words, there is no power equal. In case there is any, this calls for the reciprocal use of the same address between power equals. That is, you use the same address to a power equal that he/she uses to you.

### **1.2.2. Horizontal nature: solidarity**

Since not all differences between people are connected with power, a second semantic, the solidarity semantic develops. Two people can be equally powerful in the social order but are from different social areas: from different families, from different parts of the country, in different professions. In other words, the need is developed to distinguish a

degree of common ground between people that goes beyond simply having equal power. This is where solidarity comes in with a reciprocal use of same T: the addressor uses T and receives the T. Such pronouns at times convey mood or emotions such as closeness (Crystal, 2008: 193). It implies a sharing between people, a degree of closeness and intimacy. This relationship is inherently reciprocal. If you are close to someone else, in the most natural state of affairs, that person is close to you. Whenever the solidarity semantic applies, then, the same address form is used by other people. Originally according to Brown and Gilman, the solidarity semantic comes into play where it does not interfere with the power semantic. This would be of course between power equals. In the case of French or German usage of second person pronoun, the authors discovered that if two people are equally powerful but with no solidarity ties, they do not share anything significant like family background or origins in the same village, they will exchange V. Mutual V is used between people with no solidarity relationships; they will exchange mutual T.

The choice of an address form can be regarded as following two essential instructive schemes. First of all, the speaker determines the vertical relationships based on power and authority. If the speaker is more powerful, then he/she will give T and receive V. In this case the addressee is inferior to the addressor. If the speaker is less powerful, then he/she will give V and receive T: the addressee is superior to the addressor. In the case there is no power difference, then, the addressor decides if he/she and the addressee maintain horizontal relationships based on solidarity ties. If so, then he/she will give T and receive T; otherwise, he/she will give V and receive V. Moreover, previous studies from Brown and Ford (1964) on the American English address are related to the use of T and V pronoun forms as the choice of the name which one person will use to address someone else. Ervin-Tripp (1972), in this regard, states that the principal choice in American English, are between F.N. and T.L.N. (First Name and Title with Last Name) with FN roughly analogous to T and T.L.N. to V. In fact, there are three patterns that are possible with the two forms: the mutual exchange of FN including common nicknames; the mutual exchange of T.L.N., with Mrs., Mr., Dr., etc. as titles; and the nonreciprocal patterns in which one gives F.N. and receives T.L.N.

According to the author the two reciprocal patterns, are governed by a single dimension ranging from acquaintance to intimacy. Americans call someone they are merely acquainted with by T.L.N. and expect the same in return. People who are friends call each other by F.N. The nonreciprocal patterns are governed by two dimensions: age and occupational status. The member of a dyad who is older will be called by T.L.N. and call the younger person by FN; as well as the person with higher occupational status has the privilege of being addressed with T.L.N., while addressing the other person by F.N. According to Brown and Ford, it is not always the case that older persons have higher occupational status than younger ones. When there is a conflict for instance, between a

young executive and an old janitor, it will be occupational status that takes precedence; the janitor will be called by F.N. and address the executive by T.L.N. This discovery on the use of address terms is significant evidence on the fact that social position has an impact on the use of language among participants.

From the foregoing, it can be noted that communicating successfully lies on how participants consider the nature of relationships among them when they meet in a communicative situation. Whether vertical or horizontal, relationships among participants remain a relevant part of fundamental considerations of language use which is essential contribution to the understanding of linguistic carving of social position.

## **2. Methodology and theoretical framework**

The sample on which this study has been carried out is the Mmaala community from the Yambassa ethnic group in the Centre Region of Cameroon. Data have been collected in Nummaala (a dialect of Nuasúa/Yambassa central Language), from observation and natural exchanges of participants. Exchanges in context has been recorded from daily and ceremonial speech events. The method of data presentation and analysis which is used here is the segmentation of the interaction into coherent and empirically bounded portions. This leads to effective authenticity, selectivity and legibility of data.

The study falls within the domain of pragmatics. Levinson (1983) suggests that pragmatics as a field of linguistics studies how people use speech in concrete situations. That is the concern of the study which involves the relationship between linguistic devices and context of use. The theoretical orientation of this study is based on two main theories for a complete interpretation and understanding. The speech acts theory that deals with utterances and specific context of use. This framework help examine the performative function of speech and see how social deixis are used to accomplish action beyond conveying the message; they are also used to establish social stratification.. This is to better understand how meaning is influenced by the type of language and to witness degree to which utterances are said by participants to fulfil their goals. The ethnography of communication theory which enables one to find out how communication is patterned is used in this study to help understand the use of language within specific social contexts encompassing language and social practices. The SPEAKING (setting, participants, ends, acts, keys, instrumentalities, norms, ends) as developed by Hymes (1972), focusing on the 'P' is to show the importance of understanding the role and identity of participants within a socio-cultural setting and how these role and identity influence communicative patterns and norms.

### 3. Social deixis as linguistic carvers of social position

People use language to communicate by delivering some information. There are three different types of information exchanged by participants as suggested by Baylon (2002): cognitive information which deals with the content of linguistic signs exchanged; indicial information which are based upon the receiver / hearer in view of defining and controlling its role during the interaction; and the injunctive information which are exchanged by participants in order to progress in the conversation. Through language, they reveal who they are and what they think and believe. The main participants reveal who they are by addressing one another using deixis. Deixis are linguistic units which can be referred to as indicators. A deixis is a word that indicates or refers to:

- a given place: *space deixis*
- a given time: *time deixis*
- a given person: *social deixis*

A better understanding of the linguistic carving of social position is considering its contextual social construction within a given community. In this regard, social deixis as linguistic carvers are constructed and used in the Mmaala community following its social organisation based on its cultural considerations.

#### 3.1. Patterns of social deixis in speech community

Unlike many speech communities round the world, like English or French speakers, where participants use pronouns to address one another, there are three major patterns of address in the Mmaala community:

- The case where there is a reciprocal exchange of names:

Here the addressor says name and the addressee also says name. This is horizontal relationship among participants of the same generation (age), or same social position (status).

- The case where there is a reciprocal exchange of address terms:

This is a horizontal relationship among participants of a high status, or of the same status.

- The case where there is a non- reciprocal pattern;

This is a case where someone uses the name and the other uses an address term. The status dimension that underlies the non-reciprocal pattern is the vertical relationship. In this case the person of high status will use the family name and the person of low status will use an address term. For instance, the child greets his father by using an address term (kinship) “Dad” and the father answers by using the child family name. In the Mmaalaa community, it is found that members of ascending generations are generally addressed with kinship titles (mother, father) but respond by calling their children by name.

Thus the speech community does not just stop at the sharing of the same language code. As a matter of fact, people who share the same language and do not share patterns that deal with rules of appropriate use of language, attitudes, sociocultural understanding, linguistic and cultural values among others, cannot be identified as a speech community. Even though people sharing all the above are actually members of the same speech community, whether they share the same language code, they need to share rules of its use. Therefore, the definition of speech community in terms of language only seems insufficient, for, it deals with linguistic as well as communicative patterns shared by a group or groups. By so doing, linguistic and communicative boundaries between communities cannot be defined by linguistic features only but also by other communicative shared knowledge socio- culturally constructed by individuals to conduct and interpret speech in a successful way.

### **3.2. Variants forms of social deixis in speech community**

Variants derive from forms of social deixis. According to Levinson (1983), there are two major forms of/ social deixis: relational social deixis and absolute social deixis. Relational social deixis is related to social relationship among participants. As far as absolute social deixis is concerned, it has to do with forms related to social roles. These forms by Levinson are the basis on which vertical and horizontal natures of relationship among people are established. It is the nature of relationship that determines the types of link among people from which given variants of deixis is revealed. Some of such variants include titles, honorifics and kin terms. In this vein, the major variants of Mmaala deixis on which I am focusing more in this section namely: titles, honorifics, kinships and names, derived from the two main types of link existing among speakers, namely: social links and family ties

#### **3.2.1. Social links**

This type of links is governed by two parameters: social hierarchy and social recognition. The former is revealed by titles and the latter by honorifics.

##### **- Titles:**

They are governed by social hierarchy. Titles in the Mmaala community can be used either with name or without name. Depending on the social status of participants, titles can be reciprocally used or not. The common titles found in the community are presented in the following:

**Titles**  
 (1) Ofun  
 Chief  
 ( chief or king)  
 (2) ɔgɔn  
 notable



( traditional notable)  
 (3) olumu  
 insider  
 (man member of the secret society)  
 (4) ɔŋɔl  
 insider  
 (woman member of the secret society)

- **Honorifics:**

Honorifics are governed by social recognition. These linguistic forms refer most often to people who are regarded in the community. There are about two honorifics which are mostly used among the in Mmaala. The most used honorifics are the following:

**Honorific**  
 (5) Ambasa  
 twin  
 (twin or twins' mother or father)  
 (6) ɔgɔndo  
 mother  
 (child's mother)

**3.2.2. Family ties**

These kinds of ties are related to reproduction which actually goes beyond genealogy. This is governed by the genealogy parameter and the matrimonial parameter. The major variants which derive from these parameters are kinships whose conception integrates both genealogy and marriage ties. Read (2001) suggests that the argument that reproduction is the basis upon which kinship relations are defined via the parents-children relationships is appealing in its simplicity. In this regard, Dysktra (2009) tackles the notion of kinships as ties which are traditionally based on blood and marriage. Thus, kinships show the way people are related to one another; either by blood (biological link and even adoption) or by marriage. This gets to maintain family members in what can be referred to as *kinship networks*. These networks reveal how people are interconnected by genealogical or matrimonial ties. The former ties have to do with consanguineous kinships and the latter ties with affinal kinships.

- **Consanguineal kinships**

They can be divided into two: lineal kinships and collateral kinships. Lineal kinships are parent-children relationships (father, mother, son, daughter, child, etc) whereas collateral kinships are extended relatives (uncle, aunt, etc). As far as kin terms in the community are concerned, the most commonly used consanguineal kinships include:

**Lineal:**  
**Kin term**  
 (7) tata

- father  
 (father or father's brother)  
 (8) ina  
 mother  
 (mother or father's sister)  
 (9) mɔɔnɔ  
 child  
 (son/daughter, brother's child)  
 (10) endimen  
 brother/sister  
 (brother/sister, father's brother's child)  
 (11) muna tata  
 brother  
 (brother : from paternal link)  
 (12) muna may  
 brother  
 (brother : from maternal link)

**Collateral:**

- (13) Tata ɔgɔn  
 grandfather  
 (paternal or maternal grandfather)  
 (14) Ina ɔgɔn  
 grandmother  
 (paternal or maternal grandmother)  
 (15) anana  
 grandchild  
 (child's son or daughter)  
 (16) indindiliŋ  
 great grandchild  
 (grandchild's son or daughter)  
 (17) indandalɔŋ  
 great-great grandchild  
 (child of grandchild's son or daughter)

**- Affinal kinships**

They are related terms established by matrimonial link. The commonly used in the Mmaala community as the following

**Kin terms**

- (18) ɔnem  
 husband  
 (husband or husband's brother or sister)  
 (19) agany  
 wife  
 ( wife or brother's wife)  
 (20) oŋino  
 in'law  
 (father-, son- or brother- in-law)  
 (21) isɔm  
 in'law  
 (mother- or son- in-law)  
 (22) munyaŋa  
 In'law  
 (sister- or brother- in-law)  
 (23) ewem

- co-wife  
(husband or husband brother/cousin's wife)  
(24)                      embieny
- nephew  
(sister's child)  
(25)                      sembiny
- Cousin  
(maternal cousin)  
(26)                      idagany/sikenye  
                              uncle/aunt  
(maternal uncle or aunt)

### **Names:**

Names are a family concern; they are generally given to individuals by family members. That is why they can be considered as part and parcel of family ties. The speaker will address his/her listener using a kin term only, or a kin term followed by name. Sometimes names are perpetuated from generation to generation and families are referred to as being members of the same ascendant. It can be seen from the above that descendants are extended up to the fifth generation (from grandparents to great-great-grandchildren).

The choice of a kin term depends on the type of relative one is addressing. From the above we can see that unlike European language like French, there is no particular term for uncle/aunt, cousin or nephew/niece in the paternal family among the Mmaala as it can be seen in (7), (8), (9) and (10). Such terms are what Hedican (2012) refers to as passive terms since many people can be put under them. We also note that one can address his/her brother, sister, or cousin depending on whether the tie is paternal or maternal. Therefore, kin terms in (11) and (12) are used to address a member from the paternal family only and the maternal family only, respectively. If the addressee is a relative from the maternal family, the addressor will not use the term in (10).

Kin terms that are generic for paternal ties are very specific for maternal ties. In this vein, the term in (26) stands for mother's brother/sister (maternal uncle only). The term in (22) is only used by a husband or his brother or cousin to address his wife's sisters vice versa; the term in (21) is only used by a mother and her daughter's husband to address each other. We can see the same specificity in (27): that term can only be used with a relative of the same generation from the same maternal family (maternal cousin only). Hence, it can be noted that whereas kinships are mostly generalised for paternal ties, they are more specified for maternal ones in the Mmaala community. Kinships terminology reveals kind of matriarchal organisation of the community. Then, there may be a feeling for an individual to be closer to his/her maternal family.

The use of social deixis is established on four variants which are used following a kind of combinations system as follows:

**Variants**

Title  
 Honorifics  
 Kinships  
 Names

**Combinations**

Title only or Title + Name  
 Honorific only or Honorific +Name  
 Kin term only or Kin term +Name  
 Name or diminutive

Participants are addressed through a selection of titles, honorific, kin terms and names or diminutives. These variants can be used alone or combined.

**Conclusion**

Language as a tool people use to interact with one another is a way through which they get to fulfill quite a number of things that go beyond the only fact of communicating. Conveying a message is based on the need people have to communicate thoughts encompassing their will to reveal the conception of themselves and the world around them. Through language people reveal who they are and what they think and believe. The framework used in this study made it possible to interpret the use of language in context by participants and understand how they imply meaning and consider communicative patterns. From the foregoing, I contribute in showing that the linguistic carving of social position is bounded by two types of milestones: context and relationship. The study undertaken enables one to realize that in communicative events participants are actually taking to consider the context of speech event as well as relationships existing among them when they meet in such events. These milestones condition the appropriate use of linguistic items through which they get to reveal social positions of one another. In fact, context of language use is relevant in the expression of participants' social positions. This is conditioned by the contextual expression of relationships among participants involved in the communicative act. Relationships are viewed in terms of nature and type. In a communicative event, the nature of relationships among participants may be either horizontal (solidarity) or vertical (power/authority). The nature of relationships determines the two types of links participants get to establish: family ties and social links. From a given type of link, social position gets to be revealed on the basis of four parameters: genealogy and matrimonial situation (for family ties), social hierarchy and social recognition (for social links). The use of language in context is an act that goes beyond linguistic devices to integrate social factors. Titles, honorifics, kinships as social deixis become indexes of social organization and their appropriate use in context play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion.

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