

Contrastive Stress as an off-Record Politeness Strategy: An Analysis of Swahili and Lubukusu Languages

Eunice Nafula Neyole, Fridah Miruka & Deborah N. Amukowa

Masinde Muliro University of Science & Technology, Kenya

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.71007>

Received: 04 September 2023; Accepted: 09 September 2023; Published: 14 October 2023

ABSTRACT

Interpretation of the intended meaning is an important factor to be considered by the interlocutors in any communicative event. Although a speaker chooses a strategy that enables the communication of the message in a well-interpreted manner, there by eliminating ambiguity, the same does not arise in the use of contrastive stress. Contrastive stress is a strategy that communicates off record politeness by giving out hints. This paper discusses contrastive stress as an off-record politeness strategy with reference to Kiswahili and Lubukusu languages. The Politeness theory founded by Brown & Levinson (1978) and later developed by them in 1987 was adopted for this study. Manguliechi's oration from the *Babukusu* community and Bi. Msafwari's oration from the Swahili community were the basis for analysis. This study relied on library recordings of Manguliechi's orature and YouTube files of *Mawaidhana Bi. Msafwari (Bi. Msafwari's counsel)*. Analysis indicates that contrastive stress can function as an indirect politeness strategy through its characteristic use of free stress. Contrastive stress changes the intonation of the word in use thus giving a basis for more than one interpretation of meaning. The unusual emphasis is a hint which the speaker deliberately gives to the hearer in a given context. The paper concludes that identifying the intended meaning in contrastive stress is complex. The complexity arises due to the fact that contrastive stress has opposing functions within the same statement. This paper recommends that detection of the presuppositions in contrastive stress can reduce ambiguity and direct the hearer's interpretation toward the intended meaning.

Key words: contrastive stress, off-record, politeness

INTRODUCTION

Prosody is an aspect of speech which is created by variations in pitch, loudness and duration of speech sounds or, respectively, recesses within a verbal utterance. Besides marking syntactic and word boundaries, sentence mode and phrasal stress as well as showing speaker's emotions, prosody facilitates lexical and syntactic speech processing. It also affects pragmatics by showing the speaker's intentions and emotions as well as helping the listener to anticipate an intended turn-taking (Seiferth & Otten, 2008). This implies that sound and meaning have an important role in conveying a message. From the special phonological arrangement, semantics can detect whether a word has meaning or not in a specific language. Communication therefore arises from meaningful units created according to special phonological rules and a special order of the phonological discipline. This implies that language has a certain order of its pronunciation that leads to the discovery of meaning. When that order is violated, ambiguity is created in the interpretation of the intended meaning. Levis & Levis (2018) hold this view when they posit that pronunciation features are not equal in how they affect listeners' ability to comprehend meaning. It is in this context that this paper examines contrastive stress as a linguistic strategy used by a speaker to deliver message off record.

Off-record is a politeness strategy that involves the use of language in an indirect manner (Brenner, 2018).

The speaker uses lexicons with primary meaning to focus on additional meaning. This additional meaning is the one that is related to the context. Although there exists meaning in the lexicon, what is intended is to be understood by being linked to the context. Therefore, the intended meaning that the speaker attaches importance to is ambiguous because those who do not associate it with the contextual cues may miss out on the speaker's intended meaning (Obuchi and Sangili, 2016). Off-record strategy portrays the speaker as one who does not pressurize the listener to accept his message because the meaning that the listener interprets is his personal choice and responsibility. Therefore, utterances made off-record are ambiguous because the intended meaning is in what the speaker intends to say even if it is not in the lexicon provided (Neale in Leth, 2021). The meaning of the lexicon may therefore be misleading to the hearer because one has to look for an additional meaning for each statement, the pragmatic meaning. Such a situation arises in the use of contrastive stress.

Contrastive stress is an off-record strategy that refers to the stress placed on a word or syllable contrary to its normal stress. This means that the word bearing the contrastive stress is pronounced with an unusual stress. The stress is unusual because the length of the stressed syllable is longer than usual. The stress length used in pronunciation can either be short, normal or long (Matinde, 2012). Contrastive stress takes into account the long length put in pronunciation of a syllable of a word. However contrastive stress does not change the meaning of the word but rather gives the word an unusual pronunciation. These utterances tend to provide various cues that the speaker intentionally gives to be a hint of the intended message for the hearer. This study attempts to describe contrastive stress as an off-record politeness strategy with reference to examples in Kiswahili and Lubukusu languages.

Lubukusu is a dialect of the Masaba language spoken by *Babukusu*: one of the Luhya dialects living in Western part of Kenya. The language is closely related to Gisu from Eastern Uganda and Tachoni from Western Kenya. Namulunda (2011) indicates that Bukusu culture is religious, and in spite of the passage of time, it has retained various practices of its history, taboos, life, death, social boundaries, morals, rights, marriages and social issues in songs, proverbs, stories and chronicles. In dealing with issues affecting society, various materials are used, including public talks. In the *Babukusu* culture there is a custom of appointing certain people from a select clan to be traditional preachers. Some of the clans that have produced preachers are: *Batikwika*, *Babuya*, *Babulo* and *Bakhwami* (Mukhwana, 1996). The preachers are elders in the community who understand the culture in-depth and who can develop activities and discuss emerging issues in the community. One of the people appointed in this regard was Manguliechi.

Manguliechi was a traditional preacher who was vastly used in oral poetry, gestures and body movements based on the culture of the community to counsel and advise (Barasa & Angwele, 2017). He used his gestures and the audience's as well as words to express cultural identity and relations in oral poetry. According to Mukhwana (1986), Manguliechi officially started performing especially in post-funeral rituals-*khuswena kumuse* in November 1985. As indicated by Nandemu & Makokha (2012), the man was gifted with supernatural powers and, he knew the *Babukusu* culture thoroughly well. He used a unique style in explaining social issues until he passed away in July 2012. After his death, it was difficult to find his successor especially due to the unique style of his presentation. A number of studies have been conducted on him (Mukhwana, 1996; Musungu, 2006; Nandemu & Makokha 2012) for various purposes. However, one of the aspects identified in these studies is his unique use of language in communication. It is for this reason that the current study sampled his recordings for analysis of his use of off-record strategies in communication.

Kiswahili is a Bantu language, originally spoken along the East African Coastal strip, from Sabaki, Tana River down to Mtwara in Tanzania. Kiswahili language has spread to many parts of the African continent and the rest of the world. Currently, Kiswahili is not a language confined to the region of its origin, East Africa. The sentiments of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization, (UNESCO, 2020) demonstrate the spread and growth of Kiswahili when he says that the language is spoken by a population of 120 to around 150 million people, and it has flourished beyond the borders of its native speakers. Mrs. Msafwari, fondly referred to as Bi. Msafwari by her listeners is a family counsellor who advises mainly on marital issues on Kenyan Citizen TV channel. She employs a unique style of communicating by use of Kiswahili language. Her works have also been analyzed in this study, for purposes of identifying how off-record politeness obtains in Kiswahili with special focus on contrastive stress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of Lubukusu verb structure shows that basically, the verb takes a subject prefix, followed by an optional tense marker, which may in turn be followed by an object prefix, culminating in the lexical verb (Mutonyi, 1992). Also, the verbal prefixes either end in a vowel or nasal. Mutonyi's study adopted the mora theories and results indicated that the consonant structure did not cause mora change but the vowel or the consonant and vowel structure determined the change. The study also mentioned that vowel lengthening is a distinctive feature in the Lubukusu language as indicated in the following examples: *xuuroora* presented phonetically as [xuuro:ra] (to dream) and *xuurora* presented as [xuurora] (to pick). The study showed that these are phonological processes that determine the meaning of the word. Accordingly, the meaning of the words is differentiated by the length interval on the vowels that are used. However, in this study, syllable lengthening derived from contrastive stress does not occur as a phonological process that changes the meaning of the word but as a deliberate strategy made by the speaker to intentionally change the intonation of the word in its pronunciation so as to communicate some information that is not clearly stated in the lexicon. The speaker performs this speech act in order to perform an indirect act which provides various hints to be deduced by the hearer.

In a study that was conducted by students and clinicians at the University of Melbourne in 2014 on contrastive stress, whose aim was to determine the reasons for the use of contrastive stress in the dialogue between doctors and patients, results indicated that contrastive stress was used for different purposes depending on the context. The study showed for example, that contrastive stress could be used to convey certain important messages. In addition, one could distinguish the opinion of two characters, especially if they wanted to convince the doctor to favor their line of thought. This study also seeks to find out the use of contrastive stress in dissemination of indigenous knowledge. In such a context, the participants are from all walks of life.

THEORY

Brown & Levinson's (1987) Politeness theory focuses on universal principles that underlie the construction of polite utterances. In doing so, they analyze four politeness strategies employed by a speaker in encoding their message in order to give attention to face wants. They therefore propose positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record and on-record as strategies that a speaker can employ to save face during a communicative act. A communicative act is off-record if it is done in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the speech act. The speaker leaves himself out by providing a number of defensible interpretations; cannot therefore be held to have committed himself to just one particular interpretation of his act.

The intention or intended meaning of the speaker is not obtained by examining only the lexicon used but also the wider context of communication. In the use of off-record strategy, lexicons are used to convey the pragmatic meaning in order to avoid embarrassment (Golidina, 2014). This situation shows that interpretation of the intended meaning is complex. This is due to the fact that the interpreted meaning depends on the lexicon used, the context, the meaning intended by the speaker and finally, the meaning

deciphered by the hearer or listener. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker should be creative in encoding his message by involving contextual parameters because they are meant to give cues to the hearer. In addition, the speaker does not take blame for the meaning interpreted by the hearer because the interpreted meaning is the hearer's responsibility. One of the sub-strategies or forms identified in Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory to convey a message off record is contrastive stress.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted content analysis method to analyze recorded conversations. Basing on Jwan & Ong'ondo (2011), focus was placed on examining meaning as derived from texts or expressions between people in an act of communication. The structure and function of the text was analyzed to determine the reasons for the use of words in a certain way, how the arrangement of words in the given order worked in the specific text and the effect of those words on the listener. Media library CD son Manguliechi's oration recorded by West FM radio station was listened to and transcribed. Additionally, YouTube recordings on Bi. Msafwari's oration by the Citizen Television channel were listened to and transcribed. Phrases with words that indicated the use of contrastive stress were extracted from the written transcriptions and analyzed based on Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, contrastive stress as an off-record politeness strategy has been described with reference to Swahili and Lubukusu languages.

While dealing with the subject of political leadership, Manguliechi makes a number of statements that employ contrastive stress to pass across messages to his audience. Some of the statements in Lubukusu are here below presented and explained.

*Bubwilulabulia we khabi. Ewe Munyasiabubwilulabulia we khabine **semwilulaa** Ewe Kapiteni **semwilulaa**.*

Good things accompany lucky people. Munyasia, good things accompany lucky people. Why can't you assess, Kaputeni why can't you evaluate (issues) .(Our translation)

Manguliechi in this context is giving counsel to political leaders. He is advising them what they need to do in order to attract development in their regions. In the first part of the statement, he says, "*Bubwilula bulia we khabi*"- (good things accompany lucky people) which is a saying of the Bukusu community. In this statement the noun "*bubwilula*" is highlighted because it is repeated twice "***Bubwilula** bulia we khabi. Ewe Munyasia **bubwilula** bulia we khabi*". The word "*bubwilula*" is presented phonetically as [βuβwilula]. In the pronunciation of this word, the syllables used have normal time length. However, when he completes the statement, he uses the root of the noun to form the verb "*semwilulā*". This occurs in the statement "***semwilulā***". "*Ewe, Kaputeni, **semwilulā***." The verb "*semwilulā*" is presented phonetically as [semwilula:]. In that word, a long length interval has been revealed. A long vowel is used in the last syllable which is pronounced with longer time length compared to the word's normal length in the word "*bubwilula*" [βuβwilula]. The word therefore bares contrastive stress as a characteristic. However, the long vowel used in the word does not change the etymological meaning of the word. Instead, more emphasis has been placed on that last syllable. The emphasis changes the intonation of the word "*semwilulā*" and provides for more than one interpretation of the statement as shown below:

1. There is a presupposition that leaders referred to have not been evaluating matters.

The intonation implies that the contrastive stress intends to criticize or condemn the state of leaders not

carrying out their duty to evaluate matters well and thus ending up not attracting development for their community.

2. The second interpretation gives the intention of encouraging the political leaders to strive to assess or evaluate matters.

The political leaders are being encouraged to give careful attention to their actions so that they positively contribute to the development of their communities.

The use of contrastive stress has brought about two different interpretations of the word "*semwililā*" because of the change in the pronunciation. The change in intonation reveals the state of concern from Manguliechi about the accountability of leaders. He is not satisfied with the way leaders are carrying out their duties, so he shows criticism and encouragement at the same time through the use of contrastive stress. It is as if he is accusing them of irresponsibility but, in the same statement urging them or encouraging them to carry out proper assessment and evaluation of political issues and improve their leadership.

While desirous of leaders to form political alliances with other like-minded political parties he says:

Engila yakama ewowasio, semwakamaa.

A road terminates at someone's door step. Why can't you cooperate? (Our translation)

In this statement he urges leaders to join other parties with the similar vision to increase their ability to succeed in taking over the leadership of the nation. He is encouraging leaders to go beyond their regional boundaries and collaborate with other political leaders. The word that is given emphasis in this statement is "*yakama*" (cooperate). In the first use of the word "*yakama*" which is phonetically presented as [yakama], normal vowel length is used. However, in the verb formed from the noun "*semwakamā*" (why can't you cooperate) phonetically presented as [semwakama:], in which a long vowel is used in the last syllable. The time duration of the pronunciation of the last syllable has been lengthened. This gives the word contrastive stress. The two interpretations which result are:

1. An encouragement for the leaders to cooperate with others.
2. A criticism to the leaders for their failure to cooperate.

Manguliechi also makes the following statement:

Engoso seyandakhambwa, ekhoya babechukhulu bakhwakala. Ewe Munyasa ne sewakalaa!
Wamalwa
sewakalaa!

You need (to have) grandchildren to help you scratch an itchy boil that is on your back. Manyasa, why can't you scratch? Wamalwa, why can't you scratch? (Our translation)

In the statement above, he criticizes those political leaders who fail to cooperate with other politicians from other political parties. In his opinion, the leaders are not willing to seek knowledge from other progressive communities. He explains this by likening it to a boil on a person's back. This is to say that if the abscess is where a person can't reach by oneself, one would require help from others. In the first use of "*bakhwakala*", phonetically presented as [βaxwakala], the usual pronunciation in terms of time length has been used. But in the word "*sewakalā*" presented phonetically as [sewakala:], the last syllable is pronounced for a longer time than normal. There is a contrastive stress placed on that word through the lengthened syllable, adding an unusual emphasis during pronunciation. The interpretations that result from the contrastive stress placed are:

1. An encouragement for political leaders to cooperate with other leaders.
2. A criticism about political leaders who have failed to cooperate with other political leaders.

These results are consistent with Mutonyi's (1992) work on Lubukusu verb, which showed that vowel lengthening is a distinctive feature in the Lubukusu language. According to that study, the meaning of words is differentiated depending on the syllable being lengthened. However, in the current study, syllable lengthening does not occur as a phonological process that changes the meaning of the word, but as a deliberate strategy employed by the speaker to intentionally change the intonation of the word. The speaker's intention is to save the listener's face by allowing him make his own interpretation from the contextual cues made available. One interpretation of meaning that stands out by use of contrastive stress Lubukusu is criticism.

According to Brown & Levinson (1987) politeness theory, contrastive stress demonstrates the use of presuppositions which together with contextual violation carries criticism. Presuppositions are made about something, events or situations but, are not usually verified (Habwe & Zaja, 2019). The statement made by the speaker is then loaded with various meanings. The speaker assumes that the listener on one hand is aware of some previous information about the matter being discussed before he gives new information in the next additional phrase. The speaker assumes that the listener will accept and interpret what is being said clearly. The new information provided by the additional phrase on the other hand becomes a presupposition of the first statement by way of comparison. This allows contrastive stress in the statements to bring out criticism as is demonstrated in the following examples:

Bubwilula bulia we khabi. Ewe Munyasia bubwilula bulia we khabi. semwilulā Ewe Kapiteni semwilulā

Good things befall the lucky people. Munyasia, good things befall lucky people. Try to attract luck, Kapten try to attract luck. (Our translation)

This statement is a saying among the Bukusu community that translates to good things or well-made goodies are made for lucky people. This is shared knowledge that is well understood by members of the community. The other part of the statement: "*semwilulā, Ewe Kapiteni semwilulā*" (Try to attract luck, Kapten try to attract luck.) has the presupposition which is a criticism to Munyasia and Kapten for their inability to carefully consider issues and therefore may not get good results. Had he told the leaders directly that they had failed to perform their duties, then they would have felt that they had been shamed publicly. However, the contrastive stress in the word "*semwilulā*" gives a presupposition about the same information, albeit indirectly.

In another example cited earlier, he says,

Engila yakama ewowasio, semwakamaa, translated as:

A road terminates at someones door step. Why can't you cooperate. (Our translation)

The opening phrase "*Engila yakama ewowasio*" is a saying of the community that gives the message that success is best achieved by cooperating with others. However, the second part of the statement "*semwakaamā*", "why can't you cooperate" gives the presupposition that the leaders are rigid and have not cooperated with other leaders. Comparing the phrase "*engila yakama ewo wasio*" and "*semwakaamā*" brings out the assumption that, the leaders are well aware that they can get political assistance from other political leaders. However, by the phrase "*semwakamā*," Manguliechi is surprised that the political leadership is rigid and locked to one political region. The contrastive stress used provides the presupposition that the leaders do not cooperate with their peers from other political parties, which, brings about criticism. He criticizes the

behavior of leaders who have alienated themselves from those in other political formations, yet they could be core in bringing them development. It is important to note, however, that the meaning that would be decided upon would depend on the interpretation of the individual listener. Although Manguliechi has made one statement, contrastive stress gives the listener the opportunity for different interpretations (Muller and Levis, 2020).

The analysis indicates that contrastive stress in Lubukusu emerges when used together with community expressions in sayings. In the sayings used, the first phrase gives information on the shared knowledge known to the members of the community about the given topic. The second part of the statement involves verbs that give presuppositions. These presuppositions are hints or indicators of the intended meaning. The results also indicate that contrastive stress is used in verbs, especially on the last syllable of the verb. In addition, contrastive stress changes the intonation of the word, which gives room for different interpretations of the intended meaning.

Besides the examples provided in Lubukusu, contrastive stress serves the same function, as an off-record politeness strategy in Kiswahili. This can be illustrated using excerpts from Bi. Msafwari's conversations. For instance, she says,

*Lakini ningependa hapa Mombasani tuwe mfano kwa wale wanawake wengine. Yaani tukaweze kuona kwamba uko ndani ya nyumba, ukajue majukumu yako. Majukumu yako ni umtengenezee bwanako kama ni breakfast, ni lunch, umpelekee maji ya kuoga hata kama uko na mfanyakazi lakini uelewe **wewe** kama mama majukumu yako ni nini.*

But I would like us here in Mombasa to be an example to those other women. That is, when in your house, know your responsibilities. Your responsibilities are to prepare for your husband, whether it's breakfast, lunch, or bath water. Even if you have a house help, you need to understand you as a wife, what your responsibilities are. (Our translation)

In this statement Bi. Msafwari encourages wives to identify and fulfill their responsibilities to their husbands in marriage. While referring to them, she has used the pronoun "wewe", "you" which is presented phonetically as [we:we] instead of "wewe" presented as [wewe]. In the word "wewe" the first syllable is pronounced with a longer time interval than usual. The words that appear before and after the word have been given normal stress thus, distinguishing it from other words..

Muller and Levis (2020) explain that words or syllables with contrasting stress are emphasized to determine the relationship of their message with other syllables and words used together. The unusual emphasis gives the word a chance to be given more attention compared to the message of the other words used. In the example above, Bi. Msafwari says, "...uelewe **wewe** kama mama majukumu yako ni nini." translated as, "...understand you as a wife, what your responsibilities are." The pronoun "wewe" (you) is emphasized with an unusual emphasis to draw the audience's attention to it. Therefore, the interpretation of the whole statement should in turn give importance to the emphasized word. In paying attention to that word, the following interpretations arise:

1. By failing to fulfill obligations in marriage, the essence of being called a wife becomes deficient.

If the above statement turns out to be true then it will be accepted that there are different categories of wives. However, the real wife is the one who fulfills her duties to her husband. In the pronunciation of [we:we] the length duration of the pronoun is extended, giving it a contrastive stress.

2. The emphasis also brings out the meaning that despite different opinions on responsibilities in marriage, a true wife is one who understands that she has marital responsibilities.

In another excerpt, Bi. Msafwari says:

*Kwa sababu wengi wanaolewa tu kwa sababu ya ule msisimuko wa mapenzi. Mnapoketi pale ndani ya nyumba mkafikiri kuwa kila labda utakavyokuwa umeolewa utakuwa ukipelekwa katika mikahawa ukila chakula au asubuhi mkiamka kama ni breakfast mwende hoteli mkale. Ningependa kuwaambia wanangu wapenzi, mwanamke hata akisoma afike wapi lazima kama amesema yes I do. Hulazimishwi na mtu kuolewa lakini kama utaamua kuolewa ni uelewe kwamba kwa kuolewa kuna **majukumu** ya kuolewa na mazito na ni mengi.*

Many get married due to the excitement of love. When you sit there in the house, you think that because you are married, you will always be taken to restaurants to eat, or when you wake up in the morning, whether it is breakfast, you will go to a hotel, I wish to tell you my dear children, even if a woman studies to whatever high level, so long as she said Yes, I do. You are not forced by anyone to get married, but if you decide to get married, you need to understand that by getting married, there are responsibilities. Marital responsibilities are many and heavy. (Our translation)

In statement above, Bi. Msafwari emphasizes to women that in marriage, there are responsibilities which must be fulfilled. In mentioning this, she, holds the view that marital responsibilities are a must for a woman. She is however, aware of those who hold a contrary opinion that marital responsibilities are slavery and should therefore, not be accepted. Bi. Msafwari is faced with the challenge of persuading all parties to accept her opinion, that, the responsibilities in marriage are not optional for a wife. When she uses the word “*majukumu*” (responsibilities) phonetically written as [majukumu:] contrastive stress is placed on the last syllable of the word. The length duration in the pronunciation of the last syllable is longer than usual but the meaning of the word remains unchanged. Bi. Msafwari does not want to openly force the women to accept her view on marital responsibilities, but the interpretation which obtains in that contrastive stress is that responsibilities exist and must be fulfilled. Attention of the interpretation of the whole phrase has been drawn to the word [majukumu:].

Another episode presents the following conversation between Bi Msafwari and Kanze;

Kanze: *Yeye anasema kwamba, yaani kule kuolewa ukiamua kuolewa, mtu huwa yuaolewa kwa sababu gani? Si mtu huwa yuaolewa ili akaweze kutoa upweke. Tunasema ‘company’ si mtu huwa yuaolewa ili akaweze kutoa photocopy? Haya yakuja mengi yaliingilia wapi?*

Bi. Msafwari: *Hakunaa. Hakuna kabisa tuseme kwamba mtu afanywa maid. Na kusema ukweli lazimawewe mwenyewe ukiwa mke uelewe kwamba...*

Kanze: The question is, why does one get married? One marries so as to get rid of loneliness. We say ‘companionship’. Doesn’t one marry so they can procreate? Where did these other responsibilities come from?

Bi. Msafwari: No. There is absolutely nothing true in the thought that in getting married one is made to become a maid. And truthfully, yourself, as a mother, should understand that... (Our translation)

This conversation between Kanze and Bi. Msafwari maintains the position that responsibilities in marriage should not be forced on the woman alone, but that all the partners in marriage should play their roles. She does not agree with the point of view that responsibilities are forced on wives, so in response she says: *hakunā* “No”, presented phonetically in Swahili as [hakuna:]. In this word “*hakunā*”, emphasis is placed on the last

syllable. This emphasis provides the presupposition that the thought of sharing responsibilities in marriage is not only rejected but impossible. The hint provided is that responsibilities in marriage are for women although, this is not said by the lexicon.

In another example Bi Msafwari says:

Bi. Msafwari: Sikiliza nikuambie mwanangu, nikwambie na nikufundishe, nikufundishe mahaba. **Mahaaba**, mahaba sijui niyaiteje kwa kiingereza unielewe mwanangu ama kwa kienglish ujue. Niseme pengine *ma-love*. Lakini nikisema *ma-love* pengine mnielewe vizuri.

Bi. Msafwari: Listen, my child, let me tell you and teach you, teach you about romance. Romance, romance, I don't know how to call it in English for you to comprehend, or know, my child. I should probably say "love". (Our translation)

Bi. Msafwari in the above statement advises women on how they can foster romance in their marriages. She implores them to heed her advice about *love* by saying, "...but let me teach you about "mahaba. **Mahāba mahaba**", (romance). In the word "mahāba" phonetically presented as [maha:ba], the middle syllable is articulated with a longer duration. Although Bi Msafwari's opinion about romance is opposed by those who refer to themselves intellectuals, the attraction that points to the word "mahāba" (romance), will attract many to listen to her advice because one interpretation that is derived from that word is that there is something new that she wants to explain about romance. Another interpretation is that she wants to explain the truth in the meaning of the word [maha:ba]. Attention is given to the importance of the word [maha:ba] in the interpretation of the whole statement. Therefore, there is a presupposition that the previous information that the listeners might be having about the meaning of the word [maha:ba] is false.

The foregoing discussion alludes to the possibility that contrastive stress leads to the existence of indirectness in language use. This is brought about by the fact that the presuppositions used provide for various interpretations of the intended meaning of the word in question. Indemaru *et al.*, (2015) while investigating the use of intonation among Koreans noted that female characters associated high intonation with politeness while male characters associated high intonation with indifference to politeness. This shows that the interpretation of the meaning will vary, depending on the intonation of the word which is affected by the stress placed on it. The different interpretations of meaning to be determined will depend on the listener(s).

These results show that in the Kiswahili language, contrastive stress can manifest on various syllables, both in the middle of the word and penultimate. For example, in the words [maha:ba] and [we:we] contrastive stress occurs in the middle. However, in the words [majukumu:] and [hakuna:] contrastive stress occurs in the penultimate syllable. Obuchi & Mukhwana (2015) have shown that Kiswahili language adopts closed stress in which words are stressed on the second syllable from the end of the word. Contrastive stress, however, tends to violate that rule as some words are stressed on the last syllable. Contrastive stress therefore, is used intentionally by the speaker as a strategy to convey an indirect message. On the other hand, in Lubukusu, contrastive stress manifests in the last syllable of the word.

Results have also shown that contrastive stress in both languages occurs in open syllables. Moreover, it has been shown that when contrastive stress is used, attention is directed to the specific word in question. The specific word given attention therefore, carries the intended meaning.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that interpretation of meaning in the use of contrastive stress is complex. The complexity is due to the fact that contrastive stress appears to be a free type stress where emphasis is placed

on a syllable depending on the intention of the speaker. Besides, contrastive stress conveys meaning by use of hints, and this gives it the distinctive feature of giving the listener an implicature rather than the intended meaning. Therefore, although stress is a very important element that enables the listener to identify words and comprehend meaning, contrastive stress can hinder the recipient from deciphering the intended meaning. This paper recommends that when the listener is faced with contrastive stress, they should first identify the shared knowledge contained in the previous statement, then, filter out the presuppositions that appear in the text. This is where they will find the relationship between what is said and other semantic categories that are not clearly evident (Muller and Levis, 2020).

REFERENCES

1. Agwuele, A. & Barasa, M. (2017). *The Convergence of Language and Culture in Manguliechi's Bukusu after Burial Oratory Khuswala Kumuse: Indigenous Knowledge for Sustainable Development in Kenya*. Kisii University.
2. Brenner, R. (2018). *Using Indirectness at Work*. Chaco Canyon Consulting. <http://chacocanyon.com>, Vol.6.
3. Brown, P & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
4. Brown, P & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5. *Doctors Speak Up*. (2014). Retrieved February 19th, 2023, from Doctors Speak Up: <https://doctorspeakup.com/content/contrastive-stress>
6. Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative & Mixed Methodologies*. New York: Oxford University Press.
7. Golidina, N. (2014). *A Pragmatic Analysis of Politeness Strategies and Politeness Principles in Up Town Girls*.
8. Idemaru, K; Winter, B & Brown, L. (2015). The Role of Pitch in Perceiving Politeness in Korean Language. *International Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, <https://www.semanticscholar.org>. Semantic Scholar.
9. Jwan, O and Ong'ondo, C. (2011). *Qualitative Research: An Introduction to Principles and Techniques*. Eldoret: Moi University Press.
10. Levis, J & Levis, M. (2018). Teaching High-Value Pronunciation Features: Contrastive Stress for Intermediate Learners. *The CATESOL Journal*, Vol 30.1:139-160
11. Leth, P. (2021). Utterance Interpretation and Actual Intentions. *Axiomathes*, <https://philpapers.org/rec/LETUIA-2>, Vol.31 (3):279-298 .
12. Massamba, D. (2002). *Historia ya Kiswahili 50BK hadi 1500BK*. Nairobi: The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
13. Matinde, S. (2012). *Dafina ya Lugha Isimu na Nadharia ya Sekondari, Vyuvo vya Kati na Vyuvo Vikuu*. Mwanza, Tanzania: serengeti.
14. Mukhwana, K. (1996). *Khuswala Kumuse: The Ritual and Rite Significance among Babukusu of Western Kenya*.
15. Muller, L and Levis, J. (2019). Teaching Contrastive Stress for Varied Speaking Levels. *Proceedings of the 11th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching conference* (kur.Pp 316-325). Northern Arizona: Iowa State University.
16. Musungu, J. (2006). *An Analysis of the Context and Meaning of the Poetry within the Bukusu Khuswala Kumuse Funeral Ritual*. Master of Arts: Kenyatta University.
17. Mutonyi, N. (1992). Cs and Vs: the case of Bukusu prosodic structure. *Ohio State University working papers in linguistics 41*, <https://glottolog.org/resource>, PP 46-84.
18. Namulunda, F. (2011). *The Bukusu of Kenya Folktales, Culture and Social Identities*. North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.
19. Nandemu, B. & Makokha, T. (2012). *Manguliechi Succession: Life and Times of Omukambisi Joseph*

Natembeya, A Bukusu Traditional Preacher Bungoma: West FM Radio.

20. Obuchi, S na Sangili, N. (2016). *Taaluma ya Maana Semantiki na Pragmatiki*. Nairobi: The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
21. Seiferth, W& Otten, M. (2008). *The role of prosodic features in the differentiation of meaning: L.O.G.O.S Interdisziplinair Vol.16 (20:114-119*
22. UNESCO. (2020, February 21). *Lugha ya Kiswahili yazidi kupaa duniani*. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from Umoja wa Mataifa: <https://news.un.org/sw/story/2020/02/1082501>