GERMIVOIRE

Revue scientifique de littérature, des langues et des sciences sociales

Université Félix Houphouët Boigny

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REVUE SCIENTIFIQUE DE LITTERATURE
DES LANGUES ET DES SCIENCES SOCIALES

18/2023

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Éditorial

Bien chers toutes et tous,

Nous revoilà ! Á nos retrouvailles semestrielles !! Avec Germivoire, notre Revue vôtre ! Où, de vous à nous et de nous à vous, des échanges sont faits. Dans le cadre scientifique !! Où sciences humaines ou d´autres sciences entrent en communion et exposent des résultats de certaines de leurs quêtes générales ou particulières. Résultats qui seront vus et appréciés, espérons-le, par d´autres personnes intéressées par les sujets traités. Puisque Germivoire est une Revue en ligne/online.

Dans le labour de ce cadre ou périmètre cultivable á diverses couches, les récoltes semestrielles présentes se sont révélées variables de saveurs. Et la variété des saveurs donnent un bon goût particulier á ce numéro de Germivoire.

Et ce bon goût particulier vient des récoltes mises ensemble des champs aux parcelles différentes que sont l´anglais, l'histoire, les lettres françaises modernes, les sciences du langage et de la communication et la sociologie. Pour s´en faire une idée selon son intérêt à l´instruction, tout esprit curieux pourrait se référer aux différentes étiquettes de ces récoltes dans notre table des matières.

Á vos plaisirs solaires !i!

Brahima Diaby

A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF HONORIFIC EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH AND SENAR

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Abstract

Senar is a minority language of the Gur family located in the western part of Burkina Faso while English is a worldwide Indo-European language. English honorifics have largely been studied but there is not yet a published work on Senar honorifics so that one cannot tell how honorifics functions contrastively in both languages in a context where English is learnt by Senar speakers as a foreign language. This paper tackles the social base on which the speakers of both languages back up their honorific expressions. Following a traditional methodology in Contrastive Analysis, honorifics in both languages are described and compared. The results show that there are similarities and differences in the structures of honorifics in both languages but English mostly refers to the social status whereas Senar refers to age. The outcome of the study may be helpful for language teaching, translation and cross-cultural communication on the one hand, and provide more understanding of the phenomenon of deixis on the other hand.

Key words: honorifics, politeness, deixis, Senar, English

Introduction

Honorifics are grammatical units that indicate social position and level of intimacy between speakers, the addressor and the addressee, and more specifically a high social status (H. Bussmann, 1996). They can involve a relationship of intimacy, familiarity, distancing, respect or even mistrust. Their employment and function are linked to the social organization of each community. More numerous and more complex in highly hierarchical or stratified societies, they are based only on age and parental relationship in egalitarian societies (W. A. Folley, 1997).

Honorifics are present in almost all the languages studied in the world, but they do not have the same form and do not function in the same way. The paper focuses on the pragmalinguistic characteristics and sociopragmatic constraints that govern honorifics in Senar, a Senufo language from western Burkina Faso spoken by a community of less than one million people, and in English, a Germanic language spoken by hundreds of millions of people. English has been widely studied and the system of how its honorifics work is well known. But very few studies have been done on Senar, and even fewer comparative studies with other African and European languages. And yet, the speakers of Senar learn English as a foreign language without knowing the functioning of certain expressions and without making the difference with the system of functioning of these expressions with their mother tongue. A better knowledge of English culture as well as awareness of how its politeness system works will allow the Senufo, the native speakers of Senar, to better understand the contours of the language in order to improve their learning of English.

The overall objective of this study is to highlight the similarities and differences between the honorifics of Senar (the Kulele diaclect spoken at Niankorodougou, in the Leraba province) and English in order to identify the difficulties that could arise in intercultural communication but also to facilitate the learning of English by native speakers of Senar.

1. Methodology

The study focuses on the morphological and semantic-referential semantics characteristics of honorifics in both languages. It is based on the semantic approach of R. Brown and A. Gilman (1960) on the description of the pronouns of power and solidarity, and the pragmatic approach of G. Leech (2014) on politeness which starts from the postulate that no linguistic expression is a priori neither polite nor impolite – it all depends on the context.

Consequently, the expressions analyzed are the terms of address and the terms of kinship pertaining to relational social deixis. To achieve this, we used available descriptive data on English (R. Brown and A. Gilman, 1960; S. C. Levinson, 1983; W. A. Folley, 1997; M. Farghal and A. Shakir, 1994; A. A. Matti, 2011; O'Keeffe et al., 2011; H. S. S. A -Ni'aymi, 2007; M. Cook, 2014; G. Leech, 2014), and data from interviews and questionnaires collected from native speakers of Senar.

2. Results and Analysis

The results are analyzed in three points: the morphology of the terms of address and kinship relating to the relational social deixis, their pragmalinguistic characteristics and the sociopragmatic constraints.

2.1. Morphology of terms of address

The morphology of English and Senar address and kinship terms is presented. It is followed by the comparison of the honorific expressions of the two languages.

The data for both languages concerns pronouns, first names, surnames, nicknames, kinship terms, marital and extramarital intimacy terms and gerontocratic terms as presented in the table 1.

Table 1: Morphology of honorific expressions in English and Senar (M. Ouattara, 2023)

	English		**Example**	Senar	**Example**
Pronomina l unit	2nd person singular pronoun		you	2nd person singular pronoun	ḿ
Nominal units	First Name		John, Mary	First Name	Zié, Gneli
	Title		Sir, Madam, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Master, Mix, Dr (professionnel)	Title	nɔ̃ɔ̃, cɔlɔɔ
	Last Name		Jones	Last Name	Ouattara
	Nickname		Bill (hypocoristic)	Nickname	Lass (hypocoristic)
	Terms of endearment		(my) honey, darling, dear, poppet, love, luvvie, sweetheart	Terms of endearment	(n)tãã
	Geronto-	Group	boys, lads, girls	Gerontocratic	niɲileel,

	cratic terms		ladies, gentlemen, folks, guys	terms	ficyaal, ceel, naan, wilyɔɔ, nigwɔ, ʃiyɛ̃n
		Individual	-	-	wilyɔɔ, celyɔ, nigwɔ
	Kinship Terms		bro, father, dad, daddy, papa, mother, mum, mam, mummy, mom, gran, grandma, nana, nan, grandpa, grandad, granpy, gramps, pops, aunt, auntie, uncle	Kinship terms	nicebor, abaa nãã, (n) naaru, (n) nun
	Marital terms		_	Taboo Teknonyms Possessive Terms	(silence) Maaru tuu daal fɔl
Phrases	Terms of endearment (possessive terms)		my love	Teknonyms (possessive terms)	N tãã Maaru tuu daal fɔl

Data analysis highlights similarities and differences between the morphology of Senar and English honorifics. Both languages use the pronominal unit of the second person singular, the nominal units of first names, titles, surnames, nicknames, intimate names, gerontocratic terms and of kinship. They also use expressions with the possessive pronoun of the first person singular.

As differences, English has more titles and kinship terms while Senar is richer in gerontocratic terms. Moreover, English does not have conjugal terms other than terms of intimacy. Finally, the Senar often uses the possessor of the third person singular, namely teknonyms.

Honorifics in both languages have morphological and pragmalinguistic similarities and differences.

2.2. Pragmalinguistic characteristics of terms of address

These are the techniques used by speakers of the two languages to address each other. They concern the use of the form 'TU'' and that of the form 'VOUS'' in discourse. Following W. A. Folley (1997), the French forms TU/VOUS are used to account for these terms.

2.2.1. The form TU

The TU form refers to the communication technique used by interlocutors in informal contexts or with low social distancing.

The data relates to the reciprocal use of the terms of address and kinship. These are specifically the terms used by the speaker and those used by the addressee to respond to the address. The speaker is the person who speaks first and the addressee is the one who speaks second. The term used by the speaker elicits a corresponding term from the addressee as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Pragmalinguistic characteristics of the TU form of English and Senar (M. Ouattara, 2023)

English		Senar	
Addressor	Addressee	Addressor	Addressee
Pronoun: you	Pronoun: you	Pronoun : ḿ	Pronoun: ḿ
First Name	First Name	First Name	First Name
Nickname	Nickname	Nickname	Nickname
Term of endearment	Term of endearment	Term of endearment	Term of endearment
Kinship term	First Name	Kinship term	First Name
Kinship term	Term of endearment	Kinship term	Term of endearment
Title + Last	Title + Last Name	Last Name + Title	Last Name +

Name			Title
-	-	Kinship term (homophony between « uncle » and « nephew » [joking kinship]	Kinship term
-	-	Ethnic group + Title	Ethnic group + Title
-	-	Profession + Title (rare instance)	Title or silence
		Last Name (Coulibaly) [joking alliance] + Title	Last Name (Ouattara)
-	-	Gerontocratic term	Nickname
-	-	(generic professional title used for civil servants): fã̃ãfɔ nɔ̃ɔ̃ (meaning « authority »)	(gerontocatic term or generally silence)

The analysis shows that there are more differences between these two languages than there are similarities. In both languages, the speakers reciprocally use the pronoun of the second person singular, the first names, the nicknames, the terms of endearment, and kinship terms.

However, the English structure of the type "Title + First name – First name" is absent in Senar. On the other hand, the Senar structures of the type "Relationship Term – Relationship Term"; "Ethnicity + Title – Ethnicity + Title"; "Last Name + Title – Last Name"; "Gerontocratic Term – Nickname" are missing in English. Moreover, one of the structures is present in both languages but the combinatorial difference is linked to the syntactic difference of the two languages. This is in particular the structure of the type "Title + Last Name - Title + Last Name" which is carried out in Senar by the structure "Last Name + Title - Last Name + Title".

The similarities and differences between the two languages present a whole different configuration when it comes to the VOUS form.

2.2.2. *The form VOUS*

The form VOUS is the one used in formal and solemn circumstances to show respect or deference. The data collected in both languages mainly concern titles, first names, last names, gerontocratic terms.

Table 3: Pragmalinguistic characteristics of the VOUS form of English and Senar (M. Ouattara, 2023)

English		Senar	
Addressor	Addressee	Addressor	Addressee
Title + Last Name	First Name	-	-
Title + First Name	First Name	-	-
Title + Professional Title	Title + Last Name	-	-
Title + Professional Title	Title + Professional Title	-	-
Title	Title	Title	Title
-	-	Title	Gerontocratic term
-	-	Kinship gerontocratic term but with no filiation	Kinship gerontocratic term but with no filiation
-	-	Gerontocratic term	Gerontocratic term
-	-	Gerontocratic term	First Name
-	-	Taboo (silence) (by some wives)	First Name
-	-	Teknonym (by some wives)	First Name
-	-	Possessive term (by some wives)	First Name
-	-	(silence)	(silence)

Speakers of both languages use the titles and receive the titles, but some English structures are missing in Senar. These include: title + first name – first name; Title + Last name – First name; Title + First name (frequent in children) – First name; Title + Title (professional) - Title + Last name; Title + Title (professional) – Title + Title (professional). In addition, some Senar structures are missing in English: Title – Gerontocratic term; Gerontocratic terms of kinship but without filiation – Gerontocratic terms of kinship but without filiation; Gerontocratic terms – Gerontocratic terms; Gerontocratic terms – First name; Taboo (silence) (by some wives) – First name; Teknonym (by some wives) – First name; Possessive term (by some wives) – First name

English uses more title while senar uses more gerontocratic terms. Whether it is the forms TU or VOUS, the speakers of the two languages use different but sometimes similar structures. The use of one or the other structure depends on the socio-pragmatic circumstances of each linguistic community.

3. Sociopragmatic constraints

The circumstances of use of the terms of address and the terms of kinship of the relational social deixis are social and pragmatic. The form TU is used in the circumstances of solidarity while the form VOUS is used in those of power. These particular circumstances require interlocutors to resort to appropriate forms.

3.1. The form TU

The circumstances of solidarity in which this form is used are: camaraderie, friendship, intimacy, and kinship. These circumstances refer to a familiarity between the interlocutors which does not require solemnity but which nevertheless includes codes. These codes are part of the social organization of each linguistic community. The sociopragmatic constraint of the form TU in English and Senar are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Sociopragmatic constraints of the form TU in English and Senar (M. Ouattara, 2023)

Circumstances	English		Senar	
	Addressor	Addressee	Addressor	Addressee
Name avoidance at all circumstances	Pronoun: you	Pronoun: you	Pronoun: ḿ	Pronoun: ḿ
Camaraderie	First Name	First Name	First Name	First Name
Close friendship	Nickname	Nickname	Nickname	Nickname
Familiarity	Title + Last Name	Title + Last Name	Last Name + Title	Last Name + Title
Intimate friendship between people of different sexes	Term of endearment	Term of endearment	Term of endearment	Term of endearment
Kinship of speakers with addressor as descendant and addressee as ascendant	Kinship term	First Name	Kinship term	First Name
Kinship of speakers with addressor as ascendant and addressee as descendant	Kinship term	Term of endearment	Kinship term	Term of endearment

Kinship of the same degree	Kinship term	Kinship term	Kinship term	Kinship term
Kinship with joke	-	-	Kinship term (homophony between « uncle » and « nephew » [existence of joke]	Kinship term
Ethnic group with joke	-	-	Ethnic group + Title	(Ethnic group +) Title
Family with joking alliance	-	-	Last Name + Title	Last Name
Joke between an older addressor and a civil servant	-	-	Generic title (professional): fãã̀fɔ nɔɔ̃ meaning « authority » but literally « force holder »	(geroncratic term but there not generaly a response)

In the circumstances of name avoidance, camaraderie, familiarity, close friendship, intimate friendship, kinship of the same degree or of varying degrees, the speakers of the two languages resort to the same structures. In joking circumstances, Senar speakers resort to other formulas, which are not present among English speakers. The latter use the structures of ordinary circumstances in the joke.

3.2. *The form VOUS*

The form YOU used in the circumstances of power expresses formality, distance or deference. In the circumstances of power, the speaker is in a position of inferiority in relation to the addressee. It can be an ordinary or diplomatic formal setting, meeting an unknown person, wife to husband in a feudal system, or a younger person addressing an elder.

Table 5: Sociopragmatic constraints of the form VOUS in English and Senar (M. Ouattara, 2023)

	English		Senar	
Circumstances	Addressor at lower position	Addressee	Addressor at lower position	Addressee
Formal ordinary setting	Title + Last Name	First Name	Gerontocratic term	First Name
Little child and adult	Title + First Name	First Name	(silence)	First Name
Very formal or	Title + Title	Title + Last	Gerontocratic term if the	First Name

diplomatic setting	(professional)	Name	addressee is much more older	
	Title + Title (professional)	Title + Title (professional)	(silence)	(silence)
Unknown	Title	Title	Title (if the span of age between speakers is not high)	Title
			Gerontocratic term (if the span of age between speakers is high)	Gerontocratic
Unknown but also known			Kinship gerontocratic term but no filiation	Kinship gerontocratic term but no filiation
Marital relationship with wife as addressor			Taboo (silence)	First Name
			Teknonym	First Name
			Possessive term	First Name

Speakers of both languages use the title when the person is unknown (and the age difference is not important as far as the Senar is concerned). However, the English still uses the title but the Senufo regularly use the terms gerontocratic. The Senufo uses specific terms in the conjugal domain.

Titles refer to social status but gerontocratic terms refer to age. This means that the English favor social status while the Senufo favor age. So, in case of conflict between social status and age, status wins for the English but age wins for the Senoufo. For example, among the English, the employee or the learner addresses the employer or the master in the form Title (Sir) or Title + Last Name (Mr X); among the Senufo, if the employer is young, he is called by his first name, otherwise it is by the gerontocratic term "wilyɔɔ" (or the feminine "celyɔɔ") (the old, the old). However, in the context of learning, age is not biological but social; therefore, anyone initiated before the speaker is older than him and should be called by a gerontocratic term.

In the marital domain, the difference is due to the type of marriage. Among the English, the age difference between spouses is not generally large, but among the Senufo, the husband is generally the same age as the parents of the wife.

Conclusion

English and Senar terms of address have virtually the same morphologies but have some differences in their articulation. These differences are even more important when these terms are used to express social realities. Honorification is generally expressed in English by the title but in Senar it is made use of gerontocratic terms. Therefore, in a context of intercultural communication, particular attention must be paid to social status when a Senufo speaks to an Englishman, and the latter must take into account the age of his interlocutor. This study allowed us to know how the honor systems of English and Senar work as well as the similarities and differences between them. However, since the honorification system is not limited to honorific expressions, other studies could be conducted on other means of expressing politeness.

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