POLITENESS IN THE ENGLISH OF FULFULDE NATIVE SPEAKERS IN MAROUA

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ABSTRACT: *This paper explores politeness in the English rendered by Fulfulde native speakers of Maroua. It investigates the politeness strategies they use in their English. It also examines specific ways of expressing politeness by these speakers. Insights were got from Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. Data were collected from Fulfulde native students in the department of English Language and Literature of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences (FALSS) in the University of Maroua. Data were elicited through discourse completion test (DCT) made up of eleven scenarios (six request scenarios and five apology scenarios) and tape recording of conversations. Three speech acts (requests, apologies and greetings) were analysed. Results show negative politeness strategies and please-request. Linguistic devices of sorry and address terms were also employed to emphasise apology. It was noticed that Fulfulde native speakers of English exhibit some culture-specific preferences in their way of expressing greetings.*

KEYWORDS: Politeness, Fulfulde Native, Speakers of English, Requests, Apologies, Greetings

INTRODUCTION

Politeness, a very crucial and problematic area of study in pragmatics "…is the feature of language use that most clearly reveals the nature of human sociality as expressed in speech"(Brown, 2015: 326).This worth studying pragmatic item does not leave any researcher indifferent to explore. Several studies have explored politeness from different views and languages: politeness expression in English is seen in works such as Bharuthram (2003) and Edmundson (1992), and in some other languages like Japanese (Kotani, 1999; Suzuki, 1999). Some other scholars looked into how it is expressed in some contexts such as social media (Herring, 1995; Tabe, 2011) and how it appears in requests and some social or private letters (Nkemleke, 2006).To Brown and Levinson (1987), every individual in a society has face and when the speaker decides to commit an act which may cause the hearer (or the speaker himself/herself) to lose face, the speaker will tend to use some strategies (politeness strategies) in order to minimize the risk. This phenomenon can be noticed in every society and every speech act situation, this makes some researchers claim for the universality of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Brown and Levinson (1987) point out that there are two types of face: negative face, which is related to the claim for one's territory, personal preserves, and rights to non-distraction, such as freedom of action and freedom from imposition; and positive face, which is related to the desire to be appreciated or approved of by other members of a society (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 311). To Brown and Levinson, the notion of face, quite assimilated or closely related to politeness, and social interactions oriented to it are universal.

Brown (2015) states that in any culture, there are norms and values that affect the degree of imposition or acceptance of utterances. Possessing pragmatic competence thus has great impact on the appropriateness of politeness expression as pragmatics focuses on meaning in use or

context rather than meaning in the abstract (Leech, 1983; Srisuruk, 2001). Uttering syntactically correct sentences with a good phonological delicacy at times does not suffice to convey meaning when communicating. Any interactant or speaker should be aware of what to say at the right place, at the right moment and to the right person (the right hearer). Hence, the importance of pragmatics in the comprehensiveness of the levels of language (syntax, phonology, morphology, etc.). To talk of whatever a speaker may want, sociocultural background should be taken into consideration as pragmatics focuses on 'message' and 'language users' (Srisuruk, 2001).

Context is thus of paramount importance in creating a good atmosphere among interactants. Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that the speech acts or even actions that people do when talking to one another, vary from one context to another and reflects specific meanings in these settings. The speech acts and/or actions have implications for each other's face. There is thus a wide array of speech act types that have the potential to threaten face: the Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Fulfulde is a lingua franca in the northern part of Cameroon (Adamawa, North and the Far-north Regions). In Cameroon, the native speakers of this Fulfulde language called the Fulbe or the Fulani are located mostly in Ngaoundere, Garoua and Maroua (the Grand North). This research on politeness in the English of Fulfulde native speakers in Maroua has been motivated by the cultural diversity of Cameroon and the variety of politeness expressed by people of each cultural group which have not yet been explored. From our observation, the Fulbes take too much time and employ a lot of linguistic resources in greetings using the Fulfulde language. Other Cameroonians think that they are not polite when communicating in English, but appear to be "overpolite" when speaking their native language (Fulfulde) as compared to speakers of other local languages in Cameroon. It would therefore, be interesting to examine their politeness in English. We intend to look into how applicable the universality of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies are to the politeness expressed by Fulfulde native speakers (in their English). In addition, the politeness strategies peculiar to them (if any) will be brought out. This investigation is guided by the following research questions:

1) What are the politeness strategies employed by Fulfulde native speakers of English in their requests, apologies and greetings speech acts?

2) What are the peculiarities of their politeness in English?

This study focuses on the examination of politeness in the greetings, requests and apology speech acts of Fulfulde native speakers in Maroua; particularly those in the Department of English language and Literature of the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences (FALSS) in the University of Maroua.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The notion of politeness has been firstly tackled by Brown and Levinson in the early seventies. As from that moment on, at the University of California, Berkeley, in the early1970s, enormous amount of research has addressed politeness from a variety of perspectives, in works coming from all the social sciences that have an interest in social interactions (Brown, 2015). Grice, within the Anglo-American framework, has carried out great works in the field of pragmatics, especially dealing with the patterns of politeness. In his "Logic in conversation", he came up

with his Cooperative Principle (CP) supported later on by Leech (1983) and Lakoff (1977). This issue of politeness, in varied perspectives, is reflected in numerous studies that have been carried out over the past few decades. These studies looked at politeness expression in English (Bharuthram, 2003; Holmes, 1990). Some other studies look into how politeness is expressed in other individual languages like German (Vollmer &Olshtain, 1989) and Japanese (Kotani, 1999; Suzuki, 1999) among others. Most of the studies had, however, an interlanguage comparative approach, mostly by looking at learners of English who speak different native languages such as Danish (Trosborg, 1987), French (Harlow, 1990), Japanese (Sugimoto, 1999), Korean (Jung, 2004), Spanish (Garcia, 1989; Márquez-Reiter, 2000), and Thai (Bergman & Kasper, 1993). Request has been, to some scholars (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Hassall, 2004; Leech, 2014), one of the most important speech acts to be targeted in order to address politeness. Investigations have thus been carried out from different languages on this speech act. Some of the researchers explore the politeness phenomenon across cultures and language, what is known as cross-cultural politeness study (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), in their cross-cultural speech act realisation project (CCSARP), studied requests in eight different languages. Being cognisant of what Brown and Levinson did on politeness strategies, they have classified requests in three major categories, following their degree of directness: the most direct request (on record without redress), the conventionally indirect request (on record with redress) and the unconventionally indirect request (off record). As mentioned by Nkemleke (2006: 2), these studies highlight the culture/user-specific pragmalinguistic resources and the illocutionary force employed to perform polite act in either written or oral speech.

Other studies on politeness include that of Rahimi (2016) who investigated the relationship between critical thinking and indirect request strategy used by EFL learners. He analysed a critical discourse skill test and a discourse completion test he administered to one hundred EFL learners in private language institutes in Sanandaj- Iran. The results show that critical discourse competence is a great determinant of the use of indirect request. This implies that the more pragmatically competent an EFL learner is, the higher the frequency of indirect strategies in his/her request speech acts. In a similar way, Ogiermann (2009) and Türker and Akbarov (2016) examined the connection between politeness and indirectness. The authors looked at variation across culture and gender and found out that female respondents are more polite than male respondents. Also, facts from the study of Türker and Akbarov (ibid) demonstrate culture-dependency nature of politeness as Bosnian students make more indirect requests than their Turkish counterparts. In keeping with Rahimi (2016), Ogiermann (ibid) and Türker and Akbarov (ibid) think that politeness and indirectness are interrelated.

Olaniyi (2017) investigated politeness through the culture of greetings in Yoruba language and specifically in the Ilorin culture. He analysed recorded conversational discourse of the Ilorin people and discovered many types of greetings (e.g. condolences, departure and arrival, rejoicing, daily greetings). He also stated that in Ilorin, greeting strategies differ according to whether the interactants are of the same generation or of different generations. For example, honorifics are used to show deference when addressing elders. Olaniyi (2017)'s results equally show that utterances and actions of the Ilorin people are conditioned by Islamic rites and tenets.

So far, the literature review shows that much has been done on politeness in foreign contexts (e.g. Rahimi, 2016; Olaniyi, 2017) among EFL learners, speakers of other languages and across culture and gender. The present research focuses on Fulfulde native speakers of English found in a multilingual context in Maroua. Though the participants are in the Department of English,

most of them speak and understand French and other local languages. This could affect their politeness strategies. Within Cameroon, although much is yet to be done to explore politeness expression in Cameroon English (CamE) and the miscellaneous languages spoken in the country, politeness in e-mails (Tabe, 2011), Requests and genre analysis such as dissertation and private letters Nkemleke (2006) have been looked into. Given the multicultural and plurilinguistic facet of Cameroon, politeness still needs to be keenly investigated in many other domains or situations where language is used. This study will therefore be a necessary addition to that of Nkemleke and Tabe.

Theoretical framework

This paper is mainly based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness: the face-saving view. Brown and Levinson (1987) also cited by Brown (2015), propose an abstract model of politeness wherein human actors are endowed with two essential attributes: "face" and "rationality", with face consisting of two kinds: "positive and negative face" and Rationality consisting in reasoning from communicative goals to linguistic means that would achieve these goals.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) claim that the strategies for doing Face-Threatening Acts are classified into two main groups: the bald on-record (which is the most direct: *close the door/window!* for instance) and the off-record strategies. The bald on-record strategy can further be subcategorized into on-record without redress and on-record with redress action. The off-record consists in making a speech act "in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:211). For instance, a speaker may say '*it is very cold in here'* to intend the same meaning as *close the door/window.*

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), contrasting with rule-based approaches, politeness is not said to be limited to what words or sentences (utterances) express; for what a person says does not necessarily reflect what he or she intends. The notion of "implicature" is thus very important. Utterances may express contextually expected concern for face (Brown, 2015). Brown and Levinson view politeness as a universal linguistic aspect. They treat politeness in terms of face, tracing back to Goffman's (1975) view of face.

Goffman (1967:5) defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self-delineation in terms of approved social attributes". Goffman does not view face as a private or internalized property in an individual but rather as an external image or set of images located in the flow of events, supported by other people's judgment, and endorsed by impersonal agencies in the situation. Goffman's theory stipulates that there are two types of face:

- Avoiding potentially face threatening acts: the avoidance process;

- Performing redressive acts: the corrective process.

Following this view, Brown and Levinson (1987)'s politeness principles consist in saving the face of the hearer, the speaker or even the face of both hearer and speaker in a communication situation.

Leech (1983) however views politeness as based on the following principles: "minimise the expression of impolite beliefs", with six main maxims namely the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Therefore, each maxim is emphasised

differently following the culture and tradition. Brown (2015: 327) claims that "cross-cultural differences derive from the different importance attached to particular maxims". It is thus obvious that people make use of speech acts to follow or deviate from these Leech's maxims. Leech (2014) claims that there are eight main characteristics of politeness among which its aspect of likely manifesting itself in repetitive behaviour, which is to a lesser or greater degree ritualized, what sounds rather weird. The speech acts of a speaker thus determine how polite or not he/she is.

Grundy (2008:72) views speech acts as actions in words. According to him, we act through words and even if we keep quiet after having been addressed to, we are still in action because we mean something in silence. Grundy (2008) distinguishes direct and indirect speech acts. One may act in an interrogative way to affirm an idea or act affirmatively to ask for something: what we say is not in the words or sentences themselves (Cutting, 2008). We may also act interrogatively to ask for something or affirmatively to declare something (direct speech act). However, "...speech acts are to some degree culturally institutionalised...And as we cross cultures, we sometimes notice slight (and even not so slight) differences in the way that illocutionary force is conveyed" (Grundy, 2008:82).In this paper, the speech acts to be analysed are requests, apologies and greetings. We will examine the politeness strategies used by Fulfulde native speakers of English in these communicative situations.

METHODOLOGY

The population involved in this study is made up of students from the department of English Language and Literature in the Faculty of Arts, Letters and Social Sciences (FALSS) of the University of Maroua. They are from Level One to Level Five, registered in the 2017-2018 academic year. These subjects are all native speakers of the Fulfulde language, and they are both male and female. There were however only four female participants.

The data to be analysed in this paper were collected through recording and Discourse Completion Test (DCT). Conversations of native Fulfulde students from the department of English Language and Literature in the FALSS of the University of Maroua were recorded. These conversations were used to analyse greetings. The DCT is made up of eleven situations (six requests situations and five apology situations), and were useful in the analysis of request and apology speech acts. During administration of the DCT, the instructions were made clear to the whole group of respondents and they were asked to ask questions if there is anything they do not understand in the scenarios described in the instrument (DCT).

In all, twenty four participants are involved in this research. Twenty participants fully responded to the eleven situations and only four were involved in the recorded speech acts. The recorded speech acts are from phone calls.

Data Analysis

The data presents instances of apologies, requests and greetings in the Fulfulde native speakers' English. Politeness in the elicited speech acts are analysed in turn below:

Apologies

Apologies are speech acts through which a speaker recognizes the act of having violated social norm(s). They are 'post-event acts' as opposed to requests which are always 'pre-event acts' (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984: 206). They can be performed through different strategies: using IFIDs (illocutionary force indicating devices) or through other techniques (promise of forbearance, offer of repair, etc.) Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) did not lay emphasis on apology speech act. They however discussed it as one of the negative politeness strategies. This implies that they are in themselves 'face' saving acts. Table1 displays the linguistic devices or words and expressions used by Fulfulde native speakers to apologise in English and their frequencies.

Table1: Types of IFIDs used by the respondents to express apology

Linguistic device	Frequency
(I am) Sorry	58 (58.59%)
Excuse (me)	20 (20.20%)
Apology	1 (1.01%)
Pardon	4 (4.04%)
(I) regret	1 (1.01%)
Forgive (me)	10 (10.10%)
Sorry + Excuse (combined)	5 (5.05%)
Total	99(100%)

As shown in the table above, the words used by Fulfulde native speakers in their apology speech acts are: (I am) sorry, excuse (me), apology, pardon, (I) regret, forgive (me). We can see instances where the subjects combine *sorry* and *excuse* in order to emphasize their apology.

Sorry is the most used linguistic device in the participants' speech acts to express apology. As displayed in the table above, there are 58 (58.59%) instances of *sorry*s. This word (*sorry)* is used almost in every situation described in the DCT. In other words, Fulfulde native speakers of English use *sorry* to apologize to whoever they have wronged and in any case of infringement. So, no socio-cultural constraint influences the use of this linguistic device. Consider the following situations:

A student has borrowed a book from her lecturer, which she promised to return today. Unfortunately, on meeting her lecturer, she realizes that she forgot to bring it along *(see situation 2 in the DCT, appendix 1):*

   (1) Lecturer: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you.

   Miriam: *I'm sorry sir I forgot it.*

   Lecturer: OK, but please remember it next week.

When moving out of the classroom a student unintentionally stepped on his mate's foot (see *situation4 in the DCT, appendix 1)*:

   (2) A: Ouch!!! My foot!!!

   B*: sorry dear I didn't see your foot.*

In *situation 9 in the DCT* (see Appendix 1)where a younger sister is hurt, the same word *sorry* is observed:

(3) *Sorry my lovely sister.*

Apart from using IFIDs, the respondents used some other techniques to express apology. We refer to those techniques as indirect apology strategies (IAS). We distinguished three different indirect strategies employed by the Fulfulde native speakers of English investigated here to express apology. These IASs are: promise of repair, promise of forbearance and description of the cause of the offensive act (the act for which the speaker is to apologize). These could be seen below.

a- The promise to offer a repair (the speaker promises that he/she will do the act she missed to do in future).

Look at the following dialogue (see *situation 2 in the DCT, appendix 1)*

(4) Lecturer: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you.

Miriam: *No sir, I did not. Sorry sir I promise bringing it next time.*

Lecturer: OK, but please remember it next week

b- Promise of forbearance: the speaker promises that the same action (offensive act) will never happen again. He/she alleviates the offense.

(5) I have mistakenly misbehaved, please forgive me. *I will never do it again.(see Situation 5 in appendix 1)*

(6) I regret for the error, for that *I will never do it again. (Situation 8 in appendix 1)*

c- Description of the cause of the offensive act: the speaker gives the external reason for the occurrence of the action to show that it was not his/her intention.

(7) Lecturer: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you.

Miriam: *No madam, I was in a hurry because I was late and I have forgotten it.*
Lecturer: OK, but please remember it next week. (see *Situation 2 in appendix 1)*

From these speech act instances, we can see that Fulfulde native speakers of English have great preference for the use of the word *sorry* as IFID to express apology whatever the context of communication. However, in situations where there are great social distance and power between the speaker and the hearer as in the fourth and seventh examples above, promise of repair and/or description of the cause of offense are used to strengthen the willingness of the speaker to apologise. As mentioned by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), this type of apology is ranged under negative politeness, the apology speech act of Fulfulde native speakers, especially in formal situations (see situation 2 in appendix 1,for instance), are typically followed by honorifics or deference indicating terms (example: *No sir, I did not. Sorry sir I promise bringing it next time*). The following section presents requests and the politeness strategies used in them.

Request

A request is a directive speech act used by a speaker with the intention of getting the hearer to do something (Searle, 1976). For face saving sake, given that request is viewed as a face-threatening speech act (Brown and Levinson, 1978; 1987), the speaker has to attach to his/her request some seriousness accompanied by more or less mitigating devices, to perform that act directly or indirectly depending on the nature of relationship between the speaker and the hearer, probably impacted by factors like "social distance", "degree of imposition", and the "power" of the interactants (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The speaker should thus be very tactful in uttering such speech acts in order to save both his face and the hearer's face in the conversation.

Data show that Fulfulde native speakers of English employ the politeness strategies put forth by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their requests. The following table presents the types of tactics and their frequencies.

Table 2: Types of request tactics in the English of Fulfulde native speakers

Types of request tactics	Frequency
Conventionally indirect requests (on record with redress)	75 (85.23%)
Direct requests (on record without redress)	10 (11.37%)
Unconventionally indirect requests (off record)	3 (3.40%)
Total	88(100%)

The table above shows three main types of request strategies used by Fulfulde native speakers of English. These strategies are the same as those outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987). These strategies are discussed in detail below.

Conventionally indirect request

A conventionally indirect request is a request done by a speaker by giving option to the hearer in order not to impinge on his or her freedom of action (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). The conventionally indirect request is the most recurrent in the requesting speech acts of the Fulfulde native speakers of English. There are 75 occurrences with the percentage of 85.23%.Consider the following example:

(8) Hamidou: Arouna, some friends are coming for dinner tonight and I will have to start cooking soon; *can you clean the kitchen? (see appendix 1, situation 1)*

Arouna: ok I will have a go at it right away.

This conventionally indirect request occurs generally when participants deal with an elder to mitigate the threat implanted by age and educational level. This is observed in situation 7 in the DCT (a situation where a student has to ask for something from a person who has power in terms of age and educational level):

(9) Please, *would you lend me your bottle?*(see appendix 1, situation 7)

(10)   Please sir, *may I go out?* (see appendix 1, situation 6)

(11)   *Can you lend me some money? (*Appendix 1, situation 11).

The conventionally indirect strategies are the most polite strategies in English (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and they are most used strategies in English language by native speakers (Leech, 1983). From the analysis above, we can conclude that Fulfulde native speakers of English are as polite as native speakers of English as far as the use of indirect strategies are concerned.

Direct requests (on record without redress)

Direct requests are requests done without any fear of threatening the face of the hearer. They are mainly used when there is no need to save face/when there is no or negligible loss of face. These strategies are typically used among people who are very close to one another (Brown & Levinson, 1987). These strategies are also used by Fulfulde native speakers of English in their speech acts. See the italicized items in following examples.

(12) Hamidou: Arouna, some friends are coming for dinner tonight and I will have to start cooking soon; *go and clean the kitchen.*(Situation 1 in appendix 1)

        Arouna: ok I will have a go at it right away.

    (13) My dear classmates *lend me a pen*.(Situation 3)

Some Fulfulde native speakers use the direct request when talking to their close friends or mate as it is the case in the conversation above between two roommates (12). Another case of this direct request occurs when asking for something from a classmate as observed in the example (13) above: a speech act by a student who wants to be given a pen by his classmates. These examples confirm Brown and Levinson's claim that direct strategies are used among close interactants.

Unconventionally indirect requests (off record requests)

The off-record strategy is considered as doing a speech act "in such a way that it is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to the act" (Brown and Levinson, 1987:211). So, a requester is doing the act without really mentioning it. It is less recurrent in this investigation; three cases with the percentage of 3.40% were observed. It is used in situations where the hearer shares much socio-cultural context and has much intimacy with the speaker. The speaker assumes that the hearer is sufficiently aware of what may be the intention behind his or her utterance. This kind of request was observed in familial situations or between very close friends:

    (14) My father*, I am invited by my friend in his party but the distance is so far.* (Situation 8 in appendix 1)

    (15) My dear friends, *I have a problem and 10,000Fcfa can solve it*.(Situation 11,appendix1).

In the data collected from Fulfulde native speakers of English, these kinds of requests are always preceded by address terms (my dear friend, my father, etc.) which shows the kind of kinship or intimacy that exists between the interactants.

Please-politeness

There is another type of politeness tactic observed in the request speech acts of the respondents that is not seen in Brown and Levinson's classification of requests' types. This type of request, at times is obtained by combining direct or indirect request with the 'Face-Threatening Act Softener, 'please'. Being aware of the fact that requests are face-threatening acts, respondents of this study, sometimes, choose to apologise before or when requesting to smoothen the threat of the hearer's face. Table 3 presents the types of please-requests that were found in the data and their frequencies.

Table 3: Types and frequency of please-requests in the English of Fulfulde native speakers

Types of please-requests	Frequency
Please-Indirect request	40 (71.43%)
Please- Direct request	11 (19.64%)
Apologetic please-requests	5 (8.93%)
Total	56(100%)

Table 3 above shows three types of please requests that were discovered in the English of Fulfulde native speakers. However, the third type can be classified under Brown and Levinson's (1987) negative politeness strategy (apologise).

The *please*-address term used with indirect request is the most recurrent type of please requests in the speech of Fulfulde native speakers of English as shown in the table above with 40 occurrences, 71.43% of the overall requests. It is used both among close friends or relatives and between a lower class speaker and a higher class, distant or powerful hearer. Let us consider the excerpts below:

(*A student talking to his roommate: situation 1, appendix 1*)

(16) Hamidou: Arouna, some friends are coming for dinner tonight and I will have to start cooking soon; *please can you clean up the kitchen?*

rouna: ok I will have a go at it right away.

(17) Please my elder could you lend me your bottle? (A student talking to an academic elder, situation 7, appendix 1).

The examples above show that Fulfulde native speakers use *please* in their requests to make their indirect requests look more polite and make the hearer feel free and respected.

The second most used please-request after indirect please-request is direct *please-request.* There are 11 occurrences (19.64%). These please-request are direct requests smoothened with the request softener 'please'. It is used by participants in this investigation to make their speech sound polite in situations where the face threats can be minimized. Such situations are: dialogues in family or kinship-related communications, conversation among friends or

comrades of strong intimacy. The following is a request by a son to his father, asking for money (situation 8 in appendix1).

(18) Please daddy, I want some money for taxi.

The following one is a dialogue between two students who are roommates (situation 1 in appendix 2):

(19) Hamidou: Arouna, some friends are coming for dinner tonight and I will have to start cooking soon; *please go and clean the kitchen.*

      Arouna: ok I will have a go at it right away.

Direct requests are, in some societies, very offending and imposing on the hearer. However, Fulfulde native speakers insert the softening device *please* to make their requests sound polite.

Another type of please-request present in the speech of the Fulfulde native speakers of English is please-request followed by apology: the apologetic please request. There are five instances of this kind of request in this study (8.93%). The speaker in this case, sees request as an offensive, as an eventual discomforting act: hence the necessity of apologizing beforehand:

    (20)Please! Sorry, I am in a sudden need, can you lend of 10,000Fcfa? (Situation 11, appendix 2)

*(21) Excuse me sir, my pen is finished, please can I borrow it from anyone?(*Situation 3, appendix 2)

As we can observe in the excerpts ((20) and (21)) above, *please* can either be placed at the beginning or in the middle of the request-sentence. In all of the excerpts, *pleases* are used to smoothen the threat of the request.

This kind of request followed by apology-terms are referred to as 'disarmer' by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), a speech act in which a speaker shows his/her awareness of a potential refusal from the hearer and therefore anticipates the refusal, being cognizant of the fact that a request is by nature a Face-threatening act (an act which may potentially offend) (Blum-Kulka &Olshtain, 1984: 205). *Please-requests* are seen in almost all the requests made by Fulfulde native speakers of English. *Please* is an indispensable determinant of politeness to Fulfulde native speakers.

Greetings

Greetings, in a general way, are things a person says or does to greet another person or acknowledge their presence around. Considered as polite by nature, greetings are seen as the most elementary acts or speech acts in societies or language communities. So, they are supposed to be the very first things a child should acquire from his/her birth. In the case of second/foreign language learning situations, greetings should occupy the first sequence of the learning and teaching process, for they determine the basis of competence in communication (mainly the pragmatic competence).

In this paper, greetings to be analysed are the ones recorded from Fulfulde native students in the Department of English language and Literature of the FALSS in the University of Maroua. The telephone conversation (the one taken from recorded texts; see appendix 2) is analysed in

four stages: the creation of the atmosphere (from line1 to 7), the recognition of familiarity (from 8 to 23), the routinely Fulfulde-specific flow (from line 24 to line 29) change of topic (serious non-routine topic, from line 30 to 45).

In the excerpts used as examples, 'S' indicates the first speaker (normally the main speaker) and 'H' stands for the listener of the utterance, but throughout the flow of the conversation roles may change (the speaker may become the hearer and vice versa).

Creation of the atmosphere

From line one to seven, the speaker is creating a conversational and familiar mood because the hearer (H) did not recognise the person to whom he is talking at first. Because of that non recognition of the other interactant, H's replies are full of unwillingness showing the potential distance he thought may exist between them. The most observable feature of politeness here is its universal trait. Thus, negative politeness is the one dominating as H does not yet know whom he is dealing with and keeps distance.

The recognition of familiarity

As from the eighth line, the hearer (H) recognises the speaker (S) as a familiar counterpart and breaks his mentally built distancing bridge. S showed to the hearer that they are sharing the same ground by asking him questions (line 7) to show interest and intimacy. The hearer's exclamation 'ah!'And interrogation 'is it Mr. Yah? 'are the manifest characteristics of positive politeness displaying H's inclusion, implication and engagement into the common ground and smooth familiar conversation. The use of the honorific 'sir' in line 9 and the interrogation 'is it Mr. Yah?' in line 8, express positive politeness in this H and S's context. That goes against Brown and Levinson's strategies of politeness expression who claim that honorifics (Mr., and sir for instance in this excerpt) indicate negative politeness. This view of non-canonical standard politeness strategies is shared by Grundy (2008:199).

The routinely Fulfulde-specific flow

A British speaker or any other speaker of English language of different cultural background may not act like the participants of this study asking questions such as *how are you? how about your family?* after such a long talk. Whereas it may sound intrusive and odd to a British man's ear and also probably strange to other people's ear, it's just friendly and normal for a Fulfulde native speaker to ask someone (about themselves and their family, etc.) for a second time after a long talk (line 24 and 26 in *appendix 2*). It's rather a routine, a culturally bound politeness strategy, specific to Fulfulde cultural background, a sign of familiarity and total interest from the speaker. This engages the hearer to feel more praised and honoured and thus adopts an automatic way of reacting (as observed, fulfulde native speakers are always ready to say *Alhamdullilaah* which is *glory be to God/ we thank God/we are managing, etc*. in (their) English), see lines 25, 27, 29 in *appendix 2*.Homeidi (2004) and Alharbi and Al-Ajmi (2008) claim in the same view that greeting does not end with formulaic expressions, but continues with some (sometimes) repetitive question-like structures to inquire about the hearer's or the addressee's wellbeing, family and state of affairs. These question-like greetings show a kind of consideration the speaker has for his or her interlocutor and not a kind of prying in the other's own personal life as a westerner might imagine.

As Leech (2014:6)highlights, "there is a reciprocal asymmetry in polite behaviour between two parties,…". This gives limitation to the speech act theory (Cutting, 2008: 20). Positive politeness is the main category displayed in this section of the talk.

Change of topic

From the thirtieth line, H steps into a more serious issue with some changes in his intonation showing distress. Although sounding a bit serious, this situation reveals the extent to which they (Sand H) have and share much in common. In keeping with Brown and Levinson- amid obviously slight deviation- sharing and commonness (involvement: see line 30 and 31) are some of the main determiners of positive politeness. The "Informal interjections" (Uhum, Walay, eeeh, Aah, aaah, etc.) abundantly used by H, although revealing a bit of his emotion, express his total agreement and adherence to the view of S. Interjections, as used by H, minimise Face Threatening Acts and create a kind of complicity between the speakers. Here, H feels solaced by S and shows his comfort through interjections and some change in intonation.

Routinely greeting flow

The same routine as in lines 24 to 29 is observed in lines 57 to 65. The speech acts in the first routine (see line 24 to 29 in appendix 2) and the intentions behind them are quite similar to the ones in the second routine (line 57 to 65). In the first routine, the hearer (H) is the starter of the flow and the speaker (S) is the recipient and pays back in monotonous automatic way (in an asymmetrically reciprocal way (Leech, 2014)). In the second routine, the interactants' roles change. The speaker (S) becomes the starter of the routine and H the recipient. H plays the role played by S before. Like in the first routine, the main type of politeness seen here is the positive politeness as H and S are showing familiarity towards each other. This familiarity is shown through devices like repetitive questions to which H responds without seeing them as way of checking into his private life.

Second change of topic (a semi-formal conversation)

From lines 66 to 114, the talk tends to become gradually more formal. S introduces a more formal issue by asking the question (So how about our business?). However, although that issue is serious and concerns official affairs, the talk looks less formal since they already know each other well enough. The use of interjections (uhu, uhum, etc.) in lines 69, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 95, … and the informal yeah (line 71) by H shows that they (both S and H) share the same ground and thus denotes positive politeness expression as interactants try to maintain their faces. From line 115 to the end, both S and H are rushing into thanking and wishing the best to each other.

The analysis has shown how Fulfulde native speakers of English incorporate politeness strategies in their requests, apologies and greetings. Some of the politeness tactics they employ are those outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987) as universal; and can also be observed among speakers in other contexts (Bharuthram, 2003; Holmes, 1990; Rahimi, 2016; Olaniyi, 2017). However, the manner and frequency of integration of these politeness strategies by speakers in foreign contexts may not be the same as those of Fulfulde native speakers of English. The novelty in the expression of politeness among Fulfulde native speakers of English could be seen mostly at the level of greetings with the routinely Fulfulde-specific flow (see section 5.3). Here, after a lengthy talk, they enquire repetitively about the welfare of their interlocutors and their relatives. Generally, learners try to be polite in L2 when necessary in suitable ways. The

tactics of politeness discovered and discussed here could help them present themselves in situationally appropriate ways.

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed at investigating the pragmatic competence of the Fulfulde native speakers in conveying politeness in English. It also aimed at exploring whether there are some peculiarities in their ways of expressing politeness. Three speech acts were chosen for this investigation namely request, apology and greetings.

Facts gleaned from data show that the main requests strategies used by Fulfulde native speakers of English are negative politeness strategies, with conventionally indirect requests. This shows that they are pragmatically competent enough because indirect requests are universal requests strategies in English (Leech, 1983). However, another request type which is very frequent in the speech of Fulfulde native speakers is the *please-request*. Nkemleke (2008) rightly thinks that this request strategy might have probably stem from the second/foreign language learning/teaching techniques. In those days, in the colonial period, and even nowadays, students are taught to say '*please sir…*' to ask for permission for example. This has become a stereotypical way of requesting in Cameroon (see Nkemleke, 2008).

In apology speech acts by Fulfulde native speakers of English, the most used IFID is *sorry* as it is the linguistic device employed in almost every speech community. This way of apologising is cross-culturally universal (see Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). In the discourse completion test, some other salient techniques were used by the respondents: the use of address terms to emphasise the apology (e.g. *Abdou, excuse me for the error!*).They also apologise indirectly through explanation of the cause of the act committed, promise of forbearance or offer of repair, what can be observed as a universal way of apologising in situations where the act is seen as very offensive.

Greetings are very peculiar speech acts in the Fulfulde speaking community. They are very special as they take too much time. Many acts are repetitive in the Fulbe speech when greeting. As can be observed in the recorded speech acts, there is a pragmatic transfer in the speech act of greeting in the Fulfulde native speakers' English. They are very repetitive and question-asking in their greeting acts. This may sound weird and embarrassing to a native speaker of English. Although greetings are not face threatening acts by nature, they may threaten the new comer to the Fulbe speech community. However, these ways of greeting show interest from the speaker and consideration given to the hearer.

This study is a contribution to research in pragmatic studies under the Cameroon English (CamE) arena since politeness among Cameroon non-native speakers of English seems to have been less tackled by CamE researchers. It appears to be the first pragmatic investigation on the politeness strategies of Fulfulde native speakers of English. It could have implications for language pedagogy, as teachers could draw the attention of students on cross-cultural strategies of politeness. However, further research with data collected through other instrument(s) could be done, and either similar or different results would be got to improve on the validity of the present study. It is also worth mentioning that politeness is not only displayed in greetings, request and apology speech acts which are investigated here. Studies can also be carried out on other speech acts such as complimenting, expressing gratitude, etc. by Fulfulde native speakers of English.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: **Discourse Completion Test**

Sex	Age	Specialty	Level	Nationality

- ➢ What is your native language? Fulfulde □ Toupouri□ Mafa □ Massa□ Others……

- ➢ Do you speak Fulfulde?   YES □   NO □

- ➢ If yes, how fluent are you in speaking Fulfulde?

Very fluent □   Not too fluent □   Fumbling □

Please, read the following short descriptions of situations now. Imagine yourself in these situations. Think what you might naturally say in response to these situations. Write your response in the space provided. Say as much or as little as you wish. You may choose to say nothing if required by the situation.

1. At a students' apartment

Arouna is Hamadou's room-mate. He had a party the night before and left the kitchen in a mess.

Hamadou: *(Hamadou is requesting Arouna to clean the kitchen).* Arouna! Some friends are coming for dinner tonight and I will have to start cooking soon; …………
……………………………………………………………………………….. …………………

Arouna: OK, I will do it right now.

2. At the professor's office

A student has borrowed a book from her lecturer, which she promised to return today. When meeting her lecturer, however, she realizes that she forgot to bring it along.

Lecturer: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you.

Miriam: *(Provide an apology by Miriam)…………… ……   ….. . .   ……………*

Lecturer: OK, but please remember it next week.

3. In a classroom situation

The lecturer is lecturing and everybody is taking note. You realise that your pen has no more ink. You want your neighbour to give you one if s/he has. *(ask for the pen)*

………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. The class is over, you are walking out of the hall and you step unintentionally on one of your mates' foot.

Mate: Ouch!! My foot!!!

You: *(apologising)*………………………………………………………………………………

5. You lost your bag in the class hall and suspected Abdou of having taken it. Another classmate came to you and gave you your bag. (*Apologise for accusing Abdou)*:…… ….. …. … ……………………………………………………………………………

6. The lecturer is in class. You are feeling very constipated. You want to go out.

(ask for permission) …… ………… …… …… …… …… ………… ………… …………

7. You are very thirsty. You are next to a tap but you don't have any bottle. An academic elder is sitting not far, holding an empty bottle. *(ask for the bottle)* …… … …… … ………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. You are invited in a party and you don't have money for your taxi. You want your father to give you. *(Ask your father)*…………………………………… ……………. …………………………………………………………………………………………

9. You have unintentionally hit your younger sister. *(apologise for your act)*

....

10.   The Lamido called for a meeting and you are concerned; unfortunately you did not attend the meeting. (*justify yourself to the Lamido for having not attended the meeting)*

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

11.   You find yourself in a sudden need of some 10,000Fcfa. You want your friends to lend you if they have. *(ask for it).*

    ………………………………………………………………………..

Appendix2: *Recorded Speech Acts*

1 S: Hello!
2 H: Hello!
3 S: Mr. Basso, good evening!
4 H: Ah good evening!
5 S: How are you?
6 H: I'm fine I'm fine
7 S: I'm in a worry! What happened? You have been calling me before. What's wrong with you these days?
8 H: Ah is it Mr. Yah?
9 S: Yes, I'm the one, sir!
10 H: Aah! I have lost my phone
11 S: Ok, sorry!
12 H: That is what happened. I came back, I'm in Maroua.
13 S: Ok! When did you come back?

14 H: Aah! Since one month

15 S: Aah I see I see

16 H: I wanted to ask to Samira, I met her but she said she didn't have your number

17 S: Yes, obviously Samira may have my number. Why didn't she give you?

18 H: I don't know. Maybe we met in a party...

19 S: Aah ok you met in a party.

20 H: Yes yes!

21 S: Ok. Maybe she didn't get time to check

22 H: Uhum

23 S: Yes yes ok

24 H: How are you? How about your family?

25 S: No we thank God, we are managing

26 H: How about your results?

27 S: No, it's fine it's fine, we thank God

28 H: Aah thank God

29 S: We thank God, yes.

30 H: For me, I have to repeat the second semester.

31 S: That's why... We would have passed because you refused to...

32 H: Uhum! Yeah

33 S: To write the exam

34 H: Walay!

35 S: That's the reason

36 H: Uhum

37 S: So, but have you gone to the department to see what is going on there?

38 H: I didn't find them there, but they sent the result, I took eeeh...

39 S: I think that they are no more there in where you knew before.

40 H: Uhum

41 S: They have gone to the former "Direction de l'EcoleNormale"

42 H: Yes!

43 S: They are no more in where you know.

44 H: Aah in Kongola.

45 S: No! Are they in Kongola?

46H: eahuhh!!

47 S: where are they...? Just...when you are going to...do you know the former Crtv?

48 H: Aah yes!

49S: Einhaa! Just close to that.

50 H: huumm!

51 S: eehaa! Where the direction of EcoleNormale was before, before they joined Kongola.

52 H: aaah!

53 S: yes! May be you went to the former one. That's why you didn't get them.

54 H: ok I will try.

55 S: if not these days they are there

56 H: ok I will try.

57 S: so, how about your family?

58 H: aahit's fine!

60 S: I've never asked you, are you married?

61 H: yes, I'm married.

62 S: ok, how many children?

63 H: No,...

64 S: aah you are waiting. You are waiting for something.

65 H: Aaah it's not yet.

66 S: aah ok! Ok, I see! I see. So how about our business?

67 H: yes, I'm waiting for your call.

68 S: ok! because I...I too, I went to Yaounde...

69 H: Uhu

70 S: there are some regions that they have for the... for the matter.

71 H: Yeah!

72 S: so within which our region has been chosen

73 H: yes

74 S: so, we are hanging waiting for them

75 H: uhum

76 S: ok, and last week

77 H: uhum

78 S: I got something new

79 H: uhu

80 S: They said, there will be a committee...

81 H: uhum

82 S: ...of that credit which will attend a meeting

83 H: Uhum

84 S: and we have our regional delegate. He is the one normally, as being the supervisor, who will organise the meeting.

85 H: uhum

86 S: I met him, ok, last week. He said that there are some papers that they are to send first before we have that very meeting. So, we are waiting for that. So anyway, things are moving.

87 H: uhum

88 S: yes, we are waiting. So, may be in one or two weeks

89 H: ok

90 S: you have to come and write and then you deposit your project.

91 H: ok, just tell me when, and I will be waiting for that.

92 S: since you have my number, try to call me in two-week's time.

93 H: ok

94 S: uhu! And it's better on Tuesday or Thursday.

95 H: Uhum!

96 S: yes

97 H: any paper that you want?

98 S: yes! There will some papers that we may want.

99 H: my identity...

100 S: your ID card, eeh there is what they call uhmm certificate of origin "certificat de domicile" in French.

101 H: yes

102S: ehean! And then you have to legalise too your...what we say...your ID

103 H: uhum

104 S: and then...what else? Ok, there is an application

105H: uhum

106 S: ...that you have to write, eeeh what else, ok and there is a business plan but we are the one who are issuing the business plan you will get it there.

107 H: I have shown you already

108 S: no, you will not consider your business...so you have to...we have our own document our own proof side. You have to follow the steps that we will show you

109 H: ok let me start with the certificate de domicile.

110 S: the certificate de domicile is very simple to get. Just through the council. When you…quandtuira a la commune…

111 H: ouioui

112 S: ehaa they will give you. Just a matter of 500 francs something like that, sometimes less than that.

113H: alright

114 S: ok

115H: ok we keep in touch

116S: ok ok see you thank you! Thank you very much

117H: thank you Mr. Yah

118S: you are welcome sir!

119H: have a good night

120 S: have a good night

121: same to you

122: thank you very much.