UNIVERSITÉ DU BURUNDI
GRENIER DU SAVOIR DU BURUNDI
Dépôt institutionnel officiel
https://repository.ub.edu.bi

Belittling in kirundi : a pragmatic analysis of this speech-act in M.L Sibazuri's play "Umurundi wa Nkoribigawa "

Semuswi, Déo-Datus; Sous la direction de : Dr. Finnard Sabimana

2002
UB, FLSH
https://repository.ub.edu.bi/handle/123456789/1634

Document téléchargé depuis le **Grenier du Savoir du Burundi** — https://repository.ub.edu.bi

UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

BELITTLING IN KIRUNDI: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THIS SPEECH-ACT IN M.L.SIBAZURI'S PLAY " UMURINDI WA NKORIBIGAWA"

By

Déo-Datus SEMUSWI

Supervisor:

Dr. Firmard SABIMANA

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree "Licence en Langue et Littérature Anglaises"

BUJUMBURA, April 2002

DEDICATION

To

You

My late mother,

My dear father ,

My dear sisters and brothers Benoîte, Adèle, Louis, Salvator, Venant, late Mélchiade,

Whoever cares,

I warmly dedicate these pages.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work should have not been what it is without the contribution and support of many people to whom I would like to express my gratitude.

Sincere gratitude goes to Mr. Firmard SABIMANA, head of the English Department and Lecturer at University of Burundi who, in spite of his many duties and academic obligations, kindly accepted to assist this work.. His patience, his careful and detailed comments from the preliminary draft to the last have not been in vain.

It would be ungrateful not to thank all my former teachers from the primary school to the University who contributed to my intellectual formation. What follows could not have been written without the knowledge of the alphabet that I learnt in first year of primary school.

I would like to thank Mrs. Viola NALUWOOZA, Lecturer at Makerere University, for her objective comments and suggestions on the thesis topic.

More than words can convey, my heart-felt gratitude is also due to my family who made me what I am. May they regard this work as the fruits of their effort.

Special thanks are due to Patrick BIZINDAVYI, Salvator HAVYARIMANA, Prime NKURUNZIZA, AARTMAN's family, other friends whose attachment allowed me to realise this work find here an expression of gratitude.

I also owe my gratitude to all my friends I did not mention, classmates and relatives.

Déo-Datus SEMUSWI

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pages

DEDICATION ---------- i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ---------- ii

TABLE OF CONTENTS---------- iii

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM---------- 1

I.O. Introduction ---------- 1

I.1. Statement of the Problem ---------- 1

I.2. Aim of the Study---------- 5

I.3. Motivation of the Study---------- 5

I.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study ---------- 6

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ---------- 7

II.O. Introduction---------- 7

II.1. Defining Pragmatics ---------- 7

II.1.1. Pragmatics Versus Semantics ---------- 9

II.2. Context---------- 11

II.2.1. Context Viewed by LEECH(1983) ---------- 11

II.2.2. Context as a Pragmatic Aspect ---------- 12

II.2.3. Features of Context.---------- 13

a) Participants ---------- 13

b) Setting ---------- 13

c) Message-form ---------- 14

II.3. Conversational Structure---------- 14

II.3.1. Grice's Cooperative Principle ---------- 15

II.3.2. Notion of Speech Acts---------- 17

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY ---------- 19

III. 1. Data Collection Procedures ---------- 19

III. 2. Encountered Difficulties---------- 20

III.2.1. Difficulties Related to the Identification of Belittling Words/Expressions. ---------- 21

III.2.2. Difficulties Related to Translation ---------- 21

III.3. Data Analysis Procedures ---------- 22

CHAPTER IV: PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF SELECTED BELITTLING WORDS/EXPRESSIONS ---------- 24

IV. O. Introduction---------- 24

IV.1. Structure of Belittling Words/Expressions---------- 24

IV.2. Functions of Belittling Words/Expressions---------- 27

IV.2.1. Didactic Function ---------- 27

IV.2.2. Aesthetic Function ---------- 29

IV.2.3. Humorous Function ---------- 30

IV.2.4. Socialisation ---------- 31

IV.3. Impact of Belittling Words/Expressions on the Receiver ---------- 32

IV.4. Belittling Words/Expressions in Burundian Culture ---------- 34

IV.5. Classification and Analysis of Selected Belittling Words/Expressions According to Themes ---------- 34

IV.5.1. Belittling Words/Expressions Related to Irony ---------- 35

IV.5.2. Belittling Words/Expressions Related to Contempt ---------- 39

IV.5.3. Belittling Words/Expressions Related to Hatred ---------- 42

IV.6. Summary of Illocutionary Forces of the Selected Belittling Words/Expressions ---------- 46

IV.6.1. Warning ---------- 46

IV.6.2. Display of Familiarity ---------- 47

IV.6.3. Rejection ---------- 47

IV.6.4. Disappointment ---------- 48

IV.6.5. Reprimand ---------- 49

GENERAL CONCLUSION ---------- 50

BIBLIOGRAPHY ---------- 52

APPENDIX ---------- 55

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM

I.O. Introduction

Wherever people are, the need of talking is very crucial. While communicating, people may use proverbs, idioms, insults and other expressions such as belittling words according to the context in which the conversation takes place. The present research deals then with Kirundi belittling words commonly called "imikororo", a noun derived from the verb "gukorora" which means to disparage, to depreciate or to discredit.

Being a part of the Burundian literature, belittling words are a means of communication which people use to transmit messages, ideas, thoughts and the tradition when advising. Then, any one who is acquainted with Burundian literature should be able to appreciate a belittling word/expression wherever it occurs.

As a tool of communication, belittling words/expressions can be a subject to a pragmatic analysis as far as, according to Levinson (1983:5), pragmatics is the study of language in usage.

Therefore, this paper seeks to analyse pragmatically some Kirundi belittling words/expressions as a part of Burundians everyday language. In other words, it has to take into account both the meaning and the context in which these words occur.

I. 1. Statement of the Problem

As the analysis is pragmatic this research deals with Kirundi belittling words found in the play of M. Louise Sibazuri, "Umurindi wa Nkoribigawa". We wish then to examine the different uses of these Kirundi words in various contexts. We would like to analyse how a speaker, through conversation, achieves his/ her intention to belittle his/ her interlocutor.

Most of the time, belittling words/expressions take place when a speaker wants to depreciate his/ her interlocutor's opinion with the intention of running him down. These words can also be uttered by someone who wants to humble someone else's pride. Since belittling words imply an open

condemnation with intent to discredit, we find that, pragmatically, any belittling word/expression is uttered with a particular force.

Belittling words/expressions can be classified under several varieties as indicated in the following illustrations:

Situation 1. A friendly conversation.

A. Sha Yoha, naho woba wanka urukwavu uremera ko ruzi kwiruka, ndambaye neza pe!
B. (Yohani): Huu, urashajije ntusumba irobe!

Translation:

A: Dear John, even though you may hate a rabbit, you recognize that it runs fast, I am very well dressed!
B. (John): Huu, you are not more smart than a loaf of bread !

Situation 2. During a court of law session.

A. Bashingantahe, iciyumviro nshikirije n'uko ayo matati twoyahebera abo bagore.
B. Umve! Aho rero nawe ngo uravuze!

Translation:

A. Gentlemen, my opinion is that we leave this misunderstanding to those women .

B. Listen! Is that your way of reasoning!

In the first situation, the conversation is smooth and the two people talk friendly. We can guess that they are friends. The belittling words uttered by speaker the B, John, cannot be taken seriously; it is a kind of joke. The speaker A is praising himself for he thinks he is very well dressed and to express it, he uses an adverb which helps to eliminate any eventual doubt. John tries then to humble his interlocutor's pride by opposing his opinion. John replies by an other expression meaning that speaker A may be well dressed but that he cannot pretend to be the smartest thing in the world and

he gives an example of a loaf of bread which, in Burundian culture, is considered as the best nice thing to be an object of comparison.

In the second situation, the intention of belittling is emphasized on. Speaker B is downgrading speaker A as if the latter cannot utter right words. His way of reasoning is underestimated. Actually, a man deserving to be called "umushingantahe" cannot leave a conflict behind. He who does it does not deserve respect. He cannot be allowed to make a comment to any subject. He should keep silence when others are discussing.

When analysing belittling words, it is not sufficient to take one word in isolation and then pretend to understand its pragmatic force. These words have to be taken in context. For instance, in the first situation, the context is that of friendly talking where joking is allowed whereas in the second situation, it is a serious discussion. The interlocutors talk about serious things, the context cannot allow jokes.

In some situations, the person concerned by the belittling may not be attending the conversation. These are examples from the play:

Example 1:

-Gateka : Uratwara basi Godeliva canke Piya.

-Hasabumutima: Huu,uragayana Gate! Godeliva afise igikiriza kigenda kirahamagara abahita nomwambika imipira nkuye hehe? Nawe Piya , yishimikije karya kajisho kagenda karavunagura ingohe, n'irya minwa nk'iyi mbata yiriwe ubusa,...

Translation:

- Gateka : Marry Godeliva or Piya at least.

- Hasabumutima: Huu, how disdainful you are! Godeliva who has a chest inviting passers- by! Where can I find pullovers to dress her? And Piya with her twinkling eye and her mouth like that of a hungry duck,...

Here, the conversation is between a young man and a young lady, Gateka and Hasabumutima. The context is marriage. Instead of asking her

for marriage, Gateka is proposing Hasabumutima other girls to marry. But Hasabumutima does not find these girls convenient to him. To have one of them as his wife would be an insult because both are ugly. The first one has a too big chest while the second has an abnormal eye and a too big mouth. The persons to whom the belittling words are directed, that is, Godeliva and Piya, are not present, they are not attending the conversation.

For many Kirundi belittling words/expressions, it is not easy to understand them if we rely only on their literal meaning. Some have figurative meanings. The best way to get their meaning is to analyse them in the framework of Burundian culture. Indeed, as S.Bassnett(1980:14) states, language and culture are interwoven. Quoting Sapir, she argues that "no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture". For instance;

-Murabona iyo mujeri!

If we rely only on the literal meaning of this utterance, we cannot understand its meaning. In Kirundi language, "mujeri" is a bird of the family of partridges. It is a half-breed of partridge, smaller than a partridge. Once this utterance heard, one has the intention to look where that bird is. But, actually, the meaning of this utterance is only to downgrade the person referred to, the imagery used is that of disdain.

For the sake of enriching the Kirundi language, many studies have been conducted on this language. Among them are some which are more relevant to our topic than others. We can mention Frederic Kazungu who studied messages through some Kirundi wishing expressions; Gervais Nzorijana pragmatically studied insulting expressions; and Béatrice Irutingabo dealt with cursing expressions.

Our concern is then to analyse how belittling words in Kirundi language are used in the everyday communication.

I . 2 . Aim of the Study

Since there is no research without aim, the purpose of this study is to provide Kirundi belittling words/expressions with meaning relying on a pragmatic analysis. In fact, Kirundi belittling words/expressions that are in use and which occur in general context have appropriate situations determining their meaning.

The main purpose of this work is then to analyse some of these words in situation and to try to find out the pragmatic forces expressed by the speaker. In other words, the emphasis is to be put on the use of belittling words and we are also to focus on their meaning in their various occurrences within conversation. Then, we are going to apply the theory of pragmatics to our culture as far as utterances containing belittling words are concerned.

From the fact that Kirundi belittling words/expressions do not have any specialised occasions unlike riddles and other forms of stories, our main task is to show how some Kirundi belittling words/expressions are closely linked to situations and to many possible contexts. Moreover, there is no limiting age to use such words. A child as well as an adult can easily deliver belittling words but it is rare that a child belittles an adult because it looks impolite. We should mention that most of the time, old people use belittling words through idioms.

In few words, this study aims essentially at analysing the value, the force and the varieties of belittling words/expressions which, most of the time, push a given person to change his/ her behaviour.

I. 3. Motivation of the Study

The primary reason why we chose to work on Kirundi belittling words is our great interest in linguistic field, particularly in the sociolinguistic domain. Being a Kirundi native speaker, we have felt the necessity to study a small part of our mother tongue. As, to our knowledge, no prior study has ever dealt with this topic, much is to be done in this field of pragmatics of Kirundi belittling words/ expressions.

Another reason which pushed us to the choice of this topic is that we are interested in exploring our own culture especially fields which are likely to be forgotten.

Our interest also grew out of the listening to a number of Kirundi plays transmitted through radio such as "Ni nde?", "Umubanyi Niwe Muryango " and other plays performed in theatres or on Television.

Using the theory of pragmatics as a tool, we think that our analysis and description of the selected Kirundi belittling words/expressions within their contextual situation, though modest and limited, will be a valuable contribution to the matter.

I. 4. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

In this study, we are not going to analyse all the Kirundi belittling words since these words are unlimited. Also, the contexts and situations in which these words occur are unlimited.

Specifically, our concern is going to be based on belittling words used in M. Louise Sibazuri's play " Umurindi wa Nkoribigawa" and the choice of those words is justified by the fact that they are frequently used in Burundian tradition. Likewise, the analysis is to be made exclusively within the framework of the theory of speech act and the social norms of the Kirundi language use.

While analysing, we are going to limit ourselves to the speaker's intention and the effect made upon the addressee. In short, the study is pragmatic.

Briefly speaking, these are the field and the limits of our study and we wish our contribution to provide new insights in the field of pragmatics.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

II.O. Introduction

This section of literature review highlighting the theoretical framework of the present study comprises three main parts;
The first one deals with the definition of pragmatics, the controversies it raised in the past. The second part is an attempt to understanding the context as a pragmatic aspect, and the last part deals with conversational structure.

II.1.Defining Pragmatics

Defining pragmatics is not an easy task. The difficulty derives from the fact that pragmatics is a domain which is still seeking its boundaries. Nevertheless, some definitions have been presented such as those of Levinson (1983). According to him (1983 :5), one general definition is that " pragmatics is the study of language usage" . He goes on claiming that:

> pragmatics is the study of all those aspects of meaning not captured in a semantic theory.

This definition seems residual. Indeed there are many aspects of meaning that cannot be accounted for within a semantic framework, and since we need to capture the speaker's communicative intention, it is not sufficient to consider only the literal meaning of words and sentences. Though traditionally pragmatics is defined as a study of language usage, modern philosophers and linguists do not acknowledge the task to be so easy. Later on, Levinson (1983:27) defines pragmatics as follows:

> pragmatics is the study of deixis (at least in part), implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and aspects of discourse structure.

In this classification of the different elements comprised in pragmatics, the main concern of the present study is found in "aspects of discourse

structure". In other words, belittling words are an integral part of the study of discourse since they are especially found in conversations.

To establish the importance of pragmatics in the study of language use, Leech (1983 : 1) presents the following point of view :

> We cannot really understand the nature of language unless we understand Pragmatics: how language is used in communication.

Here the focus is on pragmatics theories of language use.

Concentrating on context and language understanding, let us turn to the following definitions provided by Levinson (1983: 5-35):

> Pragmatics is the study of relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding.

Through this definition, the main thing to keep in mind is that the notion of language understanding refers to the speaker's meaning, which is connected to the context.

A further definition also provided by Levinson makes the notion of appropriateness or felicity central to pragmatics. It runs as follows:

> Pragmatics is the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate.

Even though the main attack on this definition consists in identifying the appropriateness of language use, it seems complete and enjoys much support among many linguists and philosophers.

To carry out a pragmatic analysis, the present study has been motivated by the fact that the knowledge of the real world is a prerequisite for the right usage of language. As a matter of fact, studying belittling words is a part of knowing how the real world works, how people behave or feel after having heard such belittling words/expressions addressed to them.

II.1.1. Pragmatics versus Semantics

Even though different, pragmatics and semantics are both studies of meaning. To differentiate the two branches, Lyons(1981 : 164) asserts that :

> Whereas sentence – meaning falls within the scope of semantics, the investigation of utterance – meaning is part of pragmatics.

Before we come to the difference between Pragmatics and Semantics, it would be better to clarify the notions of sentence and utterance as the point of departure.

According to Levinson (1983 : 18) , "A sentence is an abstract theoretical entity defined within a theory of grammar, while an utterance is the issuance of a sentence, (...), in actual context".

To establish the difference between sentence – meaning and utterance – meaning, Levinson (1983) asserts that a sentence is an abstract entity which does not depend on the context, that is, which is not tied to any particular time and place; it is but a unit of the language it belongs to. The meaning of a sentence depends in part on the meaning of the language it belongs to. The meaning of a sentence depends in part on the meaning of the lexical items it contains, on one hand, and, on the other, it depends on the way these lexical items are put together.

In terms of meaning, Searle (1969) argues that the literal meaning of a sentence is distinguishable from what a speaker means by the sentence. When uttering a sentence, a speaker may mean something different from what the sentence means. However, sometimes, what the sentence means and what the speaker means may be exactly the same. For example, in a given context, a speaker may utter a sentence : " The student is reading" and mean exactly and literary that the student is reading. Since we can have other meanings beside the literal one, such as the ironical meaning, the metaphorical meaning , indirect speech acts and conversation implicatures, Searl (1969: 18) says that all these meanings are not properties of sentences, but rather of speaker's utterances of sentences.

There are many authors who define and contrast pragmatics and semantics in terms of utterances and sentences respectively. Here, we think of Fasold (1984) according to whom semantics is associated with the truth conditions of sentences, the latter being independent of their use. As for pragmatics, it is associated with various implicatures that arise once utterances occur in context . Following Levinson (1983 : 19), we can say that semantics is concerned with sentence-meaning, and pragmatics with utterance – meaning. So the difference between semantics and pragmatics lies in the fact that the former deals with meaning at the sentence level whereas the latter deals with meaning at the sentence plus context level.

Another difference between the two branches is also established by Morris (1938) and Leech (1983). The trichotomy syntax - semantics – pragmatics is explained by Morris (1938 : 6) who defines pragmatics as " the relation of signs to interpreters" whereas semantics is "the relation of signs to one another".
The following difference is also raised by Morris (1983 : 2) when he says :

> If in an investigation, explicit reference is made to the speaker, then we assign it to the field of pragmatics....if we abstract from the user of the language and analyse only the expressions and their designata, we are in the field of semantics. And finally, if we abstract from the designata also, and analyse only the relation between the expressions, we are in syntax.

It is true that syntax, semantics and pragmatics are all branches of the same field, that is linguistics. Nevertheless, only semantics and pragmatics are theories of meaning.

With regard to our study, we are mostly concerned with Morris definitions and distinctions between the two areas (pragmatics and semantics) as quoted by Recanati (1981) when he says that the differences among semantics and pragmatics deal respectively with the relations between signs and what they represent and the relations between signs and their users. According to him, an utterance not only represents a state of affair but also expresses the thoughts and feelings of the speaker.

II . 2 . Context

II . 2. 1. Context viewed by Leech (1983)

Previously, we gave definitions of pragmatics provided by philosophers and linguists. Most of these definitions refer to "context" or just to contextual considerations.

In the contextualists's view (see Leech 1983: 66), context is an undeniably important factor in communication. Above all, the specification of context (whether linguistic or non linguistic) has the effect of narrowing down communicative possibilities of the message as it exists in abstraction from the context. As a matter of fact, Leech(1983:67) defines what can be called " properties of context" in the following way:

A. Context eliminates certain ambiguities or multiple meanings in the message.
B. Context indicates the referents of certain types of word we call " deictic" (this, that, there, here, now, then, etc), and of other expressions of definite meaning such as John, I, you, he, it, the man, etc.
C. Context supplies information which the speaker / the writer has omitted through ellipsis.

Example:

We are to appreciate that: - Janet! donkeys! means something like; -Janet! drive those donkeys away! rather than: -Janet! Bring those donkeys here!

II.2. 2. Context as a Pragmatic Aspect

At first glance, belittling words always occur in a given context. According to Brown and Yule (1983:27), the discourse analyst necessarily takes a pragmatic approach to the study of language in use. Such an approach takes into consideration a number of issues which do not generally receive much attention in the formal linguist's description of sentential syntax and semantics.

The discourse analyst has to take into account the context in which a piece of discourse occurs. Some of the most obvious linguistic elements which require contextual information for their interpretation are deictic forms such as: here, now, I, you, this, or that. In order to interpret these elements in a piece of discourse, it is necessary to know at least who the speaker and the hearer are, and the time and the place of the production of the discourse. The following example can be a good illustration of the point.

Hasabumutima: ...ahubwo nk'ubu wosumagana ugaca umbwira ico noserukana mw'irembo iwanyu ngo bakunyegurire maze ndagushogomangane riva ,...

Gateka: (atwenga) Ninde yaguhenze ko nshaka kuba bwegu wa muntu?

Translation

Hasabumutima: ...it would be better if you told me what present to give your parents in order to get you as mine...

Gateka: (laughing) You really don't know me! Who let you down telling you that I wish to belong to someone?

Based on the context, we can easily identify the kind of interlocutors without any difficulty. Actually, nobody can say for instance that the girl is a sister and the young man is a priest. Nor can one say that the production of the discourse is taking place in a church.. It is simply an exchange between lovers, two persons belonging to the same generation.

Since the analyst is investigating the use of language in context by a speaker, he is more concerned with the relationship between the speaker and

the utterance on the particular occasion of use, than with the potential relationship of one sentence to another regardless of their use.

II.2. 3. Features of Context

Features of context are many but not all of them are always relevant in a given analysis. That is the reason why only the most relevant ones are considered in the present study.

a) Participants

According to The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics(1985), a participant is a person who is present in a speech event and whose presence may have an influence on what is said and how it is said. He / She may actually take part in the exchange of speech or be merely a silent participant, for example as part of an audience composed of Christians to whom a priest is addressing.

As far as participants are concerned, Lyons (1977:36) points out the fact that the speaker addresses an utterance to another person (or other persons) who is (are) present in the situation. The speaker may also refer to himself, to the addressee (s) or to other persons and objects by means of a personal or demonstrative pronoun. He focuses also on the participants' social status which determines the terms of address of the speaker to produce appropriate sentences in various situations.

b) Setting

Using Wardaugh's (1985:62) terms, an utterance makes reference to the external world and indicates places, positions and the time in which it occurs. Moreover, apart from the knowledge of the world around them, the participant share a common knowledge of what is uttered at a given time and what is said.

Hymes(1964 : 60) says that if you have information about the setting, both in terms of where and when the event is situated as well as in terms of the physical relations of the interactants with respect to posture and gesture and social expression, your expectation will be still further limited.

c) Message form

For the analyst, the knowledge of the message form is an interesting information. In fact, the information about the form of the message whether it is a debate, a congratulation card, a chat, a tale, act , is a sign of the success of the analysis because none of these genres requires the same behaviour and speech event as another one. This means that the analysis will be easy if the analyst has more knowledge on the speech event.

II. 3. Conversational Structure

Communicating is a social activity requiring the co-ordinated efforts of two or more individuals. Mere talk to produce sentences , no matter how well formed or elegant the outcome, does not by itself constitute communication. Only when a move has elicited a response can we say communication, hence conversation, is taking place.

In this section we would like first to have an idea about conversation since defining exactly what conversation is and what it is not is a rather tough task. As a matter of fact, some people wonder whether a talk in a meeting can be considered as a conversation or not . To resolve such ambiguity, Levinson (1983 : 284) defines conversation as :

> That familiar predominant kind of talk in which two or more participants freely alternate in speaking, which generally occurs outside specific institutional settings like religious services, low courts, classrooms and the like.

Quoting Gumperz (1982 : 1), once involved in a conversation, both speaker and hearer must actively respond to what transpires by signaling involvement , either directly through words or indirectly through gestures or similar non-verbal signals. The response, moreover, should relate to what we think the speaker intends, rather than to the literal meanings of the words used. Conversation can then be said to be that period of " idling felt to be an end itself" (cf. Funk and Wagnell (1967:312)). Moreover, in conversation, there is no fixed schedule, everyone can speak and listen to his interlocutor and there is no synthesis to be demanded later. By this, a question of whether or not a conversation is ordered is raised.

Sacks (1976) and his followers Jefferson and Schegloff were the first tofocus on conversation as the " simplest instance of a naturally organised activity". Their research concentrated on isolating strategies of openings, speaker change , ongoing checks and closings. The opening section by which, usually conversations begin, comprises a series of " Hello" followed by an exchange of "How are you" each with their paired responses. Most of the cases, this part is followed by a series of turn-takings.These are exchanges of questions and news, each one followed by a response. Turn-takings are thus characterised by an A-B-A-B-A-B distribution in that one participant , A, talks and then stops; another , B, talks, stops and so continues the cycle. A turn-taking can also be characterised by overlapping. Most of the time, during a conversation, when the first participant is still talking, the second introduces his point of view. It is after these exchanges that come the closing section. The closing sections must be done carefully so that no one would be forced to exit while still having something to say. That is the reason why, most of the time, conversations end is preceded by arrangements for further meetings followed finally by sequence of "okays" just prior to a final exchange of "Goodbyes". As a whole, these are the parts that constitute a conversation.

II.3. 1. Grice's Cooperative Principle

During a conversation session, interlocutors have to take into account some factors so as to permit the discourse to be fruitful. So, as many social activities, talk is "meaning- negotiation", to use Wardaugh's (1985:38) terms. He says that all along their conversations, people are trying to put their ideas on the floor and make them understood the way they would like to. Moreover, talk is a "reciprocal undertaking ". Wardaugh (1985:38) goes on saying that in this reciprocal undertaking each participant must be aware of his co-participant's needs.

Grice(1975:45) on his part points to principles which have to be respected for a conversation to be successful. However these principles are not to be used as rules to apply absolutely, rather, they are used as social regulators of language use and serve as choices used following the goal of the speaker. Therefore, the speaker may privilege such and such maxims of the principle while he flouts another one depending on the aim and elements

of the context. The Cooperative Principle is presented by Grice (1975:45) as follows:

> Make your conversational contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged.

The above principle is supported by a set of four maxims which are guidelines for the efficient use of language in situation. The four maxims are then stated as follows:

1. Maxim of Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2. Maxim of Quality : Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.

4. Maxim of Manner : Be perspicuous. Avoid obscurity of expression. Be brief and orderly.

With these maxims, Grice makes it possible to describe what types of meaning a speaker can convey by flouting at least one of these maxims.

As a point in case, the present study deals more specifically with the first maxim " make your contribution as informative as required". In the example below, the aim of Ntihagwibara is not only limited to insulting Nkoribigawa but his best intention is to inform other citizens that this man is not a man deserving honour and respect.

Ndegeya: sigaho sokuru n'ivumwe!

Ntihagwibara: ...kirya gitantahe c'umugabo

Translation

Ndegeya: that's incredible grandfather!
Ntihagwibara: ...that deviant man!

In Burundian culture, "igitantahe" means a man who lost his status of a respectful man. This person cannot be asked for a piece of advice, he no longer has the right to express his opinion. He is a deviant man.

As a matter of fact, belittling words have their way of observing Grice's maxims because they are a particular genre which is very meaningful when they are relevant in respect to their contexts of use.

II.3. 2. Notion of Speech Acts

Linguists and philosophers, especially Searle and Austin made a more general approach to the notion of speech acts.

Searle (1969) built upon Austin (1962) to develop the notion of speech acts, that is, the action which the utterance of text intentionally or conventionally performs. Austin(1962) distinguished three different types of action involved in or caused by the utterance of a sentence:

-The Locutionary act: the act of uttering a sentence with a certain meaning. In other words, it is the saying of something that is meaningful and that can be understood , that is, having a clear sense or reference.

-The Illocutionary act: is the act of intending an utterance to constitute an act of praise, criticism, agreement, …in other words, it is an act of using a sentence in order to perform a function.

-The Perlocutionary act: is the act of uttering a sentence to achieve a certain consequent response from the hearer , for example to frighten him, to amuse him, to get him to do something. In other words, it is the result or effect that is produced by meaning or saying something.

Searle also distinguished three types of acts namely:

-Utterance acts; which are acts of producing various sounds, words and sentences.

-Propositional acts; which are acts of referring and predicating;

. Referential act, that is relating one individual to another.
. propositional acts, by which speakers ascribe a property to an individual identified by a referential act.

-Illocutionary acts ; which are acts that specify the purpose of the speaker in the discourse; for example asking , promising , warning, threatening,...In fact, these clarifications are complementary.

Since it clarifies the act of performing an act of speaking, the way in which the speaker organizes his speech, the speaker's intention, the speech act theory brings much interest.

Actually, our topic is concerned with one speech act of delivering belittling words. It also seeks to know in which conditions these words are delivered and how they affect the hearer. When performing such a speech act, there are many parameters to be taken into account. In other words, we have to know if we share the same background and therefore cultural values, age , sex, social class, etc. All these are very important for a message to be decoded. According to Gumperz and Hymes (1986:99) , the selection of one or more formulas for the realisation of the speech act depends on socio-cultural rules and specific discourse situations above individual preferences.

For Austin (1970:43), the circumstances in which words are pronounced should be appropriate. And the speaker, while saying something, should incite the hearer to act in a way or another, whether negatively or positively.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

III.1. Data Collection Procedures

In most cases the success of a research is determined by the way data have been collected. In traditional Burundi, writing was unknown but there is a common agreement among Burundians and researchers on Kirundi that Burundian oral literature is rich.

In their book, Discourse Analysis, Brown and Yule (1983) assert that "the discourse analyst can take his/her data either from written texts or from tape-recordings". Between the two, the present study has chosen to use a written text as its source. It is then directed to the description and analysis of belittling words through a written text: a play. Besides the recommendations of Brown and Yule(1983) to use either a written text or a tape-recording, Fowler (1981: 8) argues that literary texts can be said to be a reflection of life, especially of how language is used by a given community.

Wreth (1981) and Fowler (1981) are two linguists who strongly advocate the use of written texts as social discourse. Wreth (1981: 212) puts it this way:

> ...a text-linguist is capable of bringing together many of the diverse approaches, since a fully-fledged theory of a text must occur in conjunction with a theory of context.

As for Fowler (1981:27), he states that:

> Literary texts are not simply texts but also, or rather, are discourses.

The two linguists share the same view and the present work has, among the various categories of written texts, chosen to use a play. The reason of that choice is mostly linked to the fact that in a play, characters act out scenes of everyday life and it is from the exchanges that the present study draws its data. Moreover with the conviction that a play reflects the writer's way of speaking, we find that he portrays life as he actually sees it.

But some question such as why among the various Rundi plays , the present study has chosen Sibazuri's can be raised. Of course the choice of this play is not random. After having read many Rundi novels, tales and plays we decided to use a play, precisely one of M.L. Sibazuri, "Umurindi wa Nkoribigawa". We found this play most suitable for our study as belittling cases are frequent.

More to the point, this study needed a play written in standard Kirundi. Many recent Rundi playwrights use the town as their setting and the language they use is most of the time a mixture of Kirundi and some Swahili or French. A case of illustration can be shown in the play "Umuco" or "Sida Yarateye" performed on Burundi National Television by some young people from Bujumbura.

In Sibazuri's(1994) play, however, the language used is standard Kirundi with the up-country as setting. This play embodies words and expressions which illustrate a good deal of socio-cultural phenomena in Burundi. Precisely, it comprises more than sixty (60) cases of belittlings. They are words or expressions directed or delivered to someone whose way of thinking or behaving is not totally accepted in the social environment. Belittling words/expressions can also be delivered by someone whose goal is to harm his opponent. In few words, belittlingwords/expressions may be harmful or simply ironical. Like the play, the words or expressions we are concerned with were not chosen randomly. They have been collected and grouped according to their main themes.

The sample for our study is made of situations that are chunks of conversations containing belittling words. These are selected throughout the play. We are mostly interested in who belittles who, how and why, according to the social relation.

We have selected a total of sixty (60) situations extended to three themes that are : Irony, Contempt and Hatred.

III.2. Encountered difficulties

Like any pioneer study, the main difficulties we met in our study are related to the lack of literature on the subject and translation.

III.2. I. Difficulties related to the identification of belittling words/expressions

The problem of identification of belittling words is linked with how data are transcribed. In a conversation transcription, not only words and sentences are transcribed but also other extra-linguistic elements such as gestures, looks, laughing, applauding, breathing, overlapping, eye movement. There is nothing to be neglected and if possible, every detail should be mentioned since it conditions the interlocutor's interpretation.

As we are concerned with a written material, a play, the task becomes more difficult when analysing a conversation lacking non-verbal cues, which are of great importance in conversation interpretation. So, the identification of belittling words was not so easy as we were not accustomed to any sophisticated technique, we only tried to interpret the presentation and the order of words making chunks of conversation occurring in our data.

III.2. 2. Difficulties related to translation

The play from which our data are fetched is written in Kirundi. Since Kirundi and English are two languages belonging to different linguistic families, the task of translating Kirundi into English is not so easy. In fact, the first language belongs to the group of Bantu languages whereas the second is from Indo-European languages. The problem is then in the difficulty to provide the reader with an exact translation of Kirundi metaphors into the English language. This problem arises from the fact that, although belittling words are part of ordinary conversation, nevertheless their terse form differentiates them from ordinary sentences, thus their translation in plain English cannot fully render the original meaning. More to the point, this difficulty is mainly due to the fact that metaphors often carry cultural connotations while Kirundi and English do not share the same culture.

Coming back to our topic, Kirundi belittling words had to be translated into English. Therefore, some aspects of encoded communications might be difficult or even impossible to translate. It is not so easy to make

clear the ideas of the original text. In connection with this, Barzun and Graft (1977:270) write:

> Let us suppose that the scholar, reporter or technician has learned in one or more foreign tongues all the words in his special vocabulary; he is still far from fully equipped. For " what the original means" is not the same thing as" knowing the meaning of every word". It is words together that create meaning and give a statement its peculiar tone and clear implications.

If we analyse this quotation, it is obvious that a word for word translation is misleading since there may be no equivalent words in both languages; this translation is even sometimes impossible. The most important difficulty we had come across then was that of untranslatability. To illustrate, let us take the following situation where the conflict between Pesiyoza and Deniza is reaching the climax.

-Pesiyoza: yoo, kukuzwa neza, …

-Deniza : Temba urakagenda bwire.

Actually, it will be difficult to find lexical or syntactical substitute of what Pesiyoza says. The combination of these words make up a linguistically untranslatable utterance because its structure does not exist in English. For the present case we would just paraphrase it as:

-Pesiyoza: What a pity, don't behave like a foolish person,…

-Deniza : Go leaping, may you travel until night-fall.

Therefore, since the general idea is crucial to a better understanding of the translated statement, the only thing we would do was to find an appropriate equivalent meaning in paraphrasing. As Newmark (1982:113) puts it, "content is the overriding factor in all translation and is primary over any rule(…)". By relying on the context of utterance, we did our best to keep close to the original meaning.

III.3. Data Analysis Procedures

While analysing the data collected we first have to bear in mind that a pragmatic analysis involves a clear understanding of the text in which sentences are used. In support of this, Brown and Yule (1983:37) argue that " the context helps to overcome the difficulties of vagueness and ambiguity". To do so, the data collected, that is belittling words, have been analysed as follows:

First, these words have been classified according to themes. Second, they have been interpreted by providing the utterance with meaning with regard to their context of occurrence. In other words, we have analysed the themes the selected belittling words are related to and see how the speaker wants these words to be considered.

Following Wardaugh (1985) who considers a text as a sequence of speech acts, this allowed us to deal with illocutionary forces as defined by Austin and Searl(1969). The analysis has then focused on the speaker's intention or goal and the illocutionary force of the belittling words.

In short, the knowledge of the context of delivery is indispensable to the understanding of an utterance. In addition, the speech act theory has been taken as a tool in the description of belittling as an act. Given that the words to be analysed can hold much indirectness, we can also bear in mind Searl's view that for one illocutionary act, several forces may be intended by the speaker.

CHAPTER IV: PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF SELECTED BELITTLING WORDS/EXPRESSIONS

IV.O. Introduction

As already mentioned in previous chapters, the pragmatic interpretation of a given discourse involves a clear understanding of its context. Since the discourse to be interpreted in this work is a Rundi play, a short summary is thus a prerequisite before going on with the analysis.

The play " Umurindi wa Nkoribigawa" was written in 1994 by a Burundian playwright named Marie Louise Sibazuri. At this period were prevailing in Burundi ethnic divisions which even led to inter-ethnic violence. The main idea of the play turns around how one ethnic group is taught and brought to hate and fight citizens who do not share the same ideology of ethnic division.

Among the leaders of the movement is Mr. Nkoribigawa, an intellectual living in town. Sometimes, Nkoribigawa goes upcountry to teach the members of his group about the ideology of hatred and even helps them to plan massacres. Of course all the citizens do not share this divisionist view. When violence begins, some elders of the village meet in order to discuss ways of recovering peace.

This chapter then analyses the data derived from the above play. As this study is a pragmatic analysis, the situations have been analysed according to the context of the play.

IV.1. Structure of belittling words/expressions

The anatomy of belittling words/expressions is just more or less a group of words.
Belittling words can just be limited to only one word (e.g. Hora! = Close your mouth! Or the interjection "Hm!") but its interpretation will be the

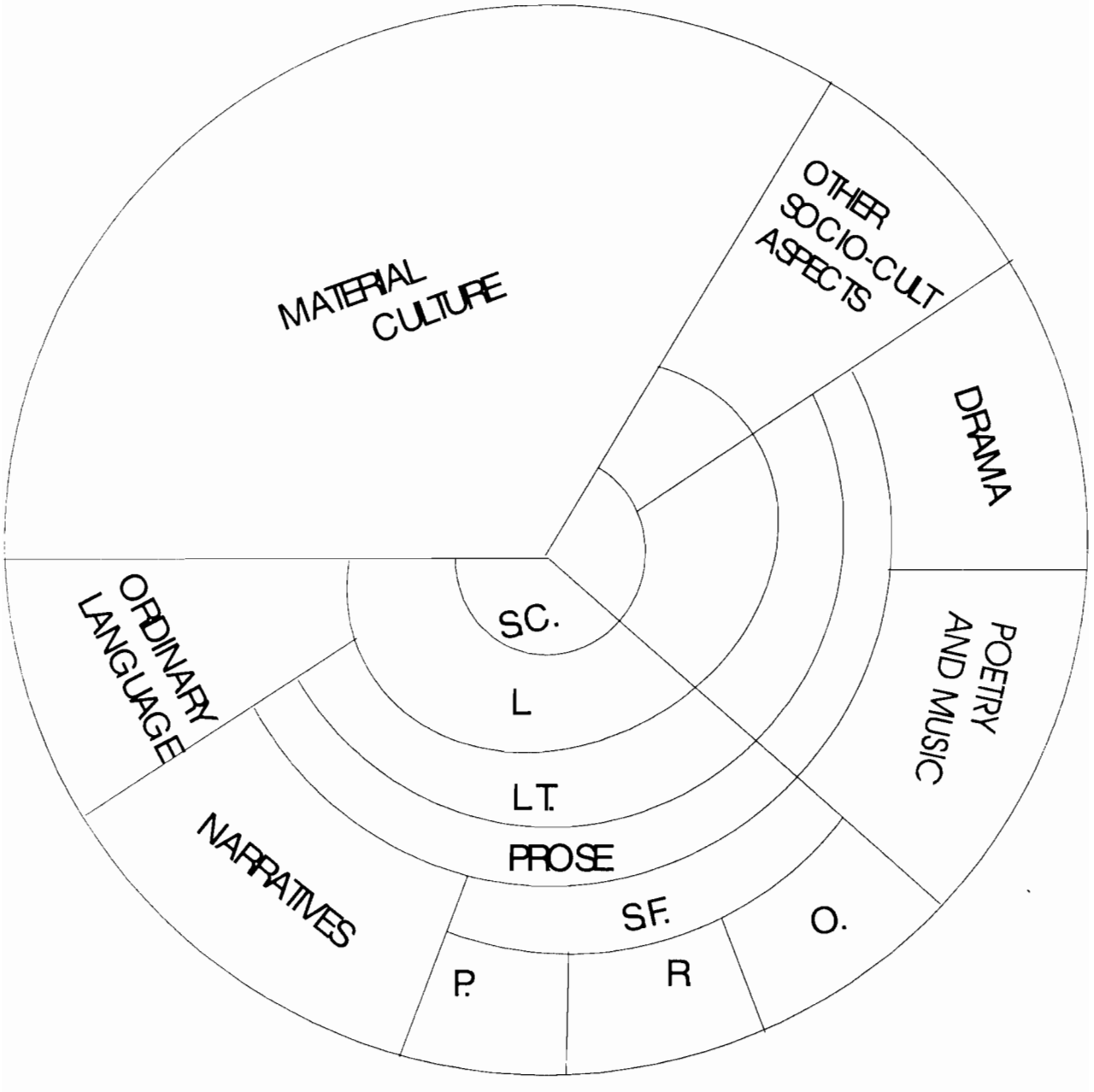
same as that of a group of many words.

Belittling words/expressions are close to proverbs. However, what makes them different is mainly based on their grammatical structures. In other words, their structure is different from that of proverbs. While a Burundian proverb is a one-sentence structure, belittling words/expression do not necessarily have the same structure.

As a matter of fact, what we need to do first is to put belittling words/expressions in a social context and that context is found in the play in use. As known, society is the mother of culture and any culture may be divided into two branches: the material and the social. Material culture refers to physical products of human societies in response to the demands of the environment. This is where we get utensils, tools, furniture, attire, musical instruments, etc. The social culture includes language, history, religion, philosophy, customs, etc. Belittling words/expressions belong to the realm of language, language itself being a part of the social culture.

Basically, spoken language is used to affect communication either nominally, artistically or in code. Oral literature, to which belittling words/expressions belong, is a part of artistic communication.

In Miruka's (1994) work entitled Encounter with Oral Literature, where he defines "proverbs" through a diagram, we can find the localisation of our subject area:



LEGEND:

Sc: Social culture
SF: Short forms
P.: Proverbs
O.: Others
L: Language
LT.: Literary Tradition
R : Riddlles

Here, Miruka(1994) has classified the proverbs among short forms and briefly states that the short forms consist of sayings and language games. The sayings are: proverbs, adages, apothegms or aphorisms, dicta, maxims, slogans, idioms and euphemisms. We can then deduce that belittling words/expressions belong to the family of short forms. Before knowing their functions, this is in short the presentation of the structure of belittling words/expressions.

IV.2. Functions of Belittling words/expressions

Belittling words/expressions whether orally or in writing have certain ends to meet. It is these ends that we call social functions and these functions may be didactic, aesthetic, humorous or social. As Miruka (1994) quoting Malinowski and Brown puts it, any cultural activity must have a utilitarian value for its people.

IV. 2.1. Didactic Function

Functionalists have always emphasised the instructive roles of orature. More than anything else, they have recognised that narratives are not just told for their own sake but have some important pieces of social instructions to impart, and so do belittling words/expressions.

The aim of belittling words/expressions is to discourage vice and encourage virtue. Belittling words/expressions give us guidelines on what is despicable and what is cherishable. In other words, they seek to change life. To illustrate, on page 2 of the text, the situation when Gateka and Hasabumutima are discussing about ethnic matters highlights the didactic function played by the belittling words delivered by Hasabumutima.

-Gateka: None ngo ko hirya no hino bariko barayapfa? (amoko)

-Hasabumutima: Birabasha. None duce tugira nkabo?

Translation

-Gateka: So, why are people fighting for their ethnic divisions all over the country?

-Hasabumutima: That is their business. So do we have to act as they do?

In this context, Hasabumutima ironizes about the fact that some people are regarding one's ethnic group as something of great importance. According to him, one's ethnic origin cannot be a matter of misunderstanding. Let only those who support ethnic division bear the consequences.

Most of the time, belittling words/expressions are used to point out facts of life where there is an anomaly so as to restructure things and to prompt the deviant back to normality. This presupposes a certain standard way of behaviour that is desirable and should be maintained. Belittling words/expressions can also fulfil normative functions since they can be used to warn, to caution, to advise or even to lampoon. Through irony and indirect suggestions as a way of giving advice and creating alertness and observation, belittling words/expressions are used to influence people's actions. Moreover, belittling words/expressions are used as educational tools as far as they reinforce quick thinking and the gaining of intellectual skills. They enhance active manipulation of knowledge in both the young and the old. More to the point, belittling words/expressions can be brought to our defence when in critical conditions. On page 6 of the play, when Hasabumutima, Ndegeya, Gateka, Kirisiyano and Leya are criticizing themselves as of less value for not having chased Nkoribigawa from their village, Kirisiyano takes his defence.

-Gateka: Mugabo natwebwe turi ibijuju. Umuntu w'inkwezi y'akarongo nk'uwo ntitwomugira inama tukamutuza ataratubibamwo urwo tutazogesa?

-Kirisiyano: Kubivuga biroroshe.

Translation

-Gateka: But we are too stupid. Why can't we chase such a devil before he

brings us trouble?

-Kirisiyano: Easier said than done!

In the present context, Kirisiyano is also concerned with the critic of being stupid. But in order to show the audience that there is someone else more stupid than he is, Kirisiyano finds a way to downgrade her opponent. And from the response provided, Gateka may learn not only to say but to act.

IV. 2. 2. Aesthetic Function

To qualify for be uttered, there must be something of beauty in belittling words/expressions, and this beauty lies in the language. Out of the linguistic resources, belittling words/expressions select what is most appealing and put it together. There are also belittling words/expressions which are not expressively meant for semantic communication but more as artistic expressions. When delivering belittling words/expressions, the context is a very beautiful and challenging exercise where people test their wits and mastery of the resources of their language through a spontaneous delivery. It is an occasion for bringing to the fore the aesthetic qualities of the language stock.

To quote Miruka (1994) : "The pith of poetic aesthetics is in the imagery". Powerful imagery is the source of good belittling words/expressions and it attains better communication than prosaic language. In the following examples, the belittling words declaimed by Hasabumutima are not meant for semantic communication but more as artistic expressions.

-Hasabumutima: Umwe agenda aturumbuye ibinoko nk'umutunzi
ataye ingodomoni.

-Gateka : (Atwenga) Bavuga ikotomoni!

Translation.

-Hasabumutima: The one who walks eyes opened like a rich person
who lost his wallet(ingodomoni)

-Gateka : (Laughing) It is pronounced "ikotomoni"

In order to attract Gateka in his conversation, Hasabumutima tries to use special words through imagery. In fact Hasabumutima has fallen in love with Gateka and tries to seduce her. At this point, there is a preoccupation with the beauty of artistic expression. For instance, instead of using simple words such as "kuraba" (to look) or "amaso" (eyes), he respectively uses "guturumbura" and "ibinoko", vulgar words. Moreover, he uses a funny parallelism and all this is done for the sake of inciting Gateka to laugh.

IV.2. 3. Humorous Function

Humour is one thing which makes a piece of communication irresistible to its audience, whether intended by the speaker or incidental. The humour may arise from the words, images or just the context of usage.

Belittling words/expressions are quite full of humour. Being culturally based, it is easier for the native speaker of a language than for an outsider to discern humour. This is because of the allusions and other paralinguistic nuances too subtle for recognition by the stranger. But all the same, anyone with a sensitivity to literature should be able to appreciate humour whenever it occurs. The example provided in the section of aesthetic function is also valid here. Hasabumutima searches a way of amusing Gateka through humour. Not only the words used can push the audience to laugh but also the imagery presented is amusing. We can imagine how someone who loses much money looks like and laughs. Relating the situation to the context, Gateka proposes Hasabumutima another girl, Florida, who can become a good wife for him but Hasabumutima does not want. To show that this girl does not fit him, Hasabumutima belittles her by describing her abnormal look.

Humour is a convenient conveyance of satire. While we glee in laughter, we sometimes fail to recognize the criticism in the expression. In

the present context, we can guess that Hasabumutima's intended goal is that of making Gateka laugh rather than that of criticising Florida. Humour then acts as a cushion in that we can chose to regard it at its surface feature.

IV. 2. 4. Socialisation

Socialisation is another function of belittling words/expressions. Socialisation can be understood in two ways: as a way of fitting one into a social fabric or as a way of deriving pleasure through entertainment.

The sense in which belittling words/expressions are socializer encompasses both cases as we obviously derive pleasure from them and since it is an art as part of literature. But also, belittling words/expressions provide some information intended to cultivate in us the sense of social fabric from which these words/expressions are created.

To illustrate, on page 2, in the conversation between Gateka and Hasabumutima, the latter minimizes the value of one's ethnic group.

-Gateka : None ngo ko hirya no hino mu gihugu bariko barayapfa?
(amoko)

-Hasabumutima: Birabasha. None duce tugira nkabo?

Translation

-Gateka: So, why are people fighting for their ethnic membership all over the country?

-Hasabumutima: That is their business. So, do we have to act as they do?

In the present situation, Hasabumutima looks down on those who consider ethnic identity as an object of conflict and invites his fellowcitizens not to follow them. According to him, what those people are doing is meaningless. Through the question he puts, he means that intelligent people like him and Gateka cannot imitate such a bad model. This is then a case of

socialization where a citizen invites other fellow countrymen to unity in order to safeguard their social fabric.

With a quick look to the previous point, the pleasure derived from belittling words/expressions performance is for both the audience and the participants as well. It may emanate from the play on words, humour or movement, mimics or attire for performance on scene.

All in all, when delivering belittling words/expressions, there is a preoccupation with the transmission of messages. People express their feelings and ideas about life with the aim of fulfilling or discouraging experience. Functionalists see the society as a stable entity perpetuated by the various cultural activities. Bascom quoted by Miruka (1994) summarises this approach when he says:

> Folklore operates within a society to ensure conformity to the accepted cultural norms and continuity from generation to generation through its role in education and the extend to which it mirrors culture. To the extent to which folklore contrasts with the accepted norms and offers socially accepted forms of release through amusement or humour and through creative imagination or fantasy, it tends to preserve the institutions from direct attack and change.

From this point of view, belittling words/expressions are also charged with the role of censuring deviants. Language influences the total psychological make up of man. According to Saporta (1961:12), "there is influence of language categories upon behaviour." Belittling words/expressions are among these language categories.

IV.3. Impact of Belittling words/expressions on the receiver

The general purpose of belittling words is to show one's disgust, depreciation in someone else's action, behaviour, appearance or way of thinking. The belittling words effectiveness depends therefore upon the hearer's recognition of their power. If the hearer does not acknowledge the belittling act, this results in the speaker's or belittler's failure. We should also notice that belittling words can be brought to our defence when replying

to an attack, be it verbal or physical. By belittling his opponent, the receiver may stop the aggression. When belittled during a conversation, one feels some kind of harm striking his heart. It is in reaction to a belittling act that the receiver changes his behaviour. At this time, the impact is positive. But it may happen that the receiver does not consider the objectivity of the speaker and does not change his behaviour. Here the impact is negative.

As far as the Burundian cultural values are concerned, it is rare for Burundians to acknowledge or positively receives a given belittling word. The general tendency is to find another way to face the attack. It can happen that the receiver more seriously downgrades the speaker and most of the cases this results in the exchange of insults, which can even leads to a physical confrontation. Nevertheless, even though the receiver cannot loudly admit that the belittler is right to downgrade him, he may positively recognize the belittlement act and change his behaviour in order to be fully well regarded in the society.

When on page 17, 7th scene, the wise men of the village forgive the young men who have destructed their neighbours' houses, the young man positively receive the belittling words, instead of feeling harmed, and react consequently : They just thank the wise men for the forgiveness they get :

- Ntungane : ... Nayo ivyo bitumva nivyimenyera ntibizombaze.

- Ya misore : Oya muradutabaye. Uwuzosubira murashaka mwice azoba atagira umutima .

Translation

- Ntungane : ... and those deaf young men, if they continue, that is their own business.

- The youngmen : Thank you, you just saved us. You have the full right to kill the heartless who will do it again.

If the belittling words delivered by Ntungane were not acknowledged or positively received, the young men could not resign themselves to their fate. The piece of advice delivered by Ntungane even pushes the young men to promise to give up the bad behaviour.

In all cases, belittling words have impact on the receiver whether positive or negative.

IV.4. Belittling words/expressions in Burundian culture

When Bassnett (1980 : 14) says that no language can exist unless it is used in the context of culture, we have to recognize that belittling words and culture are linked.

For many belittling words, it would not be easy to understand them if we do not take into consideration their cultural values. Culture accounts for social functions, contexts and general implications of the belittling words in Burundi.

In Burundian culture, belittling words are given according to various contexts or themes. Since our work is limited to a play , the belittling words found in this play are also limited to some themes.

IV.5. Classification and Analysis of Selected Belittling Words/Expressions According to Themes

Analysing belittling words in Kirundi would seem to be an endless process because people belittle others in so many circumstances.

As it has been said in chapter two under the section on context, a pragmatic analysis takes into account three main orientations, that is, the participants, the setting and the message –form. Therefore, the context in which belittling words occur is a context first of all situated within Burundian culture. It is a context which is proper to Burundian everyday life.

More to the point, belittling words picture the Burundian culture, the Burundian psychology and the Burundian way of living. Through conversation, belittling words are then used at any place and at any time; that is, in any physical setting. As far as the participants are concerned, belittling words are most of the time delivered to human beings but they can also refer to animals, objects or other representations.

Looking at the message-form, the reader should bear in mind that whenever we speak of culture, we must have an idea of the linguistic environment, that is, the language used and the kind of the message to be decoded.

Though culture and language are emphasized on, it is obvious that the researcher keeps near the idea that the scope of context is not easy to define and that one must consider the social and psychological world in which the language user operates at any given time, as suggested by Ochs (see Levinson 1983 : 23). Therefore, the social and psychological world of belittling words is to be understood through the themes which are developed in it. Since there is no definite number of themes in the belittling phenomenon, we have decided to restrict the classification to three recurrent themes, namely irony, contempt, and hatred as identified in the play "Umurindi wa Nkoribigawa".

IV.5.1. Belittling words/expressions related to irony

According to the Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English(1963), irony is defined as the expression of one's meaning by saying something which is the direct opposite of one's thoughts, in order to make one's remarks forceful.

In Webster's Third New International Dictionary 1986, irony is defined as humour, ridicule or light sarcasm that adopts a mode of speech the intended implication of which is the opposite of the literal sense of the words (as when expressions of praise are used where blame is meant). Another definition flows as a state of affairs of events that is the reverse of what was or was to be expected : a result opposite to, and as if in mockery of, the appropriate result. Throughout the present play, we meet various belittling words and some of them are related to the theme of irony.

E.g. 1.Page7,4th scene

-Nkoribigawa : … Nk'uko nabibabwiye ngitangura, biratangaje cane ingene imyaka irenga itatu inyuma y'itangura ry'intambara mu gihugu, ino iwanyu hacifashe gurtya!

- Ijwi : None ni bibi ? (bamwe baratwenga mu ntamatama abandi bakamuzivya)

Translation

- Nkoribigawa : ...As I have already told you since the beginning, it is amazing to see that, after more than three years of war your region remained as before !
- A Voice : So is it bad ? (some people laugh, others oblige him to keep quiet)

In this situation , irony is felt when the voice reacts to what Nkoribigawa says. The intention of the person who raises this voice is not just to ask a question as the utterance is presented but the intention is to emphasize a sarcasm which tend to underestimate Nkoribigawa's speech, and indirectly Nkoribigawa himself. By replying in a such way, he may also say for example : It is rather all right that we keep peace ! Here we also understand that the interlocutor does not share Nkoribigawa's way of thinking. Nkoribigawa wants war while the interlocutor wants peace. Even among the people attending the meeting, there are some who preach for war and others for peace. On one hand for instance, when the interlocutor reacts to what Nkoribigawa says, some people fail to keep serious and burst into laughter. This is the way of ridiculing Nkoribigawa. On the other hand , other people try to bring the interlocutor to keep silence by threatening him. This means that these people are not happy with the reaction. They are supporters of war while the first group to which the interlocutor belongs is a supporter of peace. War supporters prevent the interlocutor from talking any more. This is also another way of belittling vis à vis the interlocutor whose intervention is qualified as of less value.

E.g. 2. P.7. 4th scene

- Nkoribigawa : (n'ishavu) ... Nkawe wazanywe ngaha n' iki ?

- Melida : (n' agahemo) : Nazanywe no kwumviriza ijambo.

Translation

-Nkoribigawa: (with anger)…you, for instance, what did you come to do here?

-Melida: (Ironically) I came to listen to the speech.

In this situation, there is a double irony. The first one is meant through the attitude Melida adopts when she talks. She sees that Nkoribigawa is angry when he addresses her, but this does not frighten her. She rather takes the pleasure to ridicule him by answering in a special manner underestimating the so-called speech. By pointing at Melida, Nkoribigawa expresses a kind of asperity toward her. According to him, Melida is not in her right place. She should be somewhere else because the place does not suit her, her presence is not welcome. So, in order to irritate Nkoribigawa, Melida finds another way of talking, a way revealing scorn and disdain.

The second kind of irony is linked to the value of the so-called speech. For Melida, the speech delivered by Nkoribigawa is not a good one. It is a speech without value. According to her, since this speech is not for the consolidation of peace, it is a bad one and no body should support it. In other words, Melida foresees the outcome of this invaluable speech, which should be rejected.

E.g.3 page 7.4th scene

-Nkoribigawa: Ninde yarigutumiriye?

-Melida: None kuvumba ntivyamye! (bamwe barakoma amashi) mugabo ntitubipfe ngo ndabicire " akanywababo" ndagiye.

Translation

-Nkoribigawa: Who invited you to attend this speech?

-Melida: There have always been those who invite themselves! (some clap hands), but we should not quarrel about it, I have no intention to disturb your "intimate meeting." I am leaving.

Melida does not give up to denigrate Nkoribigawa and the kind of the meeting itself. She tries to face the hard situation in which, according to Nkoribigawa, Melida is not a respectful woman who could be invited to this meeting. By asking such a question, Nkoribigawa denigrates her for she invited herself. Then, in order to escape to this treatment, she tries to find an answer ridiculing Nkoribigawa as if the question was that of a stupid person. The answer Melida gives leads some people attending the meeting to applaud, turning Nkoribigawa into an object of ridicule. When she goes on before leaving, she pretends to qualify the meeting as an important one by calling it "intimate meeting". But this is not what she really means. As we defined irony, Melida here means the direct opposite of her thoughts in order to make her remark forceful. She leaves then, not because she must do so but because she denigrates the kind of the meeting held and its issue.

Eg.4.Page 9,4th scene.

-Pesiyoza: (Ahaguruka) Emwe eka na jewe reka nsiguze iryo ntasobanukiwe hanyuma njane n'abandi.

-Deniza: Mbega abo bandi aho mujana wumvise hari ico mugipfana?

-Pesiyoza: Bapfana iki barutwa nico bamariraniye.

Translation

-Pesiyoza: (getting up) Let me also ask for some clarification and after I leave with others.

-Deniza: Do you think those with whom you are to leave together are still your relatives?

-Pesiyoza: Helpful people are better than relatives.

Considering that the meeting is of less interest, Pesiyoza like some others decide to leave. She finds that staying there will be wasting time. When Deniza tries to retain her, she replies by a belittling expression. For her, there is no use to stay there even though her relatives remain there. As far as these relatives of her are not searching for peace, they are to be downgraded. Pesiyoza addresses Deniza somehow politely and at the same time gives her an indirect severe remark. In fact, her main intention is

moralistic. Through the belittling expression used as an answer to the question, irony is felt as a way of giving advice and creating observation.

In this situation, helpful people are those who leave the meeting while relatives are those who stay, attending the invaluable meeting. We understand here that those who stay share the same ethnic group. Therefore, Pesiyoza who belongs to this group is allowed to stay but she refuses because she underestimates them for their ideology of ethnic division.

IV .5.2. Belittling Words/Expressions Related to Contempt

In The Advanced learner's Dictionary of Current English (1963), contempt is defined as "a condition of being looked down upon or despised. It is a mental attitude of despising, disregard or disrespect." According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1986), contempt is " the act of despising or the state of mind of one who despises; the feeling with which one regard for something. It is also the wilful disobedience to or open disrespect of the valid rules, orders, or process or the dignity or authority of the court or a judge acting in a judicial capacity whether by contumacious or insolent language , by disturbing or obstructive conduct, or by mere failure to obey the orders of court."

From the beginning to the end of the play, the theme of contempt is pointed out. For instance on the second page, 1st scene; Godeliva is being looked down because she is not beautiful.

- Gateka : Uratwara basi Godeliva canke Piya

- Hasabumutima : Huu, uragayana Gate ! Godeliva afise
  Igikiriza gihamagara abahita ... nawe Piya we,
  yishimikije karya kajisho kagenda karavunagura
  ingohe, n'irya minwa nk'iyimbata yiriwe ubusa...

Translation

- Gateka : At least, marry Godeliva or Piya

- Hasabumutima : Hm, how disdainful you are !

Godeliva who has a chest calling passers-
by,and Piya with her twinkling eyes and her lips
like those of a hungry duck…

Gateka who has seduced Hasabumutima is suggesting him other girls among whom to chose and these girls are Godeliva and Piya. But Hasabumutima, charmed by her finds that those girls do not suit him because they are ugly. To reject the suggestion, Hasabumutima argues that Godeliva has a very big chest, consequently very big breasts. In other words, it is impossible for Hasabumutima to marry her. Actually a chest which can call passers-by does not exist, this is a hyperbole used by Hasabumutima to mention that he had never seen such breasts. According to him Godeliva is abnormal and it will be difficult for her to get a fiancé. As far as Piya is concerned, she has abnormal eyes, they are twinkling all the time. Moreover her mouth is too big. Hasabumutima compares it to that of a hungry duck which has a too big beak. The metaphor used in this situation is a way of denigrating Godeliva and Piya as if they lack some thing in order to gain one's attraction, to mean that the two girls are contemptible.

From the suggestion made by Gateka, Hasabumutima feels insulted, he feels a contemptuous attitude toward him. In fact, Gateka disdains him from the fact she finds that the right girl to Hasabumutima would be Godeliva or Piya. We find then two kinds of contempt, the first one directed to Hasabumutima while the second is directed to the two girls who are looked down upon by young men.

Eg.2.Page 8,4th scene

-Kamoso: (ashavuye)…urumva aho watumeneye amatwi, uducira muryo batagutumiriye. Ubu noshangashirwa…noshangashirwa…

-Melida: (Amusubira mu kanwa n'akagayo) nayo ahandi ho woshangashigwa….woshangashirwa…(baratwenga)

Translation

-Kamoso: (angry)…You have been deafening us with your noise, interrupting the meeting you were not invited to. If I get angry now…if I get angry…

-Melida: (Repeating after him with contempt)…otherwise if you get angry… if you get angry…(other people are laughing)

In this situation the contempt is emphasized by the mocking tone used by Melida. Naturally, she was not supposed to attend the meeting because she does not belong to Kamoso's ethnic origin and she does not care. Melida faces her opponent without fear. Kamoso is angry with her but she is not afraid and she even finds another way to make him more nervous by repeating after him. In Burundian culture, we cannot repeat after someone we respect. In the Melida's eyes, Kamoso is not a person deserving respect, he is a mean person, he is despicable. Through the contemptuous repetition, she tries to make Kamoso appear vile. He is ridiculed and becomes an object of amusement.

Eg.3.Page 13,6th scene

-Felisi : Akatwivuna nyene, none tweho ntitwoba tumuteye?

-Kamoso: Feli, udafise ico uvuga za unuma!

Translation

-Felisi: Of course he can fight us, won't we have attacked him?

-Kamoso: Feli, can't you shut up when you have nothing to say!

In all human societies, especially in Burundian culture, nobody has the right to prevent someone else from speaking. We cannot say to someone "shut up", obliging him/her to keep silence unless he/she is a disrespectful one. In the present context, Kamoso considers that Felisi's observation has no importance. For Kamoso, it would be better if Felisi kept silence instead of saying meaningless things.

Actually, what Felisi predicts may happen as a consequence of the intended attack. They could consider a probable defeat. But Kamoso finds that Felisi is a fearful boy hence not a good fighter. Then it would be better for the group if he just kept quiet because by saying such words, he may discourage his fellowcitizens and then they may lose the fight. It is in this way that Kamoso, angry, downgrades Felisi as if he cannot have any

valuable idea to express. He considers him as a stupid person who should not open his mouth to say something among others. According to Kamoso, Felisi is a contemptuous person worth being treated as invaluable.

Eg.4, Page 15,7th scene

-Ntihagwibara: Ya mihimbiri ntibarayizana?

-Ntungane: Ngabarya baraje…

Translation.

-Ntihagwibara: Are those good-for-nothing not brought here yet?

-Ntungane: There they come,...

According to Ntihagwibara, the boys in question do not deserve to be called by their real names. He finds them another name depicting their deeds. They are qualified of disturbers or just mean persons as if they were good-for-nothing.

In Burundian culture, "umuhimbiri", a mean person, is a person whose behaviour is not socially accepted. He is a socially harmful person or a contemptuous person. He is marginalized and has no word to say when others are discussing. When Nkoribigawa calls the boys "imihimbiri", this means that he has no more esteem for them; he uses a word denoting belittlement and contempt.

Pragmatically, instead of putting emphasis on the question, the emphasis is put on the qualification of the boys in order to communicate to other citizens that these boys are morally abominable.

IV.5.3. Belittling Words/Expressions Related to Hatred

Besides the theme of irony and contempt found throughout the play, there is also a theme of hatred developed in different scenes of the play.

In The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (1963), hatred is defined as violent dislike which can be expressed by physical confrontation or insult.

In Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1986), hatred is hate or general attitude or prejudiced hostility.

In the Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (1971), hatred is defined as the condition or state of relations in which one person hates another; the emotion or feeling of hate; active dislike, detestation, enmity, ill-will, malevolence.

Taking into account these different definitions, it becomes easier to detect hatred throughout the play to be analysed. For instance, in the third scene, page 6, we discover a feeling of hate and detestation in Hasabumutima towards Nkoribigawa.

- Kirisiyano: ...Hewe, oya ngo ibintu birayangara, abari bashize hamwe barahindukana, barashihana, ngo amoko ayacanga n'imigambwe maze akayagwa karayagwa.

-Hasabumutima: None ubwo buyobe aje ino iwacu!

Translation

-Kirisiyano: ...So things went worsening, united people became enemies, so he mixed ethnic membership and political parties and every thing was confusing.

-Hasabumutima: And so that ghost came to our region!

Instead of calling Nkoribigawa by his name, Hasabumutima calls him through insult comparing him to a ghost or a devil. In fact, what Nkoribigawa did in his own region was unbearable. He divided united people who then killed each other, he created a mood of hostility between citizens. Then, now that he visits Hasabumutima's region, some people including Kirisiyano and Hasabumutima himself are afraid that he comes to do the same. The two people consider Nkoribigawa as an abnormal person characterised by an ill feeling, an enemy of the whole society. According to them, he has to be socially rejected, excluded.

Eg 2. Page 4th scene.

-Pesiyoza: Deniza, wewe ntajambo nagusavye!

-Deniza: Aho nawe uraja mu bandi maze ukanega umutwe nk'inkoma ngo ufise amajambo uriko uravuga ngaho…nawe ngo fyo, fyo…

Translation

-Pesiyoza: Deniza, I didn't ask for your word!

-Deniza: Without shame you raise your head among others like a viper pretending that you have interesting things to say…and you replied fyo, fyo,…

The confrontation between the two girls is so serious that it can even lead to a physical confrontation. The object of hatred in this situation is that Pesiyoza does not share Nkoribigawa's opinion while Deniza does. Therefore, according to Deniza who considers Pesiyoza as her opponent, the latter should not dare utter a word opposite to Nkoribigawa's words. Deniza shows a strong dislike towards Pesiyoza but this one does not give up presenting her point of view. So far, Deniza repeats Pesiyoza's words in a strange way" fyo,fyo". This is to mean that, not only she feels bitterness to repeat what Pesiyoza said but also because she hates her. Moreover, Pesiyoza is compared to a snake, a reptile or a damned crawling animal.

Eg.3. page 10,4th scene

-Pesiyoza: Yoo, kukuzwa neza , urucira mukaso rugatwara nyoko…

-Deniza: Temba urakagenda bwire…

Translation

-Pesiyoza: What a pity! Do not become so mad, may your wish happen to you…

-Deniza: Go leaping, may you travel until night-fall…

The relations between the two girls went worsening and give now place to an open exchange of insult. Pesiyoza addresses Deniza like someone addressing a foolish person. In Kirundi, "gukukuzwa" means behaving like a mad person, what is a very big insult. To take a revenge, Deniza tries to curse Pesiyoza by another insult wishing her to travel and never stop.

In Burundian culture, the two things currently recognised to travel without destination are a river and a foolish person. Then Deniza uses the verb "gutemba" which means to flow. In other words, she would be happy to see Pesiyoza running endlessly like a river or a foolish person. Actually, no one can wish someone else to become foolish unless he hates him/her.

Eg.4, page 14, 6th scene

-Ijwi: Mureke none ko agize uko umutima umubwiye!

-Kamoso: ...Nayo Hasabumutima ...,urya muhemu!

Translation

-A voice: Since he acted according to his choice, let him free!

-Kamoso: ..And Hasabumutima,..that betrayer!

In a general sense, to be called a betrayer is a heavy insult. The person so insulted is someone who cannot keep secret, a person in whom we cannot trust. For Hasabumutima who did not show solidarity with his ethnic group members because he wants to marry a girl from his opposite ethnic fellow citizens, he is no longer accepted in his social group. He is looked down on and hated by his ethnic group members. In the present context, Hasabumutima is not a man deserving honour in his ethnic group. He is a person to be socially excluded. A betrayer in general is to be publicly punished because the offence committed affects the whole social group.

As mentioned above, the analysis and classification of the selected belittling words/expressions according to themes is a hard task since, through the play, we can find various themes other than the three dealt with.

IV.6. Summary of Illocutionary Forces of the Selected Belittling Words/Expressions

So far, we have been dealing with the meaning of belittling words in contexts. Since these words/expressions can be used to convey more than one meaning, their utterances are produced with more than one illocutionary force. The reader may have realized that those illocutionary forces vary from one situation to another. In other words, there is no particular connection between each belittling word/expression and each illocutionary force. Now, we would like to point out some illocutionary forces we found in our analysis.

IV.6. 1) Warning

The speaker communicates via warning that the addressee is to give up a behaviour or stop an action already started. This behaviour or action is judged not to be in the interest of the speaker or the society. He announces to the addressee that something unpleasant will happen to him if he does not change his behaviour. Via warning, the speaker invites the addressee to behave or to act according to the speaker's desire.

For example, on page 17 scene 7, through warning, Ntungane invites the young men to give up their bad behaviour. He also predicts then an unpleasant consequence if they do not change:

-Ntungane: ... Navyo ivyo bitumva nivyimenyera ntibizombaze.

-Ya misore: Oya muradutabaye. Uwuzosubira murashaka mwice azoba atagira umutima.

Translation

-Ntungane: ...and those deaf persons, if they continue it will be their own business.

-The young men: You just saved us. You have the right to kill the heartless who will continue.

IV.6.2) Display of Familiarity

Belittling words/expressions can be used to show familiarity between the speaker and the addressee. The speaker talks in a special way or uses belittling words/expressions where they are not necessary. They are uttered in a reflex-action between familiar persons. For instance, on the second page, first scene of the play, Gateka belittles Hasabumutima by correcting a word this one failed to pronounce. When she corrects him, she does it laughing at him ironically. It is through this ironical laughing that the belittlement appears.

-Hasabumutima: Umwe agenda aturumbuye ibinoko nk'umutunzi ataye ingodomoni!

-Gateka : (atwenga) Bavuga ikotomoni!

Translation.

-Hasabumutima: The one who walks eyes opened like a rich person who lost his wallet (Hear: ingodomoni) !

-Gateka: (Laughing ironically) It is pronounced "ikotomoni"

Actually, the correction was not necessary since everybody understands the meaning of the word but Gateka reminds Hasabumutima the right word, she pronounces it as required denigrating him for not knowing to pronounce the word correctly.

IV.6. 3) Rejection

The speaker communicates to the addressee that his opinion is not best or objective. He tells him that he does not comply with his desire or proposal. In the following example, page 2, first scene, Hasabumutima rejects the idea of taking part in the divisionist movement.

-Gateka: None ngo ko hirya no hino mu gihugu bariko barayapfa? (amoko)

-Hasabumutima: Birabasha. None duce tugira nkabo?

Translation

-Gateka: But I hear that people are fighting for their ethnic membership all over the country?

-Hasabumutima: That is their own business. So do we have to act as they did?

In the present situation, Hasabumutima refuses to comply with his ethnic group members in their plan to trigger war in their region. He finds that those who have already done it are heartless, abominable people. No body equipped with morality can think of such an odious act.

IV.6.4) Disappointment

An action already done or something which is being done may not satisfy the speaker and it is in this way that via belittlement, he/she manifests his/her disappointment. For instance Hasabumutima who has never seen any interest in his ethnic membership finds that there is no use to take one's ethnic group as a very important thing. Instead of being useful, ethnic groups only brought him trouble.

-Gateka: (…)

-Hasabumutima: …Ubwoko…ko ico bwankoreye gusa ar' ukumara ko incuti n'abagenzi.

Translation

-Gateka: (…)

-Hasabumutima: … ethnic group…they only decimated my friends and relatives.

In this context, Hasabumutima regrets the existence of ethnic groups. He has only bad memory of them.

IV. 6. 5) Reprimand

The speaker tells the addressee that he has said or done something wrong. The speaker wants the hearer not to show the bad behaviour again. Consider the following context on page 4, second scene:

-Umusore umwe: Simba cane Kirisiya, wewe umuntu witerura nk'uwitekeye, wumva uzopfa uduserukiye mu makungu? (baratwenga)

-Umukobwa: We n'uko agira na birya. Ja harya ku ngoma umurushe turabe!

Translation

-One Young man: Kirisiya, jump higher! You jump as if you were tied. Can you pretend to ever represent us abroad?

-A Young lady: He can at least do that. Go at that drum and show us that you can perform better.

The young lady reprimands the young man who belittles Kirisiyano. As far as Kirisiyano is concerned, he is dancing to the drum as he can. No one has the right to denigrate him, comparing him to a tied object. Then, to protect Kirisiyano, the young lady reprimands the young man letting him know that he should not talk to Kirisiyano in a such way.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Throughout the pages of the present work, we have tried to deal with a pragmatic analysis of Kirundi belittling words/expressions selected from a play "Umurindi wa Nkorabigawa" written by M.L Sibazuri . We have analysed the use of these words/expressions in conversation through a written text, a play. Many aspects have been tackled. This work was divided into four chapters. Let us summarise them briefly.

Within the first chapter, we introduced the problem and some preliminaries useful to our study. It is in this section that we tried to present the subject, the reasons which motivated its choice, the purpose of the analysis and its methodology.

The second chapter was concerned with the theoretical notions on which the study of Kirundi belittling words/expressions rests. We have attempted to define pragmatics and kept close to Levinson's(1983) definitions. We noticed that among his various definitions, the more suitable would be the one stating that "pragmatics is the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with the contexts in which they would be appropriate." We have mentioned the relations between pragmatics and semantics and we have seen that Pragmatics can be considered as the study of utterance–meaning while Semantics is the study of sentence-meaning. Another important element pointed at is context. We analysed Leech's (1983) context view, context as a pragmatic aspect and features of context. Considering that, in social conversation, the intended meaning is not always unveiled, we have reviewed the concept of conversational implicature and especially Grice's Cooperative Principle. We could not forget the theory of speech acts with the main interest directed in the illocutionary forces carried by belittling words/expressions in context.

The third chapter dealt with the methodology followed in this study. Working in the framework of pragmatics, we paid particular attention to some basic notions which helped us either to collect or to analyse them. Then we indicated the way we had collected our data, the difficulties we had encountered such as those related to the identification of belittling words/expressions and translation. Since the data collected had to be analysed, we put forward procedures that had been followed.

The last chapter which was the heart of the work, was a detailed treatment of the subject. It was concerned with the pragmatic interpretation of selected belittling words/expressions. This part of the work led us to the very analysis of these words/expressions. As already mentioned we first presented the general overview of such a speech act as belittling in the Burundian culture. We presented the structure of belittling words/expressions thanks to Miruka's (1994) diagram in which he defines "proverbs". In their daily usage, belittling words/expressions are useful. So, we showed how these words/expressions were used to fulfil various functions, namely the didactic function, the aesthetic function, the humorous function and socialisation. It is from this point that the need to analyse the impact of belittling words/expressions upon the receiver was raised. In fact, it is rare that one belittles without aim. Once the function of the belittling words/expressions delivered is fulfilled, the addressee behaves consequently, according to the way these words have been acknowledged as we have illustrated in this chapter. Following Bassnet (1980:14) who states that "no language can exist unless it is used in the context of culture," we have tried to set the selected belittling words/expressions in Burundian culture. Since we had used a play as our main source, the data fetched from this play were not analysed randomly, they were grouped according to themes, which were mostly related to irony, contempt and hatred. Another point which raised our particular attention is the illocutionary act. As any act is associated with one or more than one particular force, we have been interested by the illocutionary forces carried by belittling words/expressions in contexts. We presented a summary of the illocutionary forces of the selected belittling words/expressions based on warning, display of familiarity, rejection, disappointment and reprimand.

In this work, our focus has been the analysis of Kirundi belittling words/expressions in usage. Nevertheless, we cannot pretend to have made an exhaustive investigation of the subject. But the findings of our research proved that our aim has been reached. We would then like to call for further research to go deeper in the analysis. In particular, the use and meanings of belittling words/expressions in Burundian culture have not been analysed deeply enough. An investigation of this aspect would be the most welcome.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Allan, K. (1986). Linguistic Meaning. London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Albert, E. M.(1972). Cultural Patterning of Speech Behaviour in Burundi in Gumperz & Dell Hymes (eds), Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

Austin, J. L. (1962). How to Do Things with Words. Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Bassnet, S. (1980). Translation Studies. London, New York: Methwen

Brown, G. and Yule, G. (1983). Discourse Analysis. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul

Cauvin, J. (1980). L'Image et la Pensée. Tome I. L'Exemple des Proverbes (Mali). Saint Augustin

Finnegan, R. (1970). Oral Literature in Africa. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Hudson, R.A. (1970). Sociolinguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Jefferson, G. and Lee, J.R E (1981). The Rejection of Advice: Managing the Problematic Convergence of a Trouble-telling and a Service Encounter. Journal of Pragmatics 5:399-412

Kempson, R.M.(1977). Semantic Theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Kigeme, Cl. (1992). A Pragmatic Analysis of Some Kirundi Swearing Expressions. Unpublished Thesis. University of Burundi

Kimonyo, A. (1994). A Pragmatic Analysis of Kirundi Closings. Unpublished Thesis, University of Burundi

Labov, W. (1981). Sociolinguistic Patterns. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

Leech, G. (1983). Principles of Pragmatics. London and New York: Longman

Leech, G. (1974). Semantics. London: Penguin

Leech, G. (1981). Semantics: The Study of Meaning. Second Edition revised and updated. Harmonsworth: Penguin Books

Levinson, S.C. (1983). Pragmatics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Lyons, J. (1981). Language, Meaning and Context. Fontana

Lyons, J. (1981). Language and Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Malmkjaer, K. (ed).(1992). The Linguistic Encyclopedia. London: Routledge

Mananda, R.CL. (1996). A Pragmatic Analysis of Some Kirundi Wellerisms (IMYIGOVYORO). Unpublished Thesis. University of Burundi

Miruka, O. (1994). Encounter with Oral Literature. Naïrobi: East African Educational Publishers (E.A.E.P)

Ndabaneze, E.(1996). A Pragmatic Analysis of Rundi Topic Shifts. Unpublished Thesis. University of Burundi

Nikobamye, A.(1997). A Pragmatic Analysis of some Kirundi Refusals.Unpublished Thesis, University of Burundi

Nkundwanabake, E. (1987). An Analysis of Kirundi Speech acts: Maternity Congratulations. Unpublished Thesis, University of Burundi

Rodegem, F. M. (1983). Paroles de Sagesse au Burundi. Leuven : Peeters

Rodegem, F. M. (1961). Anthologie Rundi, Accompagnée de Traductions et Commentaires. Paris: Colin

Rodegem, F. M. (1961). Sagesse Kirundi: Proverbs, Dictons, Locutions usitées au Burundi. Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique

Searle, J.L. (1969). Speech Acts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Seitel, P. (1985). Proverbs and the Structure of Metaphor among the Haya of Tanzania. Witwatersrand: Johannesburg University Press

Wardhaugh, R. (1985). How Conversation Works. Oxford: Blackwell

APPENDIX: ***BELITTLING WORDS/EXPRESSIONS***

– Huu, urashajije ntusumba irobe!

T. Hm, you are not more smart than a loaf of bread!

- Umve! Aho rero nawe ng'o uravuze!

T. Listen! Is that your way of reasoning!

– Huu, uragayana Gate! Godeliva afise igikiriza gihamagara abahita nomwambika imipira nkuye he? Nawe Piya, yishimikije karya kajisho kagenda karavunagura ingohe, n'irya minwa nk'iyimbata yiriwe ubusa,...

T. Hm, how disdainful you are Godeliva who has a chest inviting passers-by! Where shall I find pullovers to dress her? And Piya with her twinkling eye and her mouth like that of a hungry duck,...

– Yoo, kukuzwa neza,...

T. What a pity, don't behave like a mad woman,...

– Temba urakagenda bwire.

T. Go leaping, may you travel until night-fall.

– Hora!

T. Close your mouth!

– Birabasha. None duce tugira nkabo?

T. That is their own business. So do we have to act as they did?

– Mugabo na twebwe turi ibijuju. Umuntu w'inkwezi y'akarongo nk'uwo,ntitwomugira inama tukamutuza ataratubibamwo urwo tutazogesa?

T. But we are too stupid. Why can't we plan to chase such a devil before he brings us trouble?

– Kubivuga biroroshe!

T. Easier said than done!

– Umwe agenda aturumbuye ibinoko nk'umutunzi ataye ingodomoni

T. The one who walks eyes opened like a rich person who lost his wallet

– (Atwenga) Bavuga ikotomoni!

T. (Laughing) It is pronounced" ikotomoni" !

- Nayo ivyo bitumva nivyimenyera ntibizombaze.

T. ...And those deaf young men, if they continue, that will be their own business.

- None ni bibi? (bamwe baratwenga muntamatama abandi bakamuzivya)

T. So is it bad? (some people laugh, others oblige him to keep quiet)

– (N'agahemo) Nazanywe n'ukumviriza ijambo.

T. (Ironically) I came to listen to the speech.

- None kuvumba ntivyamye! (bamwe barakoma amashi) mugabo ntitubipfe ngo ndabicire "akanywababo" ndagiye.

T. There have always been those who invite themselves! (some clap hands), but we should not quarrel about it, I have no intention to disturb your" intimate meeting" I am leaving.

– Bapfana iki barutwa nico bamariraniye.

T. Helpful people are better than relatives.

- (Ashavuye)…urumva aho watumeneye amatwi, uducira muryo batagutumiriye.Ubu noshangashirwa…noshangashirwa…

T. (angry)…You have been deafening us with your noise, interrupting the meeting you were not invited to. If I get angry now…if I get angry…

- (Amusubira mu kanwa n'akagayo) nayo ahandi ho woshangashirwa… woshangashirwa…(baratwenga)

T. (Repeating after him with contempt) …otherwise if you get angry… If you get angry…(other people laugh)

- Feli, udafise ico uvuga za unuma!

T. Feli, can't you shut up when you have nothing to say!

– Ya mihimbiri ntibarayizana?

T. Are those good-for-nothing not brought here yet?

– None ubwo buyobe aje ino iwacu!

T. And so that ghost came to our region!

– Deniza, wewe ntajambo nagusavye!

T. Deniza, I did not ask for your word!

– Aho nawe uraja mu bandi maze ukanega umutwe nk'inkoma ngo ufise amajambo ufise amajambo uriko uravuga ngaho…nawe ngo fyo, fyo…

T. – Without shame you raise your head among others like a viper pretending that you have interesting things to say…and you replied fyo, fyo, …

- …Nayo Hasabumutima yambwiye, urya muhemu!

T. …Concerning Hasabumutima, that betrayer!

- … ubwoko …ko ico bwankoreye gusa ari ukumarako incuti n'abagenzi.

T. …Ethnic memberships…they only decimated my friends and relatives.

- Simba cane Kirisiya, wewe umuntu witerura nk'uwitekeye, wumva uzopfa uduserukiye mu makungu? (baratwenga)

T. Kirisiya, jump higher! You jump as if you were tied. Can you pretend to ever represent us abroad?

– We n'uko agira na birya. Ja harya ku ngoma umurushe turabe!

T. He can at least do that. Go at that drum and show us that you can perform better!

- …Mbe mwa misehanduru mwe..
…kirya gitantahe c'umugabo

T. ..You disturbers
…that deviant man