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A pragmatic analysis of some kirundi swearing expressions

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SOME KIRUNDI SWEARING EXPRESSIONS.

Supervisor :
Dr. Firmard SABIMANA

A Thesis submitted by
Claudette KIGEME In
partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree
"Licence en Langue et
Littérature Anglaises"

Bujumbura, February 1992

In memory of G. BUGAZA,

To Gaspard and Ornella

I dedicate this work.

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Claudette KIGEME

Key to Abbreviations

Applic	: applicative
ARG	: Argument
ASP	: Aspectual marker
COP	: Copula
FOC	: Focus marker
Fut.	: Future tense marker
i.e.	: That is
Loc P	: Locative Phrase
Neg.	: Negative marker
NP	: Noun Phrase
OPT	: Optative
Pass.	: Passive
PP	: Prepositional Phrase
PRD	: Predicative
Pres	: Present Tense
S	: Sentence
SUBJ	: Subjunctive
VP	: Verb Phrase
XP*	: Any phrase, the asterisk shows that the number is variant

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

"Don't tell your friends about your indigestion
`How are you' ? is a greeting, not a question."

[Arthur Guiterman A Poet's Proverb]

CHAP. I : INTRODUCTION

I.1. The Problem

The aim of this study is to analyse the use of swearing expressions in Kirundi language. As Jennifer Coates (1986 : 22) states it, there exist great differences with regard to swearing between nations. But before undertaking such a study, we would like to make explicit the kind of swearing we are dealing with.

According to Collins Cobuld's Dictionary, the verb "swear" has three meanings. The first one is to use language that is considered to be rude or blasphemous. For instance, people swear when they are angry. Its synonymy would be to curse. The second one is to promise solemnly that one will do something or that one is saying the truth. Its synonym can be to vow. The third one is to say emphatically, the synonym being to insist. In this work we are concerned with the two last meanings in less formal situations, i.e. conversations.

G. GUEDOU (1985 : 426) defines swearing expressions as follows :

> *Le juron est considéré comme une charge lourde (...) une parole puissante et vénimeuse que l'on suspend au dessus de soi-même pour prouver à son interlocuteur son innocence (ou la véracité de ses propos). On y fait appel à des forces invisibles et puissantes pour qu'elles déclenchent la chute de la parole suspendue.*

Those expressions (actually ill-wishes) commit the speaker to a certain course of action when uttered seriously. They are intended to prove one's innocence or truthfulness. Supernatural powers are called upon to imprecate on the swearer if need be.

We have realised that in many circumstances, serious or unserious, Burundians like to use swearing expressions in daily conversations. The most frequent are short and emphatic ; long expressions are generally reserved for serious matters. Something doubtful is in general followed by a swearing expresion to give it credit ; similarly something serious is accompanied by such an expression to put emphasis on it. In other cases, its utterance is so spontaneous that it seems to be a reflex-action. This often occurs between peers who may be chatting or do not take the expression for granted. F. KAZUNGU (1985 : 65) asserts this in the following terms :

> *Il est rare que les Barundi répondent simplement par oui ou non. Presque toujours, ils affirment ou nient avec emphase : leur interlocuteur les encourage d'ailleurs en disant «ndahira» ou «urabêsha».*

Putting the swearing expression in the scope of conversation, he says that

> *Le juron est utilisé dans ces circonstances d'une part pour rendre le discours expressif, d'autre part pour donner l'impression que ses dires même les mensonges évidents sont vrais.*

According to him, swearing expressions are used to make the discourse expressive on the one hand, and to give credit to one's utterances even to transparent lies, on the other hand.

Moreover, we have realised that the literal meaning of those expressions is misleading insofar as they have figurative meanings which are connected to culture. Many have taken elliptical forms of longer and more comprehensible expressions.

For instance, the expressions like "Mwĭshwānje" literally meaning "my niece" or "umukŏbwānje" my daughter" were formerly like

Ndakĭnjira mŭ nzu y'úmwĭshwa wānje
"May I enter my niece's house"

and

Ndakĭnjira mŭ nzu y'úmukŏbwa wānje
"May I enter my daughter's house".

Culturally, they express a taboo which is to sleep with one's daughter or niece.

The main hypothesis of this study is that with respect to the context, such expressions embody various illocutionary forces. They may be intended to express emphasis, astonishment, irony, refusal or even threat. The same expression may have different meanings when uttered by the same person in different contexts. For example, the expression

Ndagasara mberé
"May I go crazy"

uttered by a person who is smiling will have a different meaning when uttered by the same person when he is angry and pointing at his addressee. In the first case, he may be joking whereas in the second he may be threatening. The difference is marked by the presence of paralinguistic elements such as tone, gestures or facial expressions and by the relations between the participants.

Considering that those swearing expressions are prominent in daily life communication and that no investigation has been carried in the field of pragmatics on that particular subject, we have decided to research on it. We will see the importance of those expressions in certain contexts and the illocutionary forces they carry. It may be worth mentioning that the thesis of NZORIJANA Gervais (1990) raised our first interest. After we have read it, we decided to work on the `sister' class, i.e. swearing expressions.

Although it deals with Kirundi language, this study is not of interest to native speakers only. It is important to both native and non native speakers in general, and to linguists in particular. In reading our study Burundians will realise the different uses of swearing expressions they have rarely or never thought about. This will help not only to be aware of those uses but also to take interest in the study of our mother tongue, and carry out further research. The study intends to raise if not increase the application of linguistic theories in general, and pragmatics ones in particular to the Kirundi language.

I.2. Review of Related Literature

As we stated in the introductory section, there is no previous work investigating on the swearing expressions in the framework of pragmatics. In this section, we will consider two theses namely F. KAZUNGU (1985) and G. NZORIJANA (1990). The first one deals with the cultural analysis of Kirundi wishes such a blessings, greetings, swearings and insults. The second one deals with the meaning of some insults in specific contexts.

I.2.1. Swearing Expressions as Part of Wishes

KAZUNGU's starting assumption is that wishes show what Burundians would like or dislike to become. Their utterance allows to notice the social behaviour or attitude and performs specific speech acts. He asserts that if we observe the reaction to a wish utterance, we realize that it carries a benevolent or malevolent force. As a matter of fact, he comes to the conclusion that in order to understand fully a language, one must refer to the notion of culture.

He distinguishes between good and ill wishes. Good wishes are those embodying benevolent forces such as blessings and greetings whereas bad wishes are those embodying malevolent forces such as insults and swearings. He establishes their differences and similarities in the following chart where sème stands for feature of the lexeme and lexeme for the type of wish. The sign + marks the seme verified in the lexeme whereas - marks the absence of the seme.

(Lexeme)	Sème / Lexeme	S_1	S_2	S_3	S_4	S_5	S_6
(Greetings)	Saluta-tions	+	+	-	+	-	+
(Blessings)	Bénédic-tions	+	+	-	+	-	-
(Swearings)	Jurons	+	-	+	-	+	-
(Insults)	Injures	+	-	+	+	-	+

S_1 Sème `Souhait´ (seme expressing wish)

S_2 Sème `positif´ (positive seme)

S_3 Sème `négatif´ (negative seme)

S_4 Sème `altero-référence (seme referring to someone else)

S_5 Sème `sui-référence (Self-referring seme)

S_6 Sème `réciprocité´ (reciprocity seme).

Considering that S_2 and S_3 , S_4 and S_5 are mutually exclusive, we can sum up the chart as :

Sème / Lexeme	S_1	S_3	S_5	S_6
Greetings	+	-	-	+
Blessings	+	-	-	-
Swearings	+	+	+	-
Insults	+	+	-	+

The observation of the chart shows that all the lexemes are wishes presenting some similarities and differences. The lexeme which will take our interest is JURON translated as swearing. It is characterised by the presence of the semes S_1 , S_3 and S_5 and the absence of S_6. This means that it is an ill wish referring to the speaker. In other words, the speaker wishes himself misfortunes if he fails to his commitment.

The presence of the semes S_3 and S_5 explains somehow the absence of the other semes. Indeed, seme S_3 shows that it is an ill wish insofar as it expresses misfortunes that the speaker would not like to happen to him. This negative side excludes the positive one namely S_2. The particularity of the lexeme swearing is the presence of seme S_5 present nowhere else. It explains the absence of S_4 and S_6 : if the speaker refers to himself, he somehow excludes other persons and there cannot be any reciprocity. But if a speaker insults another person for example, he can get a reciprocal answer from the addressee.

Quoting ZUURE (1932 : 238), KAZUNGU recognizes that Burundians use swearing expressions frequently. He distinguishes two main contexts. They can swear in conversation when they are talking to each other or in courts of law for judicial matters. The first use may be informal and produce no particular effect on the hearer whereas the second use is always found in formal situations. Indeed, those expressions are generally used to prove the truthfulness of one's saying

but they can be used even if the speaker knows that he is lying. If the addressee considers it seriously, the speaker may excuse him in the following terms *«nâjândajânda»* (I was joking). This happens frequently to peers.

In contrast, swearing expressions in very formal situations are highly valued. They commit the speaker to a certain course of action and are uttered seriously. The speaker (swearer) must use an expression recognized to be impressive. Most of the time, supernatural powers are invoked and the more they are to be feared the more the expression is valued. For instance, incest which is frequent in those expressions is considered to be a crucial sin. As a consequence, any person who uses a swearing for treacherous purpose or who does not fulfil his commitment is punished by the society. It is said that he has violated a taboo "Yârênze indahiro".

Concerning the themes, many swearings allude to social solidarity, incest and religious beliefs. Here are some examples he gave :

1) Ndakava mu bântu "May I be cursed"
   Ndagacîbwa "May I be cursed"
   Ndakagesera "May I rebel"
   Ndakayoba "May I rebel"

2) Ndakâmbura umukôbwânje : "May I unclothe my daughter."

   Ndakâmbura abakwé : "May I unclothe my sons-in law"
   Ndakarârana ná mâmá : "May I bed with my mother"

3) Ndagahanwa n'Imâna : "May I be punished by God"
   Ndakîcwa na Kirânga: "May I be killed by Kirânga"

Swearings of the first category shows the importance people attach to social solidarity. The person who breaks the norms is considered as an outcast. The second group is related to incest. Burundians recognize the primacy of family relationships therefore incest is a great harm to social norms. The third group is about religious beliefs and supernatural powers. Those powers are feared because they can harm any deviant.

On the whole, KAZUNGU's study dealing with sociological and psychological aspects of some wishes in Kirundi language shows the part of language in Burundian culture.

1.2.2. Insulting Expressions

The observation of KAZUNGU's previous chart brings us to consider the French lexeme injure "insulting expression" which shares many characheristics with swearings. Gervais NZORIJANA researched on the topic under the title of A Pragmatic Analysis of some Kirundi Insulting Expressions.

According to Searle cited by G. NZORIJANA, one illocutionary act can have more than one illocutionary force. He verified the hypothesis on Kirundi insulting expressions and found that the assertion is proved.

Actually, those expressions show ill-wish and contempt. Yet, they can be used uncharacheristically to mean something else. Here are some cases he gave.

- Threat : Realising that the act undertaken is not in his interest, the speaker wants the hearer to stop it unless he wants to get in trouble with him.
  For instance, "Nyaruka urákavuna umuheto" (be quick, may you lose your first-born male) can be uttered by a father to his son who is delaying. If he wants to be in order he has to be quick otherwise he can be beaten for instance.
- Reinforcement : an insulting expression can be used to reinforce something already said, to put an emphasis on it. For example, a father is calling his son to bring the cows in pastures and the son delays. For the second time, he orders him to be quick by adding an insult and says "Nyaruka urákavuna umuheto" (be quick may you lose your

first-born male). Sometimes the two illocutionary forces overlap within the same context.

- Reprimand : The speaker tells the hearer that he is not satisfied with what has been done. He communicated him not to behave in the same way again.
For instance, to a disobediant son, the father may say, "Ukazôsubira nzôkuvuna urákavunika amaví" (If you do it again, I will break you, may you break your knees).

It is at the same time a threat, a reinforcement and a reprimand. Thus, it has more than one illocutionary force.

Violent refusal : The speaker tells the hearer (addressee) that he disagrees completely with what the latter says or wants him to do. He totally refuses to satisfy his request.
Example : A wife is asked to pay visit to her co-wife who is in a hospital and refuses. She replied, "Arakarwâra njânyi" (may she never recover her strength).

- Display of hatred : Without saying it overtly, the speaker expresses the hatred he has for the person to whom the insulting expression is conveyed.
For instance, the wife who said, "Arakarwâra njânyi" shows indirectly the hatred towards her co-wife. She would like her to die.

- Disappointment : The speaker is dissatisfied of what has been done and expresses his disappointment.
Example : Commenting on a basketball player, one student said, "Yakinye nâbi arákavuna umuheto" (He did not play well, may he lose his first son).

- Banter : The speaker shows more familiarity to the addressee. In a banter situation, there is lack of consideration of some social parameters such as respect, power or authority of one person to another.
  Example : A man comes and addresses a group of men who are drinking in the following terms "Mpa nǎnje mwā mbwá mwe" (Give me, you dog).

G. NZORIJANA came to the conclusion that depending on the context, insulting expressions are used to perform specific speech acts and carry different illocutionary forces. The force is weakened or strengthened by the context in which it occurs.

1.2.3. What Particularly Interests us ?

In order to show the similarities of this work with the previous ones and its ability to produce new ideas, let us consider the following analogy.

A man called MACUMI has a son BUKURU and a daughter, BUTOYI. They look like each other physically. The main element that distinguishes them is their clothes. The son wears shorts whereas the daughter wears skirts. They are all students. A psychologist comes home and studies their behaviour. He realises that they share some traits in their character and diverge on some others. The difference of sex is the origin of their divergence. Another psychologist studies the son's behaviour in classroom and finds that he does not behave like at home. Some factors such as the influence of his classmates, the absence of his parents influence his behaviour. A third psychologist undertakes to study the daughter's behaviour in the same context, i.e. in classroom. He acts so because he has realised that some factors such as sex, the influence of her classmates, the absence of her parents and the presence of the teacher condition her behaviour in classroom. The study of the third psychologist will differ obviously from that of the first

psychologist insofar as they are set in different contexts, and from that of the second psychologist because the subjects are not the same. On the whole, the first psychologist makes a general study, and using another approach the two others draw subjects (which are different) from the first study. They deal thoroughly with another aspect not explored in this study.

Now, considering F. KAZUNGU who dealt with wishes in Burundian culture as the first psychologist, G. NZORIJANA who made a pragmatic analysis of insults as the second psychologist, and ourselves intending to make a pragmatic analysis of Rundi swearings as the third psychologist, any reader will agree with us that this study is neither a complement nor a reproduction of any other work. It is rather original and seeks to analyse how people who use those expressions in different contexts want them to be considered by the addressees, that is their illocutionary forces.

CHAP. II. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter of methodology, three main headings will be considered, namely :

- The review of theoretical framework
- Data collection procedures
- Data analysis.

The first one aims at giving major articulations in a pragmatic analysis. The second states the way we have proceeded to collect data and to transcribe them. The third says briefly the way data have been analysed.

2.1. Review of Theoretical Framework.

2.1.1. Defining Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a new branch of linguistics. Its lack of clear boundaries has as consequence a diversity of possible definitions which are less satisfactory by themselves. Though, traditionally, pragmatics is defined as the study of language usage, modern philosophers and linguists do not acknowledge the task to be so easy. Levinson (1983 : 9) points out that

> The term pragmatics covers both context-dependent aspects of language structure and principles of language usage and understanding that have nothing or little to do with linguistic structure. It is difficult to forge a definition that will happily cover both aspects.

The same linguist (1983 : 5-35) has devoted a whole section to potential definitions. As the latter vary from one author to another, we will mainly deal with Levinson's in this work.

The first definition runs as follows :

> Pragmatics is the study of those relations between language and context that are grammaticalized or encoded in the structure of a language.

Such a definition restricts pragmatics to the study of aspects of language structure, and thus, to purely linguistic matters, but fails to include the study of principles of language usage. It excludes some interpretations which explain how extrameaning is understood through utterances without actually being encoded in them.

Another definition goes as follows :

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

Understanding such a definition requires to know first the boundaries of semantics to get the residue, on the one hand, and the delimitation of meaning in its broadest sense, on the other. Semantics is the study of meaning. But sometimes, a speaker can mean more than or something different from what he literally says. We need to penetrate the speaker's mind to know his intention. Here, the mutual knowledge of a communicative intention is very important. Thus, there are some meanings which cannot be studied within semantics such as the figurative, ironical meaning, to name but a few. This definition succeeds to give the concern of pragmatics but fails to give its unifying characteristics since meaning is too broad.

Let us now turn to a third definition which concentrates on the context and language understanding :

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

Understanding an utterance is not but understanding the meaning of the words uttered and the grammatical relations between them. It involves the making of inferences to unite the utterance with what is mutually assumed or what has been already done. The notion of language understanding refers to the speaker meaning which is connected to context.

A further definition 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.

This definition seems complete and enjoys much support among many linguists and philosophers. But the main attack on it consists in identifying the appropriateness of language use since all the users do not necessarily behave in the same manner. Speakers of a language can use it differently, and some can use it inappropriately.

The last definition provides a list of phenomena which pragmatics must account for. In other words, it states the central topics in pragmatics. It is formulated in these terms :

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

This definition is complementary to the preceding ones. Indeed, the topics mentioned make easy to grasp the conveyed meaning in a given context, and thus contribute to the language understanding.

Coming back to the second definition, it would be appropriate to establish some relationships between pragmatics and semantics.

2.1.2. Pragmatics and Semantics

Both pragmatics and semantics are studies of meaning. To differentiate them, John Lyons (1981 : 164) asserts that

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

From the above quotation, utterance-meaning and sentence-meaning are the main elements to distinguish the two branches. But, what is an utterance and what is a sentence ?

An utterance, according to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, is what is said by any person before or after another person begins to speak. It may consist of one word, one sentence or even more than one sentence. Such a definition outlines the scope of an utterance but fails to include utterances in monologue. A sentence, on the other hand, defined by the same dictionary is the longest unit of grammatical organisation within which parts of speech and grammatical classes are said to function. An English sentence, for instance, must contain a verb. Thus, any sentence can be an utterance but all utterances are not sentences. The sentence-meaning may be part of utterance-meaning as a result.

Levinson (1983) establishes the difference between sentence-meaning and utterance-meaning. A sentence, unlike an utterance, is an abstract entity which does not depend on the context, i.e. 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 lexical items it contains, on the one hand, and on the way they are put together grammatically, on the other. An utterance is the insurance of a sentence, a proposition and the like in an actual context. The utterance meaning can correspond to the sentence-meaning, i.e. when the speaker meant exactly what he said, nothing else. But

in other cases, the speaker may use other elements such as deixis, gestures to make explicit the meaning of the sentence uttered indirectly. To make it more clear, John Lyons (1981 : 140) puts it in the following terms :

> The meaning of an utterance includes but is not exhausted by the meaning of the sentence that is uttered. The rest is contributed by contextual factors.

The utterance-meaning is then richer than the sentence-meaning insofar as the former combines the latter and the context.

Whereas the meaning of a sentence depends on its literal form, that of an utterance goes beyond it and embraces extralinguistic elements and gets extrameanings such as metaphorical or ironical ones. A speaker may use a sentence indirectly to mean something different from what is directly said. This is what John Lyons (1981 : 166) calls the uncharacteristic use :

> A sentence can be used uncharacteristically to mean something different from or in addition to what is characteristically used to mean.

So far, we have been dealing with the difference between pragmatics and semantics. Yet, it goes without saying that there exists a certain interaction between the two fields. If semantics may facilitate the pragmatic analysis, pragmatics also may serve semantic analysis in the disambiguation of sentences by clarifying the context of utterance. Searle (1969: 18) asserts that there are two complementary approaches, i.e. the first one emphasizing the use of expressions in speech situation and the second concentrating on the meaning of sentences. He goes on saying that a satisfactory explanation is attained when one combines semantics and pragmatics.

To summarize this section, let us quote Geoffrey Leech (1983 : 6)

> Semantics corresponds to : **«What does x mean ?»**
> Pragmatics : **«What did you mean by x ?»**

On the whole, while semantics is concerned with meaning out of context, pragmatics is concerned with the meaning in context.

2.1.3. The Role of Context

According to Dijk (1977 : 193), we distinguish two functions in a communicative situation. These are the speaking function and the hearing-function. The persons satisfying the two funtions are called PARTICIPANTS and the world states in which they operate the CONTEXT. Let us see briefly their role in the interpretation of meaning.

(1) Participants

The participants in conversation are named in different ways such as the sender and the receiver, the addresser and the addressee, and the speaker and the hearer. Sender, addresser and speaker are the same ; they all mean the person satisfying the speaking-function. Yet, although very close, hearer or receiver are different from addressee.

For John Lyons (1977 : 34), a receiver is the person who receives and interprets the message whereas an addressee is a person who is an intended receiver of the message. In other words, the addressee is the person to whom the message is conveyed. Thus, a receiver may be a bystander who caught the message not addressed to him. So, in pragmatic analysis, it is very important to know whether we have an addressee or a bystander receiver.

In case we have an addressee, some factors such as the relationships between the participants, their status and sex need particular attention. For instance, the way close friends address each other will be different from the way they will address a foreigner. Close friends may flout out some social parameters such as respect and politeness in a banter situation. Similarly, the way we talk to our inferiour may be different from the way we address our superiour. It is also worth mentioning that there exist some subjects discussed by men which are rarely tackled by women. All those factors condition the speaker. Therefore, they should not be neglected when deciphering the meaning of an utterance.

(2) The context of situation

Leech (1983 : 13) points out that context should be considered to be any background knowledge assumed to be shared by the speaker and the hearer and which contributes to the hearer's interpretation of what the speaker means by a given utterance.

Any verbal interaction can be conceived of as taking place in the context of a certain degree of speaker and hearer convergence. Both participants share a "Common knowledge" of the physical and social environment, and are able to select what can be said to whom on a given occasion.

Stating the importance of the context, Wardhaugh (1985: 102) said that

> It is context which creates possibilities for interpretation and helps remove the multiple ambiguities that utterances would have if they occurred in isolation.

An utterance may make reference to the external world in naming objects and participants, or indicating place, position and time. It is the knowledge of that world which contributes to establish the accurate meaning of the utterance. Considering the same topics, Hymes (1962) quoted by Brown and Yule (1983 : 37) states that

> The use of a linguistic form identifies a range of meaning. A context can support a range of meanings. When a form is used in a context it eliminates the meanings possible to that context other than those the form can signal : the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those the context can support.

He views the role of context as limiting the range of possible interpretations, on the one hand, and supporting the intended interpretation, on the other.

Moreover, in order to be convincing, some utterances need to be placed in a context. For instance, threatening words are commonly associated with a severe face, loudness of voice and threatening gestures. With the absence of those elements, the utterance runs the risk of failing to achieve its goal. In Kirundi language, for instance, the expression "Ndakava mu bāntu tudahūrá" uttered by a father who is unhappy with his child may be intended to reprimand the latter. Yet, when it is used by one person who is leaving his friends, it may be a promise to meet again, or more clearly a reassurance that they are to meet again.

In few words, in order to understand fully an utterance, we must look at its context and participants. We must ask ourselves the following questions :

- Who is talking to whom ? i.e. the participants
- When and where the utterance occurs ? i.e. the physical setting.

- What are the utterances which precede and follow the utterance under analysis ? i.e. the linguistic environment.
- What is the topic and how is it delivered ?

- What is the effect of the utterance on the receiver ?

A satisfactory definition of context is not easy to provide. Quoting Ochs, Levinson (1983 : 23) assumes that

> The scope of context is not easy to define (...) one must consider the social and psychological world in which the language user operates at any given time.

The analysis of context is not always sufficient to grasp the meaning of an utterance. Sometimes, speakers can imply, suggest or mean something different from what they literally say. In this case, the context should be supported by what Grice calls "Implicature". In the following section, we are going to deal with conversational implicature especially with the Cooperative Principle.

2.1.4. Conversational Implicature

A conversation is a social activity involving at least two people willing to communicate orally. The talk undertaken is supposed to be mutually satisfactory and beneficial to the participants. Thus, conversation is a cooperative enterprise . The silence during the conversation is often embarrassing for both parties because it is a marker of failure to keep alive the cooperative endeavour. To keep the cooperativeness, speakers generally avoid using harsh or unpleasant words. Sometimes, they resort to euphemism or to metaphor. Considering but the literal meaning of an utterance is risky because very often people mean more or quite different than what they say. The notion of implicature provides some explicit account of the matter.

Indeed, implicature is a kind of reasonable inference related to the method by which hearers understand the indirect illocutions of utterances. Hurford and Heasley (1983 : 288) assume that implicature exists by reason of general social conventions of which the principle of cooperativeness between speakers is the most important.

Grice's Cooperative Principle

According to the philosopher Paul Grice, conversationalists should observe a cooperative principle that has consequences on both the speaker and the hearer. Brown and Yule (1983 : 31-32) present Grice's principle as follows :

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

The principle is supported by four conversational conventions commonly called "maxims".

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

b. Maxim of Quality :

   Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

c. Maxim of Relation :

   Be relevant.

d. Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous
Avoid obscurity of expression
Avoid ambiguity
Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
Be orderly.

Grice's concern regarding these maxims is particularly devoted to an account of conversational implicatures, i.e. the knowledge conveyed when people imply something distinct from what they literally say. These maxims intend to make the conversation cooperative. Yet, on some occasions, speakers may ignore or violate them to be uncooperative. For instance, they may be challenging or misleading each other.

In Kirundi language, for instance, some utterances may sound too good to be true, too hollow to be convincing or too dishonest to be accepted. Those are followed by swearing expressions to give them credit. The speakers who utter them flout out the maxim of quantity insofar as they fail to give adequate information to their interlocutors. Or else, some persons may use swearing expressions to convince their friends that they are saying the truth while they are convinced that they are telling lies. In this way, they violate the maxim of quality especially its sub-maxim "do not say what you believe to be false".

Conversational implicature can be related to the notion of intended meaning insofar as the former account for the speaker's meaning beyond the literal one. In some cases, the intended meaning and the conveyed meaning may be equivalent, but in some others they may fail to overlap. The following section on speech acts will tell us more about the intended meaning.

2.1.5. The Notion of Speech Acts

A more general approach has been worked out by linguists and philosophers especially John Searle and J.L. Austin. Searle (1969) builds upon Austin (1962) to develop the notion of speech acts, i.e. action which the utterance of a text intentionally or conventionally performs.

Austin distinguishes three different types of action involved in or caused by the utterance of a sentence :

- the locutionary act as the saying of something that is meaningful and can be understood, i.e. having a determinate sense and reference. For example, saying "Shoot her" is a locutionary act if hearers understand the words shoot and her and can identify the person her refers to.

- the illocutionary act as the using of a sentence to perform a function. For instance, "shoot her" may be intended as an order or a piece of advice.

- the perlocutionary act as the results or effects that are produced by means of saying something. For instance, to the addressee of the utterance "shoot her" the perlocutionary act would be shooting the person in question.

Searle also distinguishes three types of acts, namely :

- the utterance acts as the simple uttering of words or sentences.

- the propositional acts as the use of content and reference i.e. the literal meaning. He distinguishes between the referential act i.e. relating one individual to another and the predictional act by which speakers ascribe a property to an individual identified by a referential act.

- the illocutionary acts as conventional activities accomplished by discourse such as promising and ordering.

Searle and Austin's classifications are not contradictory ; they are rather complementary. Combining the two views, we get four types of acts :

- the locutionary/utterance act as a form of activity or a mere performance of speech sound.
- the propositional act as the act of uttering something meaningful
- the illocutionary act as a performance of a certain function in saying something
- the perlocutionary act as a reaction act to the illocutionary one.

In real life conversation, those four acts appear almost simultaneously. When conveying a message, the speaker must utter sounds (utterance act) which are recognized as being meaningful (propositional act) in order to achieve his intention (illocutionary act) by producing certain effects on the addressee (perlocutionary act).

Each utterance is associated with a certain force to perform specific action that is called "illocutionary force". In other words, it is the way the speaker wants the utterance to be considered. Austin holds that to one illocutionary act corresponds necessarily one illocutionary force, and that the illocutionary act is performed only if the addressee recognizes the illocutionary force intended by the speaker. Searle's view is different. He assumes that one illocutionary act may correspond to one or various illocutionary forces. He also assumes that whether the speaker's intention is caught or not, the illocutionary act is performed but is defective. He undertakes to state the conventions which apply to the illocutionary acts and takes the illocutionary force of promising as illustrative. For him, promising entails stating one's future action which the receiver desires and which would not be done in the normal course of things. Or, in order to be `sincere' one must really intend to achieve the action and does it at all cost.

U.B

Austin (1962) distinguishes five very general classes of acts according to their illocutionary force namely verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives and expositives.

(1) Verdictives consist of giving a verdict by a jury or arbitrator. Such verbs are like convict, acquit, etc.

(2) Exercitives consist of giving a decision in favour or against a certain course of action. In other words, it is exercising the power, right or influence.

e.g. : ordering, voting, urging.

(3) Commissives are to commit the speaker to a certain course of action.

e.g. : promising, undertaking, swearing.

(4) Behabitives have to do with attitudes and social behaviour.

e.g. apologizing, congratulating, cursing.

(5) Expositives make plain how the speaker utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation.

e.g. : assume, postulate, apply, etc.

Nevertheless, he recognizes that his classification may give some confusion. He assumes (1962 : 152) that

> Behabitives are troublesome because they seem too miscellaneous altogether: and expositives because they are enormously numerous and important and seem both to be included in the other classes and at the same time to be unique in a way that I have not succeeded in making clear even myself.

On this point, Searle's taxonomy seems less confusing. He also distinguishes five categories :

(1) Representatives which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition such as asserting and concluding.

(2) Directives which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something such as requesting and questioning.

(3) Commissives which commit the speaker to some future course of action like promising and offering.

(4) Expressives which express a psychological state like thanking or apologizing.

(5) Declarations which effect or cause immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on extra-linguistic institution..

e.g. : declaring war, christening, etc.

The notion of speech acts is too broad to be exhausted here. Our main focus was to make explicit the notion of illocutionary force that will be useful in the analysis of our data. Applying this notion to Kirundi swearing expressions, we can assume that for one illocutionary act we may have various illocutionary forces. This is conditioned by the context of utterance. To exemplify this, let us consider the expression

"Mwĭshwânje utarí imbwá"
"May I enter my niece's house if you are not a dog".

It may be interpreted as a reprimand or a challenge when the speaker is serious and angry with his addressee at the moment of the utterance.

2.2. Data Collection Procedures

The data we use have been found in conversation between Burundians in various contexts. They have been collected from August 1990 until May 1991 in many regions of the country.

2.2.1. Subjects

We did not select particular subjects, they were randomly chosen. Indeed, we proceeded so because the use of the swearing expressions was not predictable in any conversation. To select subjects or to limit the number would have had the risk of restricting our data and even of delaying our collection. The subjects were drawn from various places in Burundi.

After the collection, we realised that our data are mainly based on conversation between :

- the parents and children : parents threatening or reprimanding their children who misbehaved
- brothers and sisters
- employers and employees : employers giving remarks to their employees
- people in bar
- friends talking to each other
- passengers in conflict with the ticket collector.

2.2.2. Materials and Procedures

The collection of data under analysis has not been a personal affair. We have benefited from the help of some students especially those of fourth year of the English Department at the University of Burundi and those of last year at Lycée of JABE in order to vary the subjects.

We have listened to people's conversations and tried to reproduce as exactly as possible the parts in which swearing expressions were used. The major points to follow were :

- to listen carefully to people's conversation especially the utterance of swearing expressions.

- to write down the part of the conversation including swearing expressions, that is, preceding and following utterances.

- to put suitable tone markers on data following NTAHOKAJA's conventions.

- to specify the context by mentioning the participants and their relationships, the space and time of the utterance, etc.

- to try to reproduce the attitude of the speakers, their gestures and facial expressions, their hesitations, slips of the tongue and so forth.

- each situation must give the reader the impression that he was present at the moment of the utterance. In other words, it allows him to recreate the situation in his mind.

2.2.3. Data Transcription

In conversation, the meaning is not conveyed by words only. Other elements such as tone and gestures contribute in giving information. There is nothing to be neglected in conversation, every detail should be mentioned if possible.

Transcribing conversation is not an easy task. Malcolm Coulthard and Martin Montgomery (1981 : x) suggest a set of transcription conventions. Yet, those are only applicable to English language and other languages similar to it. The Kirundi language is different from those languages, therefore such

transcription symbols would be difficult to use on it. As we are not initiated to the accurate use of those symbols, we preferred to write down the relevant elements in the conversation such as the attitude of the speakers, smiling, facial expressions and gestures.

In Kirundi language, the meaning of a word depends on the tone used when producing it. For instance, the verb Kuraba may have two different meanings. It may mean "to look" (kurãba) or "to lose consciousness" (kurába). A Burundian linguist J.B. NTAHOKAJA disambiguates the situations by using tone markers :

1° ´indicating a high tone.

e.g. : umusóre "young man"
umugoré "womam"

2° ˆindicating a rising and falling tone.

e.g. : umwâna "child"
kwânkana "hate each other"

3° ˇindicating falling and rising tone

e.g. : Umwǎmi "king"
umuhǔngu "boy"

4° ¯ indicating a long low tone

e.g. umūntu "person"
umugēnzi "friend"

5° ¨ indicating a long high tone

böse "altogether"
höse "everywhere".

We have used the tone markers above to transcribe the data analysed in this work.

2.2.4. Encountered Difficulties

We mainly faced two kinds of difficulties, namely the collection of data and their translation from Kirundi language into English language.

1° Difficulties in the Collection of Data

In the collection of data, we attempted to use a tape-recorder but we soon gave up the practice. Indeed, it would have taken long to collect sufficient data because we could not know the appropriate occasion to put the record on. We heard the swearing expression when it was too late to record, just after its utterance. Moreover, we were doomed to restrict the subjects to people frequenting our room since we could not carry the tape-recorder everywhere. And if we had tried to carry it, we would have been tempted to condition the utterances whereas we were searching for unconditioned data. Facing all these difficulties, we opted for collecting data by writing down the situations.

Yet, this method also had many limitations. It was almost impossible to write the situation the time it was uttered. Sometimes, we did not have available materials or feared to cut short the conversation. Some speakers would not like their conversation to be written down and would have preferred silence. And when we come to reproduce the situations, there were some elements which were already forgotten. Needless to say that there were some paralinguistic elements which could not be produced exactly when writing. For instance, slips of the tongue, hesitations, voice quality, facial expressions and gestures were not always easy to describe. The better solution would have been to use a videotape but our means did not allow to do so.

Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, the essential of our situations has been captured and could help us to make a reliable study. Any person who would recognize some elements left out in a given situation is asked to forgive our memory weaknesses and our limitations in actions.

2° Difficulties in the Translation of Data

Considering that we were working on Kirundi language but in the English language, we had to translate data from Kirundi into English. This has not been easy for two main reasons.

The first reason is related to culture. There are some culture-bound words which were involved in our study and made the translation in another language of different culture problematical. We were obliged to use paraphrases which sometimes failed to convey the accurate meaning. Some words were even left out because we did not find the close words in English.

The second problem has been the lack of appropriate dictionary. We were in need of a Kirundi-English and English-Kirundi dictionary but unfortunately we did not find any.

Anyway, we did our best to keep close to the original meaning by relying on the context of utterance. According to P. Newmark (1982 : 113), "context is the overriding factor in all translation, and has primacy over any rule (...)".

2.3. Data Analysis

While analysing the data collected, we will take our cue from Ronald Wardhaugh (1985). As he looks at the text as a sequence of speech acts, this will allow us to deal with illocutionary forces as used by Austin and Searle. We will

analvse the situation in which swearing expressions occur and see how the speaker wants the expressions to be considered. In other words, we will try to find their illocutionary forces.

The role of context will lead us in our analysis. We will consider the participants and their relationships, the physical and linguistic settings of the utterances containing swearing expressions, the mutual knowledge of the world especially Burundian culture, to name but a few.

On the whole, we will be inspired by the review of theoretical framework stated in 2.1., but more particularly the theory of speech acts.

CHAP. III FINDINGS

This chapter seeks to analyse thoroughly the swearing expressions we collected. More precisely, we intend to analyse the illoctionary acts and thereby their illocutionary forces intended by the speaker when he uses those expressions.

Following Widdowson (1979 : 57) who said that it is by extensions of syntactic and semantic structures that speech acts are well analysed, we divided the chapter in three sections. The first one deals with grammatical analysis of Kirundi swearing expressions. The second one is about contextual semantics, i.e. the meaning of those expressions in Burundian culture. The last one is concerned with pragmatic analysis, namely the meaning of the expressions when uttered in particular contexts.

3.1. GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS OF SWEARING EXPRESSIONS

For J.R. Hurford and B.Heasley (1983 : 258) language users are able to tell from the form of an uttered sentence the illocutionary act performed in uttering it. So, in this transitional section, we will deal briefly with the main grammatical forms under which swearing expressions fall.

We distinguish mainly three forms :

- the optative form
- the subjunctive form
- the copula form.

3.1.1. The Optative Form

1° Morphology of the Optative Sentence

Morphologically, Meeussen (1959 : 113) characterizes the optative by the presence of the morpheme -raka. However, we can divide the morpheme into two components and get - ra-ka, the first being the focus marker (see SABIMANA 1986 : 49) and the second the optative marker.

In the affirmative form, apart from the focus marker, it is characterized by the absence of high tones and the aspectual marker -a.

Examples : (1) ndagasara
n - ra - ka - sar - a
I - Foc - Opt - be mad - Asp.
"May I be mad".

(2) ndakakubura
n - ra - ka - ku - bur - a
I -Foc - Opt- you - lose - Asp.
"May I lose you".

The focus marker - ra - occurs only in the affirmative form. When the optative is in the negative form, it is characterized by the negative marker nti - followed by a high tone on the subject marker and the aspectual marker - e. It looks like the negative subjunctive, but the difference is marked by the presence of -Ka-Morpheme on the one hand, and the absence of the morpheme on the other. To take one of Meeussen's (1959 : 114) own examples, let us consider the following sentence :

(3) ntăkabure abâna
nti-á-ka-bur-e / abâna
Neg-he-Opt-lose-Asp / children
"May he not lose children".

For the case of Kirundi swearing expressions, we always have the affirmative form.

Meeussen (1959 : 99) and SABIMANA (1986 : 47) all agree that the Kirundi verb is a morphological complex unit. The verb root which occupies the central position is frequently prefixed and suffixed. The examples (1) and (2) are illustrative.

(1) The verb root -sar - "go crazy" is prefixed by the referential morpheme n "I", the focus marker -ra - and the optative marker - ka -. It is suffixed by the aspectual marker - a.

(2) The verb root - bur "lose" is prefixed by the referential morpheme n - "I", the focus marker - ra -, the optative marker - ka - and the referential morpheme - ku - "you". It is suffixed by the aspectual marker - a.

Considering the examples above, we may draw a conclusion that swearing expressions in the optative form can be represented as follows :

(Negative Morpheme+) Referential Morpheme (+Focus marker) + Optative Morpheme (+ Referential Morpheme) + Verb.Root + Aspectual Morpheme.

Yet in some expressions, there can occur derivational morphemes (applicative, causative, passive, reciprocal, etc) between the verb root and the aspectual marker.

examples : (4) Ndakavumwa
n-ra-ka-vum-u-a
I Foc-Opt-curse-Pass-Asp
"May I be cursed".

(5) Ndakĩnjirira umwânânje
n-ra-ka-injir-ir-a /umwânânje
I Foc-Opt-enter-Applic-Asp / my child
"May I enter to my child's[1]

[1] The real meaning is "May I marry my daughter who has lost her husband.

For all Kirundi swearing expressions, the referential morpheme occuring in the first place is always n - indicating the first person singular. This means that it refers to the speaker. In the examples above, the roots are - vum - and - injir -, respectively. In (4) the root is expanded by the morpheme - u - indicating the passive voice. In (5) it is expanded by the morpheme -ir -. Considering these examples, we would say that the structure is :

(Negative Morpheme +) Referential Morpheme + (Focus Marker +) Optative Morpheme + (Referential Morpheme +) Verb Root + (Derivational Morphemes +) Aspectual Morpheme.

However, this cannot be the general representation of the optative because all the verbs do not have derivational morphemes. The very general structure is the following :

Referentiel Morpheme + Optative Morpheme + Verb Root + Aspectual Marker.

2° Structure of the Optative Sentence

Sentences in the optative form can be represented by the general formula

S [OPT] ———› VP [OPT, ARG] (XP*)

VP[OPT,ARG] ———› V[OPT,ARG ‹NP$_1$›], XP*

The VP [OPT,ARG] can be rewritten as follows :

(1) VP [OPT,ARG] ———› V [OPT,ARG ‹NP$_1$›]

e.g. Ndagasara

"May I go crazy"

(2) VP [OPT,ARG] ———› V[OPT,ARG ‹NP$_1$ ›] NP

e.g. Ndakamena ibânga

"May I lose virtue"

(3) VP [OPT,ARG] ———› V[OPT,ARG ‹NP$_1$›] Loc P

e.g. Ndakava mu bântu
"May I be banished from the society"

(4) VP [OPT, ARG] ——————› VP[OPT,ARG]$_2$ PP [na]
VP [OPT, ARG]$_2$ ——————›V[OPT ,ARG ‹NP$_1$ ›, PASS]
e.g. Ndagahanwa n´Imâna
"May I be punished by God"

(5) VP [OPT,ARG] ——————› VP[OPT,ARG]$_2$ S
VP[OPT,ARG]$_2$ ——————› V[OPT,ARG ‹NP$_1$ ›]
S ——————› VP[ARG]$_3$
VP[ARG]$_3$ ——————› V[ARG ‹NP$_1$ ›]
e.g. Ndagapfa ntávyâyé
"May I die childless"

3° Illocutionary Functions of the Optative Sentence

According to Meeussen (1959 : 113) the optative expresses a wish or an imprecation.

Examples : (1) Murakavyâra
"May you have children"

(2) Ndagacîbwa
"May I be cursed"

(3) Urakarânduka
"May you die childless".

In (1) the speaker wishes the addressee to have children an enormous joy in the Burundian culture. The speaker expresses good wish to the addressee. On the opposite (2) and (3) are ill wishes. Being cursed or dying childless are very bad events. Thus, we can conclude that the optative expresses a good or ill wish.

For the case of Kirundi swearing expressions, we have always ill wishes.

3.1.2. The Subjunctive Form

1° Morphology of the Subjunctive Verb.

Meeussen (1959 : 116) distinguishes two types of subjunctive namely the present subjunctive and the future subjunctive.

The present subjunctive expresses an action to come the same day, and in most cases after the expression of the wish. It is characterized by the absence of the tense marker morpheme (transcribed as ø), the aspectual marker - e and the verb stem form which is marked by a high tone on the second syllable starting from the verb root.

Examples : (1) Nsángíre / n'ímbwá
n-ø-sǎngir-e / n'ímbwá
I-Pres-share-Asp/with a dog
"May I eat with a dog".

(2) Nícwé na Kigoyi
n-ø-ic-u-e /na Kigoyi
I-Pres-kill-Pass-Asp/by hunger
"May I be killed by hunger"

The future subjunctive expresses an action which will occur in the future. The action may start the following day. This subjunctive is characterized by the tense marker morpheme -zô - and the aspectual marker - e

Examples (3) Uzôgarúke hǎnyuma
U-zô-garúk-e/hǎnyuma
You-Fut-come back-Asp / another day
"You may come back another day".

In the affirmative form, the present subjunctive can be preceded by the morpheme ni for emphasis.

Example : (4) Imâna ní impané

"May God punish me just now".

For Kirundi swearing expressions, we only have the present subjunctive in the affirmative form.

2. Structure of the Sentence Containing the Subjunctive form.

Sentences with the subjunctive can be represented by the general formula :

S [SUBJ] ——————› VP [SUBJ,ARG] (XP*)

VP [SUBJ,ARG] ——————› V[SUBJ,ARG ‹ NP_1 ›] XP*

Where VP [SUBJ,ARG] can be rewritten as :

(1) VP [SUBJ, ARG] ——————› V[SUBJ,ARG ‹NP_1 ›] PP [na]

e.g. Nsãngíre n'ĩmbwá

"May I eat with a dog"

(2) VP [SUBJ, ARG] ——————› V [SUBJ, ARG ‹ NP_1 ›] NP

e.g. Nzũré umwânãnje
"May I exhume my child"

We can also have cases where the NP precedes the VP [SUBJ, ARG].

(3) S ———› NPS_1

S_1 ——————› VP [SUBJ, ARG]

VP [SUBJ, ARG] ——————› V [SUBJ, ARG ‹NP_1 , NP_2 ›]

e.g. Imâna impané
"May God punish me just now".

3° Illocutionary Functions of the sentence containing a subjunctive

NZORIJANA (1990 : 36) points out that the illocutionary function of the subjunctive depends on the speaker attitude. It can be used to express a wish, a recommendation or a request.

Examples : (1) Mugiré umugisha
"Luck be with you" or "Good luck"
(2) Ntibázõgêndé
"They should not go"
(3) tugẽndé
"Let's go".

In (1) the speaker wishes good luck to the addressee. It is a good wish. The sentence (2) can be understood as an order or recommendation that the people talked about have to go. The sentence (3) sounds more as a request than an order. The speaker would like the addressee to go with him/her.

For Kirundi swearing expressions, they always express ill-wish.

e.g. Nzũré umwânânje
"May I exhume my child"

3.1.3. Sentences with the Copula

1° Morphology of the Copula Verb

We have already stated that the Kirundi verb is a complex unit from the morphological point of view. The copula verb has a lot of irregularities.

First of all, while the verb stem is - ri for the first and second persons (see NZORIJANA 1990 : 36), it becomes ni for the third persons in the affirmative (see SABIMANA 1986 : 60) and si in the negative. It has a tense marker for all the persons except the third one. It is marked by-ø-in the present tense and-á-in the past. It never occurs in the future. Where the third person occurs in the subordinate clause, it takes - ri as the verb stem and can have a tense marker. Another point worth mentioning is the absence of aspectual marker for all the persons.

e.g. (1) ndi umunyêshŭri
n-ø-ri : umunyêshŭri
I - Pres- be / a student
I am a student.

(2) Yari - umwĭgīsha
a-á-ri /umwĭgīsha
He - Past - be /a teacher
He was a teacher.

(3) Indahiro ní dàtá
Indahiro / ní / dàtá
The swearing is my father.

(4) Aba sí abanyêshŭri
Aba / si / abanyêshŭri
These / be not/ students
These are not students

(5) Avuze kó yarí Yohăni
Avuze kó / a-á'-ri /Yohăni
He says that / it-past-be / John
He says that it was John.

In case of Kirundi swearing expression, we are concerned with the third person in the present tense. SABIMANA (1986 : 60) points out that it is particular because on the

surface structure it has no tense marker, no aspectual marker and no internal argument or locative marker.

2. Structure of the sentences with the Copula Verb

Sentences with the copula verb have mainly two forms, namely :

(1) S [COP] ——————› XP_1 S_1

S_1 ——————› VP [ARG] (XP*)

VP [ARG]——›V [ARG ‹ NP_1 ›] X P_2 X = N or X = Loc

e.g. Indahiro ní dâtá
"The swearing is my father".

(2) S [COP] ————› XP_1 S_1

S_1 ————› VP [ARG]

VP [ARG] ————› V [ARG ‹NP_1 ›] XP_2 [PRD]

e.g. Ni úkurí kw'Imâna

"It is God's Truth"

3° Illocutionary Functions of the Sentences with the Copula Verb.

The copula form is part of declarative sentences, typically used for assertions. It expresses an assertion of a certain situation. As Hurford and Heasley (1983 : 233) define the assertion, the speaker utters a declarative sentence (which can be true or false), and undertakes a certain commitment to the hearer on the existence of a particular situation or state of affairs.

For example, the expression Ni izína ry'Imâna "It is God's Name" in the following situation asserts that A is telling the truth, that he cannot fail to tell the truth in God's name.

ex : A : Urâzi kó Yohâni yajé ejó.
B : Nivyó ?
A : Ni izína ry'Imâna

A : Do you know that John came yesterday ?
B : Is it true ?
A : It is in God's name.

For Kirundi swearing expressions, the copula verb expresses a known taboo (such as "Indahiro ní dátá" "the swearing is my father") or the truthfulness of a situation.

3.2. SWEARING EXPRESSIONS IN BURUNDIAN CULTURE

For many swearing expressions, it would not be easy to understand them if we rely on their literal meaning. Some have figurative meanings, others are ellipses. A better way to get their meaning is to analyse them in the framework of Burundian culture. Indeed as S.Bassnett (1980 : 14) states it, language and culture are interwoven. Quoting Sapir, she argues that "No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture ; and no culture can exist which does not have at its center, the structure of natural language". Thus, our pupose in this section is to acquaint the reader with some preliminary notions.

We can distinguish five types of swearing, namely :

- Swearing expressions related to religion
- Swearing expressions related to sex
- Swearing expressions related to bad memories
- Swearing expressions related to fate
- Swearing expressions related to social solidarity.

3.2.1. Swearing Expressions Related to Religion

In Kirundi language, swearing expressions are highly valued. Their analysis could provide insight into Burundian culture and tradition. Swearing expressions related to religion are illustrative to show the place of Imâna "God" in Burundian Society.

Even before the introduction of Christianism, Burundians believed in God. They know that there exists a supreme being that they called "IMANA". NTAHOKAJA (1978 : 149) explains this by the names parents gave to their children. Names like HATANGIMANA "It is God who gives", HAVYARIMANA "It is God who gives birth" and BIGIRIMANA "It is God who does this" are illustrative. The Imâna is known to be powerful, omniscient, pure in mind and ready to forgive. According to ZUURE (1932 : 132), Imâna is considered to be the source of everything rather than their end. This is shown by names given to him :

- SEBIBONDO : The one who gives children
- RUGIRAVYOSE : The Almighty
- MUSHOBORAVYOSE : The Almighty
- SEMBABAZI : The Forgiving
- RUREMA : The Creator

Not only IMANA is the creator, but also the ruler of the Universe. NTAHOKAJA (1978 : 150) says that all existing things are God's creation. People have to act as he wishes in order to avoid his anger. Although he is kind, he can punish seriously somebody who misbehaves. For instance, if a person actually behaved in a bad manner and got in trouble, Burundians said that it is God who punished him for his misbehaviour. He can take back health and wealth and the person remains miserable.

In general, Burundians fear God's anger and punishment. When they want to give credit to their saying or to prove their innocence, they refer to God's name. Examples are :

Ni izína ry'Imâna
"It is God's name"
Ni ukurí kw'Imâna
"It is God's Truth"
Ndagahanwa n'Imâna
"May I be punished by God"
Imâna impané
"May God punish me just now".

On the whole, those expressions invoking God's name are highly considered and are not played with. God is known to be virtuous and his name should not be associated with unpleasant speech or blasphemy. This kind of swearings is used by both men and women.

3.2.2. Swearing Expressions Related to Sex

In this category, we will consider incestuous relations and anomalous relations. Incestuous relations are those sexual relations with a person of one's own family. For particular reasons we will exclude those family relationships established by marriage such as the in-laws. These will be in the second group, that of relations judged to be unsuitable or scandalous.

1° Incestuous Relations

According to Ethel Albert (1964), Burundians value family relationships. They respect each other and avoid anything that could injure such feelings. Examples are given on relations existing between a father and his daughter, an uncle or aunt and his nephews or nieces, and a mother-in-law and her son-in-law. For instance, in order to avoid any temptation to incestuous relations, fathers and uncles were forbidden to

enter the house of their daughters and nieces, respectively. It was taboo to enter those houses.

This taboo has generated many swearing expressions. Let us consider the following examples :

(1) Umwânânje : Literally translated as "my child", it generally refers to one's daughter if used by men and to one's son if used by women. But it is only in the first case that it relates to incest. Many are explicit and say overtly "umukǒbwânje". This is an elliptical form of longer expressions like

- Ndakĩnjira mũ nzu y'úmukǒbwânje
  "May I enter my daughter's house"

- Ndakâmbura umukǒbwânje
  "May I unclothe my daughter"

- Ndakênda umukǒbwânje
  "May I be incestuous with my daughter".

The two first expressions are euphemisms. The incestuous relations are referred to in a polite way and do not sound embarrassing. The last expression is too bald and sounds offensive to the ear. For respect to the reader and for decency sake, we will only use those euphemisms in this work.

We had asked ourselves why it was taboo for a man to enter his daughter's house whereas it was not for a women to enter her son's house. Mr Antoine KABWA who works at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences attempted an explanation to that. Just after the enthronement of NTARE I, a man was sentenced to death because he has been incestuous with his daughter. NTARE was invited to pronounce the verdict, but he refused and said; "My first verdict cannot be the sentencing to death, all the following would be upsetting. What I can do is to forbid all the men to enter their daughters' houses". From that day on, it became taboo for men to enter their daughter's

houses. But such a case has never occurred for a woman, therefore it is not taboo to enter the house of her son.

(2) Mwĭshwānje : It can be literally translated as "My niece". The daughter of one's sister is almost one's daughter, therefore a niece is as well respected as a daughter.

At birth, it was taboo for her maternal uncle to touch her without giving her something. We can infer that this handrail was established from early age to avoid any temptation or attempt at sexual relations. In the mind of her uncle, the niece is not a relative like others, she deserves greater respect than others. If a man is clumsy or stammers, Burundians like to say that he has touched his niece/nephew.

Like the previous expression, its longer expressions can be uttered euphemically or baldly. We have the expressions like :

- Ndakĭnjira mū nzu y'úmwĭshwa
  "May I enter my niece's house"

- Ndakāmbura mwĭshwānje
  "May I unclothe my niece".

- Ndakagōka ku mwĭshwa
  "May I do wrong to my niece"

Any person who dares doing such a thing was banished from the society and taken for an outcast. But of all incestuous relations, the worst was the one with one's mother, according to KAZUNGU (1985 : 119)

(3) Māmá mberé : it is literally translated as "My mother". Having sex with one's mother is universally forbidden. According to KAZUNGU (1985 : 119), Burundians consider the matter too bald and too harmful that even on court of law,

they do not dare to demand such a swearing. They only limit themselves on daughters and nieces.

The long expressions can be :

- Ndakāmbura māmá
  "May I unclothe my mother"
- Ndakagōka kurí māmá
  "May I do wrong to my mother"
- Ndakarārana ná māmá
  "May I spend the night with my mother".

All the above examples are usually uttered by men. Women rarely refer to sex in swearing, and if it happens they use euphemism. The following expression is one of the examples.

4) Dātá arazira : "My father is taboo". It is the equivalent of the previous expression, "May I be incestuous with my mother". The difference is that this expression is used by women whereas the expression in (3) is used by men only.

In general as a boy alludes to his mother, a daughter also alludes to her father but in less bald terms. She cannot utter overtly words related to sex without losing her decency. According to NTAHOMBAYE (1983 : 64) a Burundian girl ought to be decent, speak less and politely. She prefers using a refined language and indirect expressions.

Another expression having the same meaning is "Ndagakūra māmá ku buriri" translated as" May I replace my mother on her bed" which means precisely "May I be incestuous with my father".

The reader may have noticed that incestuous relations are feared by both parties. As parents swear on their children, the latter also swear on their parents, and this reveals how incest is undesirable.

2° Scandalous Relations

Concerning scandalous or anomalous relations, let us consider the relations with the in-laws, especially a women and her son-in-law, on the one hand, and the relations with one's dog, on the other.

(5) Ndakâmbura abakwé : It is translated as "May I unclothe my sons-in-law". It is used by women and refers to sexual relations.

In Burundian culture, sons-in-law are so respected that no one would dare doing such a thing. Ethel Albert (1964) says that the son-in-law was obliged to pay visit to his mother-in-law but that joking with her was forbidden.

Surprisingly it was not taboo for a man to have sexual relations with his daughter-in-law. He was even allowed to marry her if his son has died. This sounds strange because one would think that the relation existing between a woman and her son-in-law should be the same as the one existing between a man and his daughter-in-law. Indeed, there is no suitable explanation to this difference, therefore we exclude the expression from incestuous relations. If the relation between a man and his daughter-in-law is normal, there is no reason to call that of woman with her son-in-law an incest. It is only scandalous in Burundian culture. In fact as NTAHOMVUKIYE (1981: 19) states it, some taboo are psychologically harmful whereas they are not reasonable.

(6) Imbwá yânje : it is literally translated as "My dog". This is an elliptical form of longer expressions relating to dog. NTAHOMBAYE (1983 : 159) assumes that the dog is a contemptible animal except that used in hunting or as a guard dog.

An utterance like "uri imbwá" "You are a dog" may irritate the addressee if said seriously. The speaker does not state that the addressee is really a dog because it cannot be

true ; he compares him to a dog. Such an expression is taken for an insult.

According to Burundians, a dog is the animal which has all the vices and which deserves no respect. This is shown by some proverbs like : Ntā bānga ry´îmbwá.

"A dog cannot keep a secret"
Usāngira ibānga n´îmbwá ikarikwīza agahĭnga
"If you share a secret with a dog, it diffuses the secret"

Then, to have sex with one´s dog would be a strong attempt to social norms. It is a relation which is unlikely to happen. When women use the term, they mean "Ndakarya imbwá, "May I eat my dog" or "Nsāngíre n´îmbwá yānje", "May I eat with my dog".

In conclusion, swearing expressions related to sex are very significant in Burundian culture. They are even the most important of all the swearings. On the court of law, for instance, they are the only one admitted.

3.2.3. Swearing Expressions Related to Bad Memories

In general, those expressions refer to a bad event, especially to death. For instance, the death of a close relative, parent or child cannot be forgotten. According to NTAHOMBAYE (1983 : 178), death is the source of all misfortunes. When swearing, some people refer to it metaphorically.

Some examples are :
- Umŭsi mubí : "The sad day"
- Umŭsi wandákije : "The day that made me angry"
- Umŭsi wankôkòye : "The day that took away all I had".

The three expressions refer to a bad event that has happened to the person who swears. Unless they are using the expressions as a joke or an imitation of someone else, young people rarely use them. They are reserved for old persons who have many experiments in life.

Gukôkôra `cut off the branches' is used metaphorically in this expression. According to NTAHOMBAYE (1983 : 170), the verb is naturally used for a tree when people cut its branches. When it is used for a person, it suggests that the person is doomed to solitude like a trunk without branches. His friends and relatives (compared to branches)who would surrender him have died. Considering that he says only one day, we may infer that the persons died on one day which has remained for him a sad day. A reference to such a day is somehow a reference to those persons. In other words, he swears that he would witness another sad day similar to that one instead of telling lies for instance.

3.2.4. Swearing Expressions Related to Social Solidarity

According to NTAHOMBAYE (1983 : 215) social solidarity is the corner-stone of Burundian tradition. A man cannot envision himself out of his society. To break social solidarity is similar to a crime ; it is considered as a taboo. Many swearing expressions illustrate the case. Indeed, people swear on something which is taboo, something that they could not do.

Some examples are :

(1) Ndakava mu bântu translated literally as "May I leave the society of men". It refers to social solidarity. As Burundians value solidarity any person who violates social norms in acting wrongly was banished. This psychological punishment is harder to support than a physical one. The banished person feels no more that he is living in a society of men because no one talks to him.

(2) Ndakamena ibānga. It can be literally translated as "May I break the secret". Burundians are very discreet. Delivering a secret is somehow a taboo because a person who does it is seriously punished. He can even be killed in some cases. Ethel M.Albert (1964) assumes that

> Discretion is appropriate to a wide variety of situations in life. Its specific character depends on specific situation and actors. In political matters (...) discretion is necessary as a self defensive measure. Information about the misbehaviour or the faults of a political superior is best concealed, at least until such time as he has lost status and is thereby deprived of power to harm.

A true wise man has the first obligation to be discreet. The ability to keep secrets embody numerous qualities and whoever says all he knows is looked at contemptuously.

According to NTAHOKAJA (1978 : 168) "ibānga" is more than "secret", it can be rather considered as respect, honour and virtue insofar as a man with "ibānga" cannot violate social norms.

(3) Ndakagesera, "May I rebel". It comes from the verb kugesera derived from the noun umugesera, "a rebel". A rebel breaks the norms of the society and is banished from the latter. A rebel is a betrayer to the whole society.

NTAHOKAJA (1978 : 144) assumes that a rebel was hanged in open air and nobody was allowed to bury him. So, any person who behaves in this way becomes a subject of imprecation and ill wishes.

In general, this class of swearing expressions put emphasis on social solidarity and individual behaviour to value social norms. The deviant is banished from the society and endures moral punishment which is the worst of all.

3.2.5. Swearing Expressions Related to Fate

Those expressions are related to bad events which may happen to a person and which are irresistible. Unlike the previous category of expressions, the event does not depend on the individual will. The person must endure them without resistance. When people use those expressions as swearing, they mean that they would not like such events to happen to them.

Here are some examples

(1) Ndagapfa "May I die". According to NTAHOMBAYE (1983), death is the first ennemy of man since it destroys his life and that of his descendants. Other events may cause him to suffer a lot but none of them can do such a harm to his life. As a matter of fact, it is very feared of. Although they know that it is unavoidable, Burundians refer on it in swearings to show that they would not like it to come early.

(2) Ndakarênzwa ivú "May earth be thrown on me" : It is synonymous to the previous one but this one is more explicit. It alludes to the way Burundians bury dead persons. The latter are put in a grave which is covered with earth.

(3) Ndagasara "May I be mad". The expression derives from the word umusazi "a mad". The mad man has lost reason and intelligence and acts anomalously. He ignores the world he is living in and suffers without realising it. To be mad is a very bad state that no person in the world would like to experiment. Thus, it has become an ill wish that people swear on in Burundian culture.

In conclusion, the meaning of swearing expressions is conditioned by the culture in which they are used. In Burundian culture, they are somehow a reflection of some social norms insofar as many of them refer to taboos. Both men and women use

swearing expressions but the ones relating to sex baldly are the proper of men. Moreover, they show sanctions reserved for deviants. Those sanctions may come from supernatural forces such as the Almighty or from members of the society. The sanctions are hard to endure, therefore they are alluded to in swearing expressions, as something that no one would like to experience.

3.3. SWEARING EXPRESSIONS IN CONTEXTS

So far, we have been dealing with swearing expressions in Burundian culture. We have given their general meaning. Yet, we have realized that the cultural meaning is not sufficient to show the role of those swearings in specific contexts. They are used to perform speech acts. As Searle (1969) asserts that one illocutionary act can have more than one illocutionary force, one swearing expression can also have different illocutionary forces. The force of a swearing expression is conditioned by the context in which it occurs. Let us consider some expressions to illustrate this.

3.3.1. Analysis of Data

(1) Umwânânje
"My child".

The expression «Umwânânje can be literally translated as "my child". Used by both men and women, it can have various longer forms and various illocutionary forces. The following situations are illustrative.

Situation 16
A grandfather and his grandson
Grandfather : Gênda hárya kũ ngoró undábire kó ariho inâma ibêrá.
Grandson : Murí iyi mbého ?

Grandfather : Umwânânje ntakuvúnagura
Ndagútuma ukânka ga
nyakúvuna umuheto ?

The opening move is a grandfather's order to his grandson. He sends the child outside to verify where the meeting will be held. The reply is an indirect refusal. The grandson says that it is cold to mean that he would not like to get out. The next move is a reaction to the grandson's refusal. It is a threat to the disobedient child. The grandfather swears on his child that he will beat him if the latter does not change his behaviour. In normal circumstances, little children have to obey to older persons without conditions. He adds an insulting expression to show that he is not happy of the child's behaviour. He wishes his grandson to lose his first son. Yet, this is but an expression of anger and not a serious wish. It is rather conditioned by the use of the verb kuvúnagura "break into small pieces" deriving from a homonym of the main verb in the expression, i.e. Kuvúna meaning "to break".

The swearing expression can also be interpreted as an emphasis to show the child that he is not joking. If the child does not execute the order he can be beaten.

The whole situation can be translated as follows :

Grandfather : Go to the Meeting House and look for me if the meeting will be held there.

Grandson : It is very cold.

Grandfather : May I lose my child if I do not beat you. I tell you to do something and you refuse!
May you lose your first son !

If the expression is used to threaten the grandson who refuses to obey to older's order in this situation, it can be used itself to express categorical refusal like in the following one.

Situation 8

At the central market a bus stops and people get out with their luggage. The ticket collector demands money for heavy belongings.

Ticket collector : Hewé zana amafrânga amajana abiri y'úmuzígo.

Old woman : Ndakazûra umwânânje ukântôrakó n'ímeya. Aka gafúko níko karemêreye gusûmba ayo mashákôshi ?

Ticket collector : Niyó matégeko.

Old woman : Nsubiza iyó wankûye ndâzi ko arívyo mwîtwâza. Nayó amatégeko ntáyo nzi.

The first move is a demand of money for a bag. The next is a categorical refusal to the first. In order to show the refusal, she uses two alternatives, that is, to exhume her child or not to get any penny from her. In other words, she says that she would exhume the child instead of giving one penny. If she cannot give a penny, she cannot obviously give more, namely two hundred. She simply refuses to pay since she could not exhume her child. The reason she gives is that there exists other luggage such as briefcases heavier than hers but which are not taxed. The ticket collector's utterance is an information to the old woman. By telling her that that is the rule he means that briefcases even heavy ones are tax-free. The old woman seems not to understand. She declares that she cannot pay it even if they threaten her to take her back. Her last utterance shows the determination she has.

On the whole, we can say that the swearing strengthens the refusal and makes it categorical.

The situation can be translated as follows :

Ticket collector : Please give me two hundred francs for that luggage.

Old woman : May I exhume my child if you get any penny from me. Is this small bag heavier than all those briefcases ?

Ticket collector : That is the rule.

Old woman : I do ignore your rules. Take me back home if you wish, I know what you always say.

Situation 18

A man talking to his houseboy

Man : Mbĕ Minăni amaherá igihûmbi yarí murí iyi pântalo yagîye hé ?

Minani : Ndakâmbura umwânânje w'ůmukŏbwa nkaba nâbônye namba.

Man : Urahira ubêsha urayâzana. UWůndi akorá mû mpuzu zânje nî ndé ?

This conversation is between a man and his houseboy. Before going to the office, the man put some money in a trouser pocket at home. When he comes back, he does not find the money. He asks his houseboy where the money is. But his utterance sounds more as an accusation of theft than a mere question. The houseboy swears that he has seen nothing in the trouser. He asserts that telling lies could be considered as violating a taboo. In order to strengthen the swearing, he uses its longer form because the shortened one is less convincing. Yet, instead of convincing the master, the utterance reinforces the accusation and turns it out to be a threat. Since nobody else can touch the cloth, the houseboy must pay the money at all cost.

In this situation the swearing expressions is used as a reinforcement of the denial. A tánslation of the situation runs as follows :

Man : Minani, where are the one thousand francs that I put in my trouser pocket ?
Minani: May I unclothe my daughter if I have seen the money.
Man : That you swear or not, you must pay that. Who else can touch my clothes ?

(2) Mwĭshwãnje
"My niece".

Translated literally, the expression is "my niece". As stated in the previous section, this is an elliptical form of longer expressions referring to incest with one's niece. It is used in many contexts and its illocutionary force vary from one context to another as we will see in the following situations :

Situation 1 : A conversation between two friends

B : Mbĕga wâ muhŭngu wavugá musigáye múbãna yĭtwa ndé ?
A : Mwíshwãnje nkamumenya
B : Mhm ! (looking surprised)
A : Eka mwĭshwãnje (expressing denial with his head).

Two friends A and B are talking to each other. A informs B that he has got a new neighbour but he does not tell him his name. After a moment, B comes back to the question. He'd like to know the name of the neighbour and thinks that A can give him the information. A's reply is a recognition of his inability to inform B. He ignores the name, B cannot hide his astonishment expressed in the third move. It is not possible to ignore one's neighbour. We can also interpret B's reaction as a negation to believe A's reply. He thinks that A is lying or joking ; therefore, he urges him to give another answer.

Yet. A does not change of language. He realises that B does not believe him and tries to persuade him. He uses a swearing expression for the second time to strengthen what he said in the previous utterance. Thus, the last move is a reinforcement of the second one. In the second move A uses the swearing expression but it does not produce any effect on B. This may be understandable because sometimes friends use swearings without intending any particular effect. B notices that A neglects the expression and repeats it for reinforcement. This time, he adds paralinguistic elements to convey the meaning, namely the shaking of the head expressing denial.

The situation can be translated as :

B : What is the name of your new neighbour ?
A : May I enter my niece's house if I know his name.
B : Mhm !
A : May I enter my niece's house.

In sum, the swearing expression is used as a reinforcement of the denial. A says that not telling the truth should be considered as being incestuous with his niece.

Situation 10 : A deleguate and his class

Deleguate : Mwãzanye yâ ma karte yânyu ?
One lady : Yooh, nãyibagiye.
Urayihitana murí shǎmbre midi
Deleguate : Mwíshwânje nkagerayó
Uzõca uyîjãnira ejó.
The lady : Bǎsi ntá kǔndi.

A deleguate is charged of collecting students'library cards to hand in them in order to be validated. The first utterance seems to be the deleguate question to the students. Although it looks like a question, it is rather a request to get the cards. A positive answer would not have been

sufficient: it would have elicitated another statement like, "So, I'd like to have them" or "so, give them to me".

The lady's reply is an excuse for not being in order. The use of "Yooh" "sorry" shows that she had totally forgotten and remembers it at that moment. She would like the deleguate to take it in her room and she formulates a direct request. Unfortunately, the deleguate does not comply with her.

Her next move is a rejection of the lady's request. The deleguate refuses categorically to go into her room. The use of the expression "May I enter my niece's house" strengthens his refusal. He tells her to hand in the card herself the following day. She understands that he refuses to satisfy her request.

The last move can be taken as a resignation on this deleguate's refusal, and therefore a cancellation of the request. The lady realizes that she cannot do anything else to change his mind and accepts this without complaining. Her resignation is shown by the following utterance "I cannot do anything else". This resignation is caused by the preceding use of the swearing expression. She realises that the deleguate is serious and is not ready to change his mind.

If we translate the situation, it runs as follows :

Deleguate : Did you bring your cards ?
One lady : Sorry, I forgot it.
Come to my room and take it at noon.
Deleguate : May I enter my niece's house if I go there.
You will hand in it yourself tomorrow.
The lady : I cannot do anything else.

Situation 13

It is about noon on Sunday. There is a group of four persons who are drinking in a bar. Another person arrives and joins the group.

N (addressing the servant) : Mpa agatébe aho shă
(To the four men) Murazínyōye mwā mbwá mwe
C (Smiling) Mwĭshwānje wehó utābāye ikibûnda
Aho warí úkiri mu buriri ?
N : Erega síngikanya narírōnkeye uburêngeti.

On Sundays some people like to meet in bars and spend a long time together. In this situation, there is a group of four persons about noon. One man N arrives and asks a chair so that he can join the group. From the way he introduces himself without any problem and addresses to the group in impolite terms, it is obvious that he is familiar to the person in the group. Instead of greeting them, he calls them "dogs". In general, a man compared to a dog is a man who seems to be unpleasant and evil or harmful. It is understandable then that N would not like to join contemptible persons. If the term "dog" is addressed to an unfamiliar person, it is conceived of as an insult. It can be taken as a challenge and irritates the addressee.

Yet, the group reaction is not that of offended people. They rather seem enjoying the insult, therefore it can be taken as a joke. The next move emphacizes the banter. The man who calls other people dogs is diminished and called a doggie. He is less than a dog according to his friends. The term doggie is also linked to the following question. Actually, doggies sleep a lot. The man who has not been seen until that hour is supposed to have slept like doggies.

N's remark seems to be an acceptance of the previous utterance. He argues that he has reason to stay in bed because he has got a blanket. This is a jargon. N got recently married and he compares his wife to a blanket. It is obvious that his friends know who he is referring to.

On the whole, the use of impolite terms, insults and jargon shows that the conversation occurs between friends in a bantering situation.

Translation

N : Waiter, bring me the chair,
You dogs, you are drinking a lot !
C : May I enter my niece's house if you
have not become a doggie
Were you still in bed at this hour ?
N : Of course : it is no longer cold in my bed
since I've got a blanket.

(3) Mămá mberé
" (...) my mother."

The meaning of the expression with all its longer forms is given in 3.2.2. Its force may vary from one context to another. Let us analyse for instance the two following situations :

Situation 7

In a basketball game, one player who is hurt by someone from the opposite team says angrily

Mămá mberé ugasubira kŭmfata tudacá
túrwănira aha nyéne.
(the other gets aways in silence).

In this situation the swearing expression is used for emphasis, but more than that for threatening. This is shown by the attitude of the player when he utters it. The item mberé which is hard to translate in English also strengthen the threatening attitude. The addressee realises the speaker's attitude and avoids saying any word. The silence can be interpreted as an avoidance to worsen the situation.

Translation

I swear on my mother's honour that we will fight just here if you hold me again.

Situation 9

One houseboy has disappeared the whole afternoon and comes back when his boss is about to arrive at four. He calls another houseboy to open the door for him.

S : Nyugururira Busóko ..... (knocking at the door)
B : Eh' ? Māmá mberé ukarwînjira
Urageze gutāhūka nka shôbuja
Huu wá, wīriwe hé ?
S : Nōné níwe usigáye unkôntrora ?
B : Nǎwe injíra turābe umugabo
Ntíwôsīmba ?

S's utterance is a request. As response, we have a categorical refusal strengthened by the swearing expression Māmá mberé "my mother". The second part of the utterance aims at deploring S's behaviour. He has been wandering the whole afternoon and comes back about four so that his boss finds him at home. In other words, B tells S that he cannot help S to hide his misbehaviour. S answers aggressively in order to put an end to that reprimanding speech. The utterance does not achieve the goal. It rather leads to threat expressed in the last move of the conversation.

Translation

S : Busokoza, open the door for me
B : Sorry ? I swear on my mother's honour
that you cannot come in. You arrive at four
like your boss !
where have you been all this afternoon ?
S : Is it your business ?

B : So, come in if you think it isn't.
Why would not you climb up the door and get in ?

(4) Imbwá yānjé
(...) "My dog"

This is an elliptical form of longer expressions as already stated. Like all swearing expressions, its meaning in context depends on participants, on the subject of their conversation and their attitude at the moment of utterance. In the following situation, for instance, it may be intended to express assurance or threat.

Situation 15

A father and his son.
Father : Mbĕga kó usigáye utâha utévye musigara murîga ibikí abăndi bâtâshe ?
Son : Oya ntídutebá, nari nácîye gutîra igitabo VYAMUNGU.
Father : Ukimutîra indwi yöse ?
Imbwá yānje hănyuma utârurâye inyuma.

Starting from an observation, the first utterance is an eliciting question. To such a question, unless the addressee wants to be uncooperative, there must be an informing answer. The son's utterance is an evasive answer. Instead of answering the question, he denies the observation and attempts explanation on it. He somehow deviates from the question. His explanation is also not convincing : he justifies only one day whereas he came home late the whole week. The father's use of the swearing expression is significant. It strengthens the statement and makes it a threat. Without such an expression, the whole utterance loses its weight and sounds as a mere assertion.

Translation.

Father : These days you come home late.
What do you remain there studying
after classes ?
Son : We do not delay, today I went to borrow
a book from VYAMUNGU.
Father : Do you borrow it every day of the week ?
May I eat with my dog if you don't spend
the night outside next time.

5) Ndagahanwa
May I be punished

The expression is literally understandable. It derives from the verb guhana "to punish", and guhanwa means "to be punished". The idea carried by the expression is to suffer from one's misdeed. A punishment is never enjoyable, therefore it is used as a swearing. In other words, the person who swears would not like to be punished.

When it is used in normal circumstances, it is intended to persuade the addressee to believe the speaker. Let us look at the following situations.

Situation 22

In the street, two women meet.

A (smiling) Hewé urãza muhirá gutôra ubutumwá
ndagufitíye.
B (doubtful) Nivyo' ?
A : Ndagahanwa mberé.

This conversation happens in the street. In the first move, lady A informs lady B that she has a message for the latter. She invites B to get it. It is at the same time an information and an invitation. B's reply is a question. She'd

like to know if really A is telling the truth. Her face reveals that she is doubtful about the information. This attitude may result from A's smiling in giving the information. Therefore, she asks for assurance. Yet, A's smiling is but a friendly gesture. Or, we may think that A has good news for B and she is excited to deliver the message. The last move can be interpreted as an assurance. In order to convince B that she is telling the truth, she uses the expression Ndagahanwa "May I be punished". In other words she says, "If I am not telling you the truth, may I be punished for that".

Translation

A : Please, I have a message for you.
You can come home to pick up it.
B : Is it true ?
A : May I be punished.

In this situation, the swearing expression is used as assurance but it can be used as a threat, as for example in situation 2.

Situation 2

A mother had asked her daughter to carry bottles somewhere. About noon, she finds that her daughter has not done it yet.

Mother (surprised) Mbĕga ntŭze yâ macupá aracâri ngăho?
Ndagahanwa mberé... (threatening look)
Makura... Icó ntakubwĭye umutíma urakúbwĭra.
Daughter (apologizing tone). Eregá măma nabānje kubúra amâzi.
Mother : Urakabura abâna. Abăndi bakŏbwa bĭyoga sāsitá?
(She gets in the house angry and the daughter hurries up to carry the bottles).

The mother expected to find the bottles already transferred in another place. She is surprised to see that they are still where she let them. She becomes angry with her daughter who failed to carry the bottles. The uttering of the swearing expression can be understood as a warning or threat. She communicates to her daughter that she is not happy with her and that she should never behave the same way. The fact that she cuts short the utterance may have many interpretations. The first could be that she is very angry and cannot go on speaking. The second could be that she knows that her daughter is aware of what she wants to tell her, and finds unnecessary to repeat it. Or else, she interrupts it in order to summon her so that she can get her attention. Among the three hypotheses, the second one seems more appropriate than the others. The statement "Your heart will tell you what I do not do" is similar to "You already know what you had to do".

The daughter's reply is an excuse. She recognises that she misbehaved and makes an excuse. According to her, she did not do what she ought to do because she did not find water easily so that she can wash herself. The mother does not accept the excuse. She is rather irritated because she finds that the excuse is of no value. Actually, ladies wash themselves very early in the morning. When the daughter says that she did not find water, her mother insults her. She wishes the daughter not to find her children. Such an utterance shows the mother's anger. It is obvious that she cannot have such a wish for her child since she loves her. The daughter realises that her mother is really angry, therefore she hurries up to carry the bottles. If she delays again she can be inflicted a punishment.

Translation

Mother : Are the bottles still there ?
May I be punished if...
Maggy, your heart will tell you what I don't do.

Daughter : Mummy, it took me a long time to find water.
Mother : May you never find your children.
Do other girls wash themselves at noon ?

In sum, the swearing expression is used in this context as a threat to the disobedient daughter.

(6) Ndagahanwa n´Imâna
May I be punished by God.

The expression may be the longer form of the previous one. Whereas in the previous the punisher is not mentioned, it is specified that it is God in this one. We cannot overgeneralize and say that this expression is necessarily the only longer form because even the society can punish a person who is guilty. Thus, we can say that (5) is a short form of (6), but (6) is not obviously the long form of (5).

In the following situation, the expression is used to strengthen a promise.

Situation 11

Two women in conversation.

A : Aríko wâ mukǒbwa uri igitó.
Ukǎmpēnda ntǔze ?
B : Emwe ubu ndágahanwa n´Imâna
utâgīye umbóna. Ubu akazi kâtânguye kugabanuka.
A : Ha, oya ivyâwé nzǒvyēmera ndábibōnye.

The opening move can be divided into two parts. The first one is intended as an insult to B and the second as an accusation of B for having lied. A communicates to B that she acted wrongly, therefore she uses the term igitó meaning "naughty". A begins by blaming B before she provides the reason. B understands the accusation and promises another visit. It is a promise reinforced by the swearing expression.

She puts two situations in balance : to realize the promise or to be punished by God. It is obvious that the first one is the easiest. Moreover, B gives the felicity conditions that will enable her to keep the promise. She is no more busy these days. This can also be understood as an excuse for the former accusation. She did not come because she was very busy. Now that she is no more very busy, she is willing to come. A's utterance is an expression of doubt. She has generalized A's missing the appointment and took it for a habit. The only way to be believed for A is to perform the act instead of promising it.

Translation

A : You naughty girl, why did you deceive me that you would come ?
B : Now, may God punish me if I don't come soon. I am not very busy these days.
C : I won't believe you until you come.

Situation 17

A passenger and a bus ticket-collector near Kabondo Bus Station.

Ticket-collector : Vĭrayo ngăho rēró (threatening tone)
Passenger (angry) : Ndagahanwa n'Imâma nkayisohoka.
Aha wanjănye ní mu Kămĕnge ?
Ticket-collector : Urasohoka urágasohoka igihúgu
Passenger : Dătá azŏba yávyăye nâbí.
Kiretse untérura.

The whole conversation is a quarrel between a bus ticket-collector and a passenger. There is an exchange of violent arguments. The ticket-collector wants the passenger to get out at Kabondo Bus Station. The way he addresses her shows that there has been previous disagreement, otherwise there will

be no reason to threaten her. Obviously, the lady's utterance makes the situation explicit. Her reply is a protest and violent refusal because the ticket collector did not respect the conventions. She has to go to Kamenge. The ticket-collector told her that the bus was going there, but took another direction, namely Musaga. The lady is told to leave on the first Bus Station. She refuses categorically with a swearing expression. She would prefer to be punished by God instead of leaving the bus. The next ticket-collector's utterance aims at changing her mind by insulting and threatening her. Yet, he does not succeed. The next move is a reinforcement of her previous utterance. She argues that unless she is carried out by force, she cannot leave the bus. She swears on her father's honour. In other words she says that if she does it, she will be dishonouring her father.

Translation

Ticket-collector : So, get out here.
Passenger : May God punish me if I leave this bus.
Are we here at Kamenge ?
Ticket.collector : You must leave it, may you leave the country.
Passenger : Are you going to carry me ? (If I leave this bus) my father would have got a worthless child.

The swearing expression is intended to strengthen the refusal and makes it categorical.

(7) Ndakamena ibānga
May I lose virtue.

The expression literally means "May I break the secret". But the word ibānga means more than secret ; it embodies all the qualities of a honourable man. A man without

"ibānga" is a contemptible man. So "kuména ibānga" is a great attempt to the society and to personal honour.

Considering the place that ibānga occupies in Burundian culture, such an expression is uttered for serious matters. Let us analyse the following situations in which it is used.

Situation 26

Conversation between two brothers about their youngest one.

A : Mbé wâ mwâna wāmuhâye yá mafrǎnga ?
B : Azōba arayátānga umwâka ního ugitângúra.
A : Ukabona bárînze kumwîrukana, ndakamena ibānga ntagutôrera abagabo. Jèwé iyó ndamúkiwe kó adaherána ?

The opening move is a YES/NO question. A would like to know if B has given the school fees to their young brother. The response move is an evasive answer to the first one. He does not say overtly YES or NO, but A understands that he has not done what he ought to do. As a justification, he says that it is early to pay that. From B's utterance, it is clear that he considers the matter carelessly. In contrast, A considers it very seriously. He is shocked by A's response and condemns him. He knows that a student who does not pay school fees is expelled from shool. A warns B that if the child is dismissed, there will be a meeting of wisemen to debate on B's case. It is a threat to B because someone who is brought to that assembly is taken for impossible and people lose trust in him.

In order to show the degree of the threat, he uses a swearing expression that he could not violate in any case. Instead of giving up his honour, A would not hesitate to call wisemen together. The last part of the utterance shows why A is angry with B. It is a complaint to B because A is always in order when it is his turn.

Translation

A : Did you give the school fees to the child ?
B : He will pay that later, it is just at the beginning of the year.
A : If he is dismissed for that, May I lose virtue if I don't summon a wisemen assembly to debate on your case. Why is he always in order when it is my turn to pay for him ?

Situation 30

Two men in conversation.
A : Mbé shă wŭmvirije irādiyo kare ?
B : Eka kubêra ikí ?
A : Wâ mugabo mukorána yăpfûye
B : Oya !
A : Ndakamena ibānga

A's question is a preparation for another speech act. B's reply is a refusal with an elicitation of the intended speech act. The next utterance, namely the prepared one is an information. A communicates to B that the man working with the latter is dead. B does not believe A and denies the information. In order to remove the doubts, A uses the swearing expression "ndakamena ibānga" "May I lose virtue". The swearing is used as an assurance and reinforcement.

Translation

A : Did you listen to the radio this morning ?
B : No. Why ?
A : The man who works with you is dead.
B : It can't be !
A : May I lose virtue.

Situation 32

Two men meeting at Musaga Bus Station.

A. Mpa lĭft Maríko tudūgáne.
M. Ndakamena ibānga utōba untábāye
Ahāntu nagirá mfaté iki kibarabara jênyené...
A. Aríko ní ukurí navyūtse nêzá.

A is waiting for a bus at Musaga Bus Station to go up country. He sees a man (called Marc) who has a car. The first move is a request for a lift. It is obvious that A and Marc know each other and A knows where Marc is going. The proof is that he does not ask him the direction he is taking. Marc immediately agrees with him and expresses his joy because he was not pleased to leave alone. Marc's answer is an approval strengthened by a swearing expression. He even exxagerates and thanks A for his request. In normal circumstances, it is the person who gets a positive answer to his request who should thank his interlocutor and not the opposite. The last move is A's assertion. It is not frequent to find a lift going up country, therefore he calls it a chance for him.

In this situation, the swearing expression is used as a reinforcement of the approval.

Translation

A. : Marc, can you give me a lift up country ?
M. May I lose virtue if I don't appreciate your company. I was about to take this long journey alone.
A. How lucky I am today !

(8) Ndakava mu bāntu
May I be banished.

The expression literally runs as "May I leave the society of men". It is somehow linked to the previous one. A man who violates the secret was banished from the society as a punishment. The wrong doer may leave the society physically or psychologically. He may be exiled or tortured morally so that he is ashamed to be with others. He is considered as a worthless man. He is no more paid respect and honour due to men.

The force of the expression may vary from one context to another. The following situations are illustrative.

Situation 5

At Kamenge Bus Station. After work, a man is waiting for a bus to go home 18 kilometers away. His friend, passing by, advises him to give up the habit.

A. : Erega udápânzé inó ntúzõkóra imisi yöse utâha ngo ubishobóre.
B. : Utábẽshá ?
A. : Ndakava mu bântu wíshĩnze umugoré hakagira icó úzõvamwó. Uzõkorera itike gusa ?

B is waiting for a bus to go home. He leaves at 18 kilometers from Kamenge. After work he always takes the bus. A disapproves the practice. His utterance is an advice to B to give up the practice. A's answer sounds as a quest for assurance. But it can also be interpreted as a Why question to know the reasons of that disapproval. The last move is made of A's explanations to B. The practice is too expensive, all his money will be devoted to bus tickets only.

In order to reinforce the advice A swears on his existence in the society. In other words he says that he should be banished instead of giving a bad advice to his friend.

Translation

A. : If you don't rent a house, you will not be able to go home every day.
B. : Is that true ?
A. : May I be banished if you will manage to see your wife at home everyday and get money to do something else. All your money will be devoted to bus tickets only.

Situation 28

A sister and her brother, new student at U.B.
Sister : Piwá, yâ Kravâte yá ba pwâle wayishize hé ?
(A threatening look from his brother)
(smiling) Wari ubêrewe kwêri !
Brother : Ndakava mu bântu wê ntâkuvunaguye.
Wã mu neyânte we uri nîvyo untwênga ?
Sister (still smiling) Egó sháza !

New students at the U.B. are called "stinkers" whereas old ones are called "wisemen". At the begining of the academic year, "wisemen " organize a kind of initiation ceremonies in which "stinking" students are prepared to become "wisemen" and integrate in the new society. They are told to do funny things in order to become less shy. For instance, the necktie is made of a pair of shoes fastened by shoe-laces or any other cord. They are then worn as necktie.

In the first move, the sister alludes to the ceremonies. The utterance is a teasing of her brother about his initiation. The brother does not want to be mocked by a person who has not been initiated because such a person is called "worthless". In the second move, he threatens the sister to beat her. He even uses a swearing expression to show that he is serious. Such a threat is intended to stop the laughing. Yet,

the sister does not consider it seriously. She goes on teasing him and this time she acts herself as a "wiseman". The last utterance is a comedy played to the brother to make fun of him.

As a conclusion, we can say that the swearing expression in this situation functions as an intensifier. It strengthens the assertion made by the brother and the whole utterance becomes a threat. Yet, it fails to achieve its goal.

Translation

S. You "Stinking student", where have you put the "wisemen's" necktie ?
How well put you were !

B. May I be banished if I don't beat you next time. You "worthless", do you have to laugh at me ?

S. Do smarten (yourself) up !

(9) Ndagasara
May I be mad.

The expression is literally understandable. It comes from the verb gusara meaning "be mad". It can have many illocutionary forces depending on the context. For instance, if it expresses surprise in situation 25 it is used as an assurance in situation 31.

Situation 31

A conversation between two roommates at the University Campus.

A. : Hewé aka ga sashe ní rwâwé ?
B : (looks at it but gives no answer)

A. : Ngira ndagaté ?
B. : Ugakūye hé ?
A. : Aha imbere y'úmwāngo
B. : Mhm !
(confused) Oyaaa...
A. : Ndagasara. Have ndagaté rēró.

The conversation turns around a small bag found near the door. A asks B if it is hers. B does not answer because she does not know exactly if it is hers or not. As many of those bags resemble each other, we may think that B also has such a bag. When A sees that B does not react, she interprets the silence as a No and asks to throw it away. B is still uncertain. In order to know exactly the solution to take, she asks A where it was found. From this question, it is obvious that there exist some places where her bag could be kept and other unexpected places where it cannot be. A's information does not remove B's doubts. We realize that B has thought that it was hers but the information she gets does not confirm it. That place is unexpected, and the bag cannot be hers. The last move of the exchange is intended to assure B.

In this context, the swearing expression ndagasara "may I be mad" aims at assuring B that A is telling the truth.

Translation

A : Is the small bag yours ? (No answer)
Can I throw it away ?
B : Where do you take it from ?
A : Here in front of the door
B : Mhm ! Really ?
A : May I be mad. So I throw it away.

Situation 25

Two women meet and one tells the other that their friend has delivered.

A : Warûmvîse kó Sabiná yavyâye ?
B : Ndagasara !
Ntiyîmariye murí...(trying to count on her fingers)
A (interrupts her) Eé, nõné kirazira kugênda ufíse inda?
B : Aríko ntâ na kímwe cǎboneka.

The opening move can be seen as an informing question. A would like to know if B already knows the news that she wants to tell her. But at the same time she tells the news. B is very surprised and utters a swearing expression. It can be interpreted as a display of astonishment. According to her, it was early for their friend to deliver. The counting on fingers is the means to know exactly the number of months after marriage. Although it sounds as a question, A's utterance is an explanation of the situation. She delivers early because she got married when she was already pregnant. From B's reply, we realize that she knows that such cases happen. The doubts are due to the fact that her pregnancy could not be seen.

It is clear that in this situation, the swearing expression has the illocutionary force of displaying astonishment.

Translation

A : Have you heard that Sabina delivered ?
B : May I go crazy !
Didn't she marry in...
A : So, is it forbidden to get married when one is already pregnant ?
B : But it seemed that it was not the case.

(10) Ndakĩshāka umugeni mũ nda.
May I marry my daughter.

The expression literally means "May I search a bride in my belly". Its real meaning is not very different from the literal one insofar as it is "May I marry my daughter". It is a euphemism referring to incestuous relations between a father and his daughter. That incest may not be committed one day but the whole life.

Such an expression is the proper of men and is not used frequently.

Situation 29

In a theater. The play is intitled «NZOKIRANTEVYE» written by Emmanuel MUYEHE and BARINDOGO.

NZORIPFIRA : Mbĕga NTARUKUNDO ntíwõreka uryá mwâna kumúburabuza ukamuha itõngo akĩrimira ?

NTARUKUNDO : Ndakĩshāka umugeni mũ nda akazõmbonakõ namba. Ntiyõja kwã sé ?

NTARUKUNDO is the husband of NZOKIRANTEVYE's mother but not his father. NZOKIRANTEVYE lives with his mother at NTARUKUNDO's. NZORIPFIRA is NTARUKUNDO's neighbour. He always observes how the latter illtreats NZOKIRANTEVYE.

The opening move is an advice to his neighbour so that he changes his behaviour towards the child. Instead of torturing the child, he should give him his own land to cultivate, and thereby live on his own. NTARUKUNDO's response is a categorical refusal to the suggestion. He swears that he would commit incest his whole life instead of giving the land to the child. Considering the place of incest in Burundian

culture, we can infer that NZOKIRANTEVYE will never get the land. According to him, the child should go to his own father instead of staying with his mother. NTARUKUNDO's firm decision is dictated by his culture. In normal circumstances, children inherit from their father's and not from their mother's family.

In this situation, the swearing expression is used to make the refusal absolute.

Translation

NZORIPFIRA : Please NTARUKUNDO, why would not you let that child in peace and give him his own land to cultivate ?

NTARUKUNDO : May I marry my daughter if he will get anything from me. Why wouldn't he go to his father's ?

(11) Ndakâmbura abakwé
May I unclothe my sons-in-law.

The expression literally runs as "May I unclothe my sons-in-law". Its deep meaning is to have sexual intercourse with one's sons-in-law.

When the expression is used in context, it can vary from one illocutionary force to the other as we can see in the following situations.

Situation 21

A mother reprimanding her daughter.

Mother : Mukamá wânje ! Mbĕ wâ mukŏbwa inzu ntírâkúbûrwa ?
(The daughter bends her head and does not answer).

Wazîndutse urakóra ikí ?

(The daughter does not answer).

Ndakãmbura abakwé wě hakagira icó uzõvamwó.

Icăsame c´ícăsame !

It is about noon. The mother comes back home and finds the house not yet cleaned. She cannot believe her eyes. She asks the daughter if the house has not been cleaned yet. Indeed, it is not a real question because she sees it herself. It is rather a severe remark addressed to her. The daughter understands the remark and does not reply. She somehow recognizes that she misbehaved and has nothing to say. If she says something, she would increase her mother´s anger and get in trouble. To bend the head is the expression of the shame she feels. The mother goes on asking the reason of such a behaviour. She probably thinks that the daughter might have a particular problem. Yet, the daughter does not say anything. The silence of the daughter shows that she cannot find any explanation to that. The mother gets very angry and begins to reprimand her. She asserts that her child will become nothing because she is very spoiled. In order to show how serious she is, the mother swears that if the daughter does not live miserably, she should be considered as one who had sex with her sons-in-law. It is a strong utterance showing the degree of anger.

The swearing expressions is at the same time a bet and a reinforcement.

Translation

Mother : My God ! Is not the house cleaned at this hour?
What did you do the whole morning ?
May I unclothe my sons-in-law if you won´t become anything. A spoiled girl like you !

Situation 14

A mother and her daughter.

Mother : Mbě hamwé nagútuma ejó warábabônye ?
Daughter (smiling) Yooh, mâ...
Ndakâmbura bâ bakwé bâwe ntǎvyībagiye.
Mother (smiling) Ipu urákīyambura wã musazi we.
Wewé ubona uzôrônka abakwé ?

This is a relaxed conversation between a mother and her daughter. The first utterance is a YES/NO question addressed to the daughter. Her mother wants to know if she found the men she was sent to look for. Unfortunately, the daughter has been nowhere. She has forgotten. Her exclamation shows that she remembers it just at that moment. The anticipated smile is a kind of excuse to charm her mother. In order to be more credible, she uses a swearing expression actually used by old people. She herself modifies it, and instead of saying her own sons-in-law she says her mother's sons-in-law. This is a sign that the expression is used as a joke. The mother also takes it as a joke and comments on it. In a happy mood, she insults her daughter and tells her that she will not get sons-in-law. From this utterance, a bystander may have two alternatives. The first one is that the mother did not hear the modification and thinks that the daughter may unclothe her own sons-in-law. The second is that the mother says that her daughter won't be married, and the mother will not get a son-in-law. The mother does not really insult her, it is but a verbal utterance intending to tease her.

Thus, the swearing expression is played with in this situation. It functions like a swearing but it is not really one. It may be intended to show that she is saying the truth.

Translation

M : Did you see the men I sent you to look for ?
D : I'm sorry, mummy...
May I unclothe your sons-in-law if I did not forget it.
M : May you unclothe yourself, you foolish girl.
Do you think that you will have sons-in-law ?

Situation 12

An old woman to her grandchildren.
Grandmother : Bǎne, vyūka munywé amatá.
One grandchild : Aratêtse ?
Grandmother : Aracâshûshe ního bagihāzá
The grandchild : Erega twě ntítunywá ayadátētsé.
Grandmother : Ndakāmbura abakwé mútayanyôye
mukazŏgaruka ngǎha
Murabóna...
Ndabáha amatá mukayânka.

The opening move is the grandmother's invitation to his grandchildren to drink milk. The following move is a question stating the condition to drink milk. The grandmother thinks that they want milk and tells them that it is still fresh from the cow. Her utterance is an information about the state of the milk. The child makes explicit the condition that she has misunderstood. They do not want fresh milk or hot milk but boiled milk. They do not drink unboiled milk.

In Burundian traditional society, it was forbidden to boil milk because it was said that cows would have less milk. Even nowadays very old people do not like to do it. On the opposite, the young generations do not understand how they

could drink unboiled milk with all the germs it is supposed to have. So, there is a generation gape in this situation.

The last move is a threat to the children followed by a complaint. The grandmother threatens the children that they will never be allowed to come back if they do not obey her. She complains about two things. First of all, they are disobedient to her. Second, they refuse milk. Nobody can refuse milk in traditional society because it was highly valued. Refusing milk is a sign of impoliteness and contempt towards the person who offers it. The two things irritate her and she expresses threat before the complaint.

The swearing expression is used to give weight to the whole utterance. It is a reinforcement of the threat and an assurance that she means what she says.

Translation

G.M. : Children, come and drink milk.
G.C. : Is it boiled ?
G.M. : It is fresh from the cows.
G.C. : We do not drink unboiled milk
G.M. : If you don't drink it,May I unclothe my sons-in-law if you will come back here.
Do you realise this ? I give you milk and you refuse it !

(12) Imâna impane'
May God punish me just now.

The expression is understandable. The main verb is guhana "to punish". It bears some resemblance with the expression in (6) but this one is stronger than the latter. Whereas the punishment may come at any time in (6) it is asked at the moment of utterance in (12).

Its illocutionary forces vary from one situation to another. The situations 6 and 19 are illustrative.

Situation 6

A woman talking to her babysitter.

Woman : Ngo undăbire kâ gakănzu kă jŏne k'ûmwâna.
Babysitter : Narábuze iyó kăgîye.
Woman : Egó Imâna impané karaméze amaguru !
Izi zó zirîndiriye ikí ?

The conversation opens by an order. The woman would like to have the yellow child's dress. The next utterance is a negation of the felicity conditions. Indeed, the babysitter is supposed to know where she has to go in order to bring the dress. Yet, she is unable to do it because she ignores "where it has gone". She is not complying with the request. The woman sticks to the literal meaning and makes an ironical remark. She does swear that the dress has got legs to go in another place. She wonders why other clothes do not go like that one. In any case, clothes cannot have legs. But the woman pretends to assert it categorically in adding a swearing expression. She is being ironic to tell the babysitter that she is saying nonsense. The expression does not have at all its meaning. Indeed, in this situation she says, "May God punish me just now if the dress has not got legs". She cannot mean what she says because she is convinced that the dress cannot have legs. It is another way of saying "Look carefully, it must be where you put it".

The swearing expression is used to express irony.

Translation

Woman : Come and find the child's yellow dress for me.
Babysitter : I don't know where it has gone.
Woman : May God punish me just now if the dress has

not got legs.
What are these ones waiting for ?

Situation 19

A conversation between sisters.

A : Mbĕga kó utarâkóra mũ nzu ?
B (surprised) Eeh !
Wĩbagiye kó arí we uramúkiwe ?
A : Indé ? Jĕwé ?
Nĩmba usára.
B : Imâna impané nkagĕnda ndáhakoze
Ahó wampêndeye nărushe.

Although the first utterance looks like a question, it intends more to remind than to have a given answer. B's reply is a violation of the Maxim of Manner. To a question, she responds by a question. From B's utterance we understand that A has also flouted the Maxim of Quality. She asks B why she does not clean the house while she believes that it was not B's turn. The following set of questions negate the assertion made indirectly by B. She adds to that a severe remark «nimba usára» "Probably you are crazy" in order to forbid her to speak again. Yet B goes on protesting. She can no longer stand A's tricks. She is determined not to clean the house whatever may happen. She asserts that she is ready to endure God's punishment instead of cleaning the house.

In this situation, the swearing expression is used to express a categorical refusal.

Translation

A : Why haven't you cleaned the house yet ?
B : Sorry ?

Did you forget that it is your turn ?
A : Who ? I ? Probably you're crazy.
B : May God punish me just now if I clean it.
I am tired of your tricks.

(13) Nsegé
May I climb

This expression is used in the north of the country, especially in the province of Kayânza. It is an elliptical form of Nsegé isêngero "may I climb the church". In religious societies, the church is a holy place. For a christian, climbing up a church is a great sacrilege. It turned out to be a swearing expression like in the following situation.

Situation 24

Two neighbouring ladies.

A : Bimwé nagútuma kw'îsóko warânzániye ?
B : Egó mugá nasânze arí amajana ané.
A : Itu ?
B : Nsegé mberé.

The opening move is a request. A does not want to be informed, it is a polite way to remind B to give A what she bought for her. B's utterance is a positive answer to the request. She adds an information to that. The price was four hundred francs. The news surprised B who asks for confirmation.

The swearing expression is used for that purpose. It is intended to assure A that B is telling the truth. It can also be interpreted as a reinforcement of the information.

Translation

A : Did you bring me from the market
what I asked you ?
B : Yes, but it costs four hundred francs.
A : Really ?
B : May I climb the church.

(14) Ní ízína ry'Imâna
It is God's name.

The literal meaning corresponds to the real meaning of the expression in isolation. But when it is put in specific situations, its intended meaning may differ from the real one. Let us illustrate this by the following situation.

Situation 23

A conversation between sisters

Elder sister : Câ gitabo wãgĩye kukĩnzánira ?
Young sister : Oya ndagẽnda hãnyuma
Elder sister : Ní ízína ry'Imâna utákĩzanye ubu nyéne tutĩhûrira
Ako sí akagayé ní ukurênza.

The first move is a YES/NO question functioning as a request. The elder sister would like to get the book. The young sister has not yet brought it. Her utterance is a denial of the previous utterance. She does not comply with the request at the moment but expresses a will to do it later. The elder sister gets angry. In normal circumstances, young persons have to obey to their elders at the moment of the order. The elder sister thinks that her sister failed to execute the order because the latter does not respect her. The last move expresses her anger

and threat towards the disobedient sister. The swearing expression emphacises the threat.

Translation

E.S. : Did you go and bring me the book ?
Y.S. : Not yet. I will go afterwards.
E.S. : I swear you in God's name that you will feel my anger if you don't go just now. It is more than undervaluation.

(15) Ní ukurí kw'Imâna
It is God's Truth.

There is no use to explain the meaning ; it is transparent. In normal circumstances, it is used to prove one's truthfulness as in situation 20.

Situation 20

In a bar a group of four men arrive.

One man : Hewé zana udutébe tuné n'ákamêza hãnyuma uduhamágarire veterinêre.
Waiter : Mugabo ntâgisígaye.
Another man : Egó zana. Ubibîkiye ndé ?
Waiter : Eka <u>ní ukurí kw'Imâna</u> nkabáhẽnda.

The first move sounds as an order given to the waiter. Yet, it is more a request than an order. The men would like to have seats first and then talk to the "veterinary". The latter is the waiter in charge of preparing brochettes in bars. In other words, they want to order brochettes. The next move is a negative answer to the last part of the request. The use of the word "but" is significant. The utterance sounds as "I can call the `veterinary' but he does not have meat". The men do not believe the waiter. The second man's utterance seems to be an

order rather than a request. The waiter realises that he is not believed. He decides to use a swearing expression in order to convince them. He compares what he says to God's truth. In other words, he means that what he says is similar to what God would tell them at that moment. As God is virtuous he cannot tell lies. The expression is used as a reinforcement of what has been said before.

Translation

M1 : Waiter, bring us four chairs and one table. And call the "veterinary" for us.
W : But there is nothing left.
M2 : Please be quick. For whom do you keep that ?
W : It is God's Truth, I am not telling you lies.

(16) Umůnsi wankôkōye.
The day that took away everything that I had.

A day cannot take anything or perform any act. The expression can be understood only if we assume that something can be taken on a certain day. Considered as the reference of the event, the day is finally associated to the actor of the day. The day on which a bad event happens is considered as a swearing, that is, something that people would not like to see again or to experiment.

Like all swearing expressions, the force of such an expression depends on the speaker's attitude. Let us analyse for instance its use in situation 3.

Situation 3

An old woman is complaining about her crops which have been destroyed by cows.

Old woman : Oyá umůnsi wankôkōye... Oyá, oyá
(shaking her head and going to and fro)
Neighbour : Mběga NYANDWI kó wîdôga ní amakí ?
Old woman : Ni yâ maséma yá TOYI yandagíriye imirimá.
Mhm ! Ngwaháno ico undăbira wã mukŏbwa we !
(showing the crops) Ehée... Rãba iri bára
rãba iri bára. Ndakãmbura ikizíra uyu můsi
hó rudacá abagabo.

The old woman's utterance is a complaint. She is shocked by the fact that her crops were destroyed by cows. It can also be interpreted as a protest about the children's behaviour. The utterance can be also interpreted as a display of anger. It is not the first time that the act is committed. Further information are given in the last part of the conversation : uyu musi hó "this day" shows that the same scene happened on other days. The next move is an enquiry. It is followed by explanation of the complaint or protest. Moreover, there is an invitation to come nearer and realize the matter. The swearing expression "May I be incestuous" shows that the situation has become unbearable. Calling upon the wisemen assembly is in any case comparable to being incestuous. The first act is normal and frequent whereas the second is taboo. The swearing expression is used as an emphasis of her decision. All the two expressions intend to show that she is determined to stop such a habit, namely to let cows destroy her crops.

Translation

Old woman : No, no,...
The day that took away everything
I had, no, no,...
Neighbour : Please NYANDWI, what are you complaining
about ?
Old woman : It is TOYI's badly behaved children who let
cows destroy my crops. Please, come and see
yourself.

Look here, look....
May I be incestuous if it is not settled by the wisemen assembly today.

(17) Umŭsi mubi
The sad day

It means the day on which the person who swears got seriously troubled. The memory of the day is a sad one.

In normal circumstances, such an expression is used by old people. Its force depends on the context in which it is used. For instance, situation 27 is one of the use of such a swearing.

Situation 27

An old woman and her grandson.

Grandson : Nyogóku, ndagîye ku Muhwĕza rēró ?
Grandmother : Sinakubwîye kó uzôgênda ejó ?
Grandson : Eka ntáco ndíko ndakora ndígîriye.
Grandmother : Umŭsi mubí ntŭrēnge ngăhoo.
Ntíwōfata indóbo ukaja kuvōma ?
(He gives up).

The opening move is a request followed by a refusal, and then a protest against that measure. The grandson's utterance can also be interpreted as an insistance said in less polite words. This can be explained by the relations of familiarity existing between grandparents and grandchildren in Burundian culture. The grandmother's reply in the last move breaks the familiarity relations or the protesting attitude. The reference to "the sad day" marks a categorical refusal. In other words she says, "if you don't want me to remember the sad day, please do what I tell you". The remembrance of such a day may irritate her and she can punish the child emotionally. It

also constitutes a threat. If the child does not obey, he can be inflicted a punishment. The grandson understands that he can get in trouble and cancels the request.

3.3.2. Summary of Illocutionary Forces

So far, we have been dealing with the meaning of swearing expressions in contexts. We have analysed the acts performed and thereby their illocutionary forces. The reader may have realized that those forces vary from one situation to another, and not from one swearing expression to another. This is to say that there exists no conventional connection between each swearing and each illocutionary force. Depending on context one swearing expression can have more than one illocutionary force as Searle (1969) states it.

Moreover, we have realized that in some cases, the swearing expressions function as intensifiers. They show how more or less the speaker is commited. Thus, their illocutionary forces depend on the action intended by the speaker.

Now, let us summarize the illocutionary forces we found in the previous interpretation.

1° Assurance

In order to remove all possible doubts, the speaker communicates to the hearer that what he tells is true. He somehow invites his addressee to be certain and believe him.

For instance, in situation 30, A tells B that the man who works with B is dead. B does not believe him and seems to deny the information. In order to convince him, he uses a swearing expression to show that he is telling the truth.

2° Reinforcement

Swearing expressions rarely occur in isolation. Frequently, they are intended to strengthen what is said or what has been said before, to put emphasis on that. For instance in situation 15 the father tells the son that as a result of his delaying, he will spend the night outside. The swearing expression is intended to tell the son that he is serious in what he says.

3° Threat

The speaker is not satisfied of the addressee's behaviour. He announces the addressee that something harmful or unpleasant will happen to him if he does not change his behaviour and act as the speaker desires.

In the previous example for instance, the father swears to his son that he will spend the night outside if he does not change his behaviour and come home early. The expression is used at the same time as a reinforcement and as a threat.

4° Absolute Refusal

The speaker tells the addressee that he totally disagrees with him and cannot behave in his interest. He displays unwillingness to cooperate.

For instance, in situation 8, the old woman who is asked to pay money for his bag refuses categorically. She swears that she would exhume her child instead of giving that money.

5° Irony

In order to cause offence politely or give a severe remark indirectly, the speaker may use swearing expressions ironically. Most of the time, he uses exaggerations or understatements.

For example in situation 6, the babysitter says that she does not know where the dress has gone. When her mistress does swear that it has got legs, she is giving a remark that the babysitter is telling nonsense.

6° Display of Astonishment

The speaker learns something causing great surprise. He does not say overtly that he is astonished but shows it by uttering a swearing expression. It is intended to show that the news or event was unexpected.

For instance in situation 25, A tells B that their friend has delivered. The swearing expression shows that the news causes great surprise to her. In other words, it invites the hearer to realise how surprising this is.

7° Display of Familiarity

Swearing expressions can be used to show familiarity between the speaker and the hearer (i.e. addressee). The speaker talks in impolite way or uses the swearing expressions where it is not necessary. It is uttered as a reflex-action between familiar persons.

For instance in situation 13, N calls his friends dogs. As a reply, one of his friend says, "Mwíshwãnje wehó utãbãye ikibûnda "i.e. "May I sleep with my niece if you have not become a doggie". None of them can be dog or doggie, it is but an expression of familiarity.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Throughout this work, we have tried to deal with a pragmatic analysis of Kirundi swearing expressions. We have analysed their uses in conversation and tried to find out their illocutionary forces. Let us summarize briefly the major points of articulation.

In the first chapter of this work, we have introduced the problem and some preliminaries useful to our study. We have acquainted the reader with existing studies related to swearing expressions. We have seen that according to KAZUNGU (1985) swearing expressions are part of wishes, and especially ill wish. Moreover, they bear some similarities with another kind of ill wish, namely insulting expressions. The main difference is that swearing expressions refer to the speaker while insulting expressions refer to any other person except the speaker. In other words, swearing expressions are always in the first person singular whereas the insults can be either in the second or the third persons singular or plural. When insulting expressions are used in contexts, their illocutionary forces vary from one situation to another. They can be used as a reinforcement, threat, reprimand, display of hatred, violent refusal, disappointment and banter.

The second chapter deals with the methodology followed in this study. Working in the framework of pragmatics, we have paid particular attention to some basic notions which served us either to collect data or to analyse them. We have attempted to define pragmatics and kept close to Levinson (1983) to avoid the wide variety of definitions. Although he gives many definitions, the more general 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 talked about the relations between pragmatics and semantics. We have seen that pragmatics can be considered as the study of utterance-meaning while semantics is

the study of sentence-meaning. Considering the relation existing between a sentence and an utterance, we have seen that there must be an interaction between the two branches of linguistics. We have seen how pragmatics can resolve some problems that may encounter semanticists thanks to the analysis of the context in which utterances occur. It goes without saying that in the collection of data, we have taken into consideration the role of context. Considering that in social conversation, the intended meaning is not always unveiled, we have reviewed conversational implicature and especially Grice's Cooperative Principle. Another point which took our particular attention is the theory of speech acts according to Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). Among the four types of speech acts, our focus has been the illocutionary act. As any act is associated with one or more than one particular force, we have been interested by illocutionary forces carried by swearing expressions in contexts. Apart from the theoretical framework which is in the first section, the chapter of methodology also states the way we have collected our data, the way we have transcribed them and the difficulties we encountered. While analysing data, we have tried to follow Ronald Wardhaugh's model who views conversation not as a sequence of utterances but of speech acts.

In the last and most important chapter of this work, we have analysed the swearing expressions on three levels, namely the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels. Although the third one was our focus, we have decided to deal briefly with the two others because they are all complementary. Indeed as Dijk (1971 : 190) states it, the syntax provides the well formedness conditions for utterances, the semantics meaningfulness and reference conditions and pragmatics the successfulness conditions.

At the syntactic level, we have seen that swearing expressions can fall under three main forms, namely the optative, the subjunctive and declarative sentences with the copula. In case of Kirundi swearing expressions, the optative and the subjunctive express an ill wish. Swearings with the copula verb

are either equative or non equative sentences. In any case, they refer to a taboo which cannot be transgressed.

At the semantic level, we have tried to make explicit the meaning of some swearing expressions in Burundian context. Swearing expressions are of great value and are used by speakers to state that what they say is really true ; that they would transgress the taboo instead of telling lies. We have also seen that bald swearing expressions or those related to sex are commonly used by men ; women's swearings are euphemisms.

At the pragmatic level, we have seen that swearing expressions are used uncharacteristically. If we consider their meaning, swearing expressions are normally ill wishes. Yet they may function as intensifiers to reinforce something already said, to make a statement ironic, to make a refusal categorical or to strengthen a threat. For instance, the utterances like "ndagútõrera abagabo" (I will call a wisemen's assembly to debate your case" and "Ndakamena ibãnga ntagutõrera abagabo" which is translated as "May I lose virtue if I don't call the wisemen's assembly to debate your case" are somehow different. The first one seems to be an assertion. In the second utterance, the swearing expression reinforces the assertion and makes it a threat. We have also seen that swearing expressions can be used as the sole element to confirm one's saying or to show great surprise. We have seen some cases where swearing expressions are played on, i.e. they are modified and look like swearings whereas they are not really ones. The utterance "Ndakãmbura bâ bakwé bãwe" (may I unclothe your sons-in-law) said by a daughter to her mother is illustrative. On the whole, we have seen that the illocutionary forces of those expressions are regulated by the context in which they occur. Such a regulation is possible thanks to the inferences drawn from the same context.

In this work, our focus has been the analysis of Kirundi swearing expressions in contexts. Nevertheless, we cannot expect to have exhausted the subject. The constraint of time limitation did not allow us to push the study further. If we had time, we would like to extend the analysis on a large number of situations in order to get more information. Moreover, the use and meanings of swearing expressions in Burundian culture have not been analysed deeply. For instance, why men use bald terms relating to sex and women euphemisms remains a question worth researching on. We hope our modest study to be supplemented by further research on other aspects of the subject such as the syntactic or stylistic one, to name but a few.

APPENDIX CORPUS

Situation 1

Two friends A and B.

B : Mbĕga wā muhŭngu wavúga musigáye mubāna yĭtwa ndé ?

A : Mwĭshwānje nkamumenya

B : Mhm ! (looking surprised)

A : Eka mwĭshwānje (expressing denial with his head)

T : - What is the name of your new neighbour ?
- May I enter my niece's house if I know it.
- Mhm ! (Really ?)
- May I enter my niece's house.

Situation 2

A mother had asked her daughter to carry bottles somewhere. About noon she finds that her daughter has not done it yet.

Mother (surprised) Mbĕga ntŭze yâ macupá aracâri ngăho?
Ndagahanwa mberé... (threatening look)
Makuraa... Icó ntakubwĭye umutíma urakúbwĭra

Daughter (apologizing tone) Eregá măma nabānje kubúra amâzi.

Mother : Urakabura abâna. Abăndi bakŏbwa bĭyoga sāsitá? (she gets in the house angry and the daughter hurries up to carry the bottles).

T : - Are the bottles still there ?
May I be punished if...
Maggy, your heart will tell you what I don't do.
- Mummy, it took a long time to find water.

- May you never find your children.
  Do other girls wash themselves at noon ?

Situation 3

An old woman is complaining about her crops which have been destroyed by cows.

Old woman : Oyá umŭnsi wankôkōye... oyá, oyá
(shaking her head and going to and fro).
Neighbour : Mbĕga NYANDWI ko' wîdôga ní amakí ?
Old woman : Ni yâ maséma ya' TOYI yandagíriye imirimá
Mhm ! Ngwaháno icó wîrâbira wâ mukŏbwa we !
(showing the crops) Ehée... Rāba iri bára, rāba iri bára. Ndakāmbura ikizíra uyu mŭsi hó rudacá abagabo.

T : - No, no...
The day that took away everything I had, no, no..
- Please NYANDWI, what are you complaining about ?
- It is TOYI's badly behaved children who let cows destroy my crops
Please, come and see yourself. Look here, look,..
May I be incestuous if it is not settled by the wisemen assembly today.

Situation 4

After classes, two lecturers at University.

A : Mbĕ shă wānzaniye câ gitabo cānje ?
B : Mwîshwānje nkaba nîbuka n'ûkó arí ie nagítwāve.

T : - Dear friend, did you bring me my book ?
- May I enter my niece's house if I remember having taken it.

Situation 5

At Kamenge Bus Station. After work, a man is waiting for a bus to go home 18 kilometers away.

A : Erega udápānzé inó ntúzōkóra imĭsi yöse utâha ngo ubishobóre.
B : Utábēshá ?
A : Ndakava mu bāntu wíshĭnze umugoré hakagira icó úzōvamwó. Uzōkorera itike gusa ?
T : - If you don't rent a house, you will not be able to go home everyday.
- Is that true ?
- May I be banished if you will manage to see your wife at home everyday and get money to do something else. All your money will be devoted to bus tickets only.

Situation 6

A woman talking to her babysitter.

Woman : Ngo undăbire kâ gakănzu kã jŏne k'ûmwâna.
Babysitter : Narábuze iyó kăgĭye.
Woman : Egó Imâna impané kăraméze amaguru ! Izi zó zirĭndiriye ikí ?

- Come and find the child's yellow dress for me.
- I don't know where it has gone.
- May God punish me just now if the dress has not got legs. What are these ones waiting for ?

Situation 7

In a basketball game, one player who is hurt by someone from the opposite team says angrily :

Mãmá mberé ugasubira kŭmfata tudacá turwãnira aha nyéne (the other gets away in silence).

T : I swear on my mother's honour that we will fight just here if you hold me again.

Situation 8

At the central market a bus stops and people get out with their luggage. The ticket-collector demands money for heavy luggage.

Ticket-collector : Hewé zana amafrånga amajana abiri y'úmuzígo

Old woman : Ndakazûra umwânânje ukãntõrako n'ímeya. Aka gafúko níko karêmêreye gusûmba ayo mashákŏshi ?

Ticket-collector : Niyó matégeko.

Old woman : Nsubiza iyó wankŭye ndâzi ko arí vyo mwĩtwâza. Nayó amatégeko ntáyo nzi.

T : - Please, give me two hundred francs for that luggage.
- May I exhume my child if you get any penny from me. Is this small bag heavier than all those briefcases ?
- That is the rule.
- I do ignore your rules. Take me back home if you wish, I know what you always say.

Situation 9

Two houseboys.

S : Nyugururira Busóko... (knocking at the door)

B : Eh' ? Mãmá mberé ukarwĩnjira.

Urageze gutãhūka nka shôbuja !
Huu wá, wĭriwe hé ?
S : Nõné níwe usigáye unkôntrora ?
B : Nǎwe injíra turãbé umugabo. Ntíwõsĭmba ?

T : - Busokoza, open the door for me.
- Sorry ? I swear on my mother's honour that you cannot come in. You arrive at four like your boss!
- Where have you been all this afternoon ?
- Is it your business ?
- So, come in if you think it isn't.

Situation 10

A class deleguate and his classmates.

Deleguate : Mwâzanye yâ makărte yânyu ?
One lady : Yooh, nãyĭbagiye
Urayihitana murí shămbre midi
Deleguate : Mwĭshwãnje nkagerayo
Uzoca uyîjanira ejo.
The lady : Bǎsi ntâ kŭndi.

T : - Have you brought your cards ?
- Sorry, I forgot it
At noon, come to my room and take it.
- May I enter my niece's house if I go there
You will hand in it yourself tomorrow
- I cannot do anything else.

Situation 11

Two women in conversation.

A : Ariko wã mukŏbwa uri igitó
Ukămpēnda ntŭze ?

B : Emwe ubu ndágahanwa n'Imâna
utâgîye umbóna. Ubu akazi kātânguye kugabanuka.
A : Ha, oya ivyâwé nzōvyêmera ndábibōnye.

T : - You naughty girl, why did you deceive me that you would come ?
- Now, may God punish me if I don't come soon. I am not very busy these days.
- I won't believe you until you come.

Situation 12

An old woman to her grandchildren.

Grandmother : Bǎne vyūka munywé amatá
One Grandchild : Aratêtse ?
Grandmother : Aracáshûshe ního bagihāzá
The grandchild : Erega twé ntítunywá ayadátētsé
Grandmother : Ndakāmbura abakwé mútayanyôye
mukazōgaruka ngaha.
Murabóna ?
Ndabáha amatá mukayânka !

T : - Children, come and drink milk.
- Is it boiled ?
- It is fresh from the cows.
- We do not drink unboiled milk.
- If you don't drink it, may I unclothe my sons-in-law if you will come back here. Do you realise this ? I give you milk and you refuse it !

Situation 13

It is about noon on Sunday. There is a group of four persons who are drinking in a bar. Another person arrives and joins the group.

N (to the waiter) Mpa agatébe aho shǎ
(to the four men) Murazínyôye mwã mbwá mwe

C (smiling) Mwǐshwânje wehó utâbâye ikibûnda
Aho wari ǔkiri mu buriri ?
N : Erega síngikanya narîrônkeye uburêngeti.

T : - Waiter, bring me the chair
You dogs, you're drinking a lot
- May I enter my niece's house if you've not become a doggie. Were you still in bed at this hour ?
- Of course ! It's no more cold in my bed since I've got a blanket.

Situation 14

A mother and her daughter.
Mother : Mbě hamwé nagutúma ejó warábabônye ?
Daughter (smiling) Yooh, mâ,...
Ndakâmbura bâ bakwé bãwe ntǎvyîbagiye.
Mother (smiling) Ipu urakîyambura wã musazi we.
Wewé ubona uzôrônka abakwé ?

T : - Did you see the men I sent you to look for ?
- I'm sorry, mummy...
May I unclothe your sons-in law if I did not forget it
- May you unclothe yourself, you foolish girl
Do you think that you will have sons-in-law ?

Situation 15

A father and his son.

Father : Mběga kó usigáye utâha utévye musigara murîga ibikí abǎndi bâtâshe ?

Son : Oya ntídutebá, nari nácîye gutîra igitabo VYAMUNGU

Father : Ukimutîra indwi yöse ?
Imbwá yãnje hãnyuma utârurâye inyuma.

T : - These days you come home late.
What do you remain there studying after classes ?
- We do not delay, today I went to borrow a book from VYAMUNGU.
- Do you borrow it every day of the week ? May I eat with my dog if you won't spend the night outside next time.

Situation 16

A grandfather and his grandson.

Grandfather : Gẽnda hárya kũ ngoró undábire kó arího inâma ibẽrá
Grandson : Murí iyi mbého ?
Grandfather : Umwânânje ntakuvúnagura
Ndagútuma ukânka ga nyakúvuna umuheto ?

T : - Go to the Meeting House and look for me if the meeting will be held there
- It is very cold.
- May I lose my child if I don't beat you.
I tell you to do something and you refuse, may you lose your first son !

Situation 17

A passenger and a ticket-collector in a bus.

Ticket-collector : Vîrayo ngãha rẽró (threatening tone)
Passenger (angry) : Ndagahanwa n'Imâna nkayisohoka
Aha wanjãnye ní mu Kãmẽnge ?

Ticket-collector : Urasohoka uragasohoka igihúgu.
Passenger : Dātá azôba yávyāye nâbi.
Kiretse untérura.

T : - So get out here
- May God punish me if I leave this bus.
Are we here at Kamenge ?
- You must leave it, may you leave the country.
- Are you going to carry me ? (If I leave this bus)
my father would have got a worthless child.

Situation 18

A man talking to his houseboy.
Man : Mbĕ Minăni amahera igihūmbi yarí murí iyi pāntalo yagīye he ?
Minani : Ndakāmbura umwânānje w'úmukŏbwa nkaba nâbônye namba.
Man : Urahira ubêsha urayāzana. Uwŭndi akora mū mpŭzu zānje nî ndé ?

T : - Minani, where are the one thousand francs that I put in my trousers pocket ?
- May I unclothe my daughter if I have seen the money.
- That you swear or not, you must pay it. Who else can touch my clothes ?

Situation 19

A conversation between sisters.

A : Mbĕga kó utarâkóra mû nzu ?
B : Eeh (surprised)
Wībagiye kó aríwe uramúkiwe ?
A : Indé ? Jèwé ? Nīmba usára.

B : Imâna impané nkagēnda ndáhakoze
Ahó wampêndeye nārushe.

T : - Why haven't you cleaned the house yet ?
- Sorry ?
Did you forget that it is your turn ?
- Who ? I ? Probably you're crazy.
- May God punish me just now if I clean it.
I am tired of your tricks.

Situation 20

In a bar a group of four men arrive.

One man : Hewé zana udutébe tuné n'ákamēzá
Hānyuma uduhamágarire veterinêre.
The waiter : Mugábo ntâgisígaye.
Another man : Egó zana. Ubibīkiye ndé ?
Waiter : Eka ní ukurí kw'Imâna nkabáhēnda.

T : - Waiter, bring us four chairs and one table. And call the "veterinary" for us.
- But there is nothing left
- Please be quick. For whom do you keep that ?
- It is God's Truth, I am not telling you lies.

Situation 21

A mother reprimanding her daughter.

Mother : Mukamá wānje ! Mbě wā mukǒbwa inzu ntírākúbūrwa ?
(The daughter bends her head and does not answer).
Wazīndutse urakora ikí ?
(The daughter does not answer).
Ndakāmbura abakwé wě hakagira icó uzōvamwó.

Icăsame c'ícăsame !

T : - My God ! Is not the house cleaned at this hour ?
What did you do the whole morning ?
May I unclothe my sons-in-law if you won't become anything. A spoiled girl like you !

Situation 22

In the street, two women meet.
A (smiling) Hewé urâza muhirá gutôra ubutumwá ndagufitíye.
B (doubtful) : Nivyó ?
A : Ndagahanwa mberé.

T : - Please, I have a message for you. You can come home to pick up it.
- Is it true ?
- May I be punished.

Situation 23

A conversation between sisters.

Elder sister : Câ gitabo wâgîye kukînzánira ?
Young sister : Oya ndagênda hanyuma
Elder sister : Ní izína ry'Imâna utákĭzanye ubu nyéne tutĭhûrira.
Ako sí akagayé ní ukurênza.

T : - Did you go and bring me the book ?
- Not yet. I will go afterwards.
- I swear you in God's name that you will feel my anger if you don't go just now. It is more than undervaluation.

Situation 24

Two neighbouring ladies.

A : Bimwé nagútuma kw'ĩsóko warânzániye ?
B : Egó mugá nasânze arí amajana ané
A : Itu ?
B : Nsegé mberé

T : - Did you bring me from the market what I asked you?
- Yes, but it costs four hundred francs.
- Really ?
- May I climb the church.

Situation 25

Two women meet and one tells the other that their friend has delivered.

A : Warûmvĩse kó Sabiná yavyâye ?
B : Ndagasara !
Ntiyĭmariye murí ..... (trying to count on her fingers).
A (interrupts her)Eé, nõné kirazira kugẽnda ufíse inda?
B : Aríko ntâ na kímwe cǎboneka.

T : Have you heard that Sabina delivered ?
- May I go crazy !
Didn't she marry in....
- So, is it forbidden to get married when one is already pregnant ?
- But it seemed that it was not the case.

Situation 26

Conversation between two brothers about their youngest one.

A : Mbé wâ mwâna wâmuhâye yá mafrǎnga ?
B : Azôba arayátânga umwâka ního ugitângúra.
A : Ukabona bárînze kumwîrukana, ndakamena ibânga ntagutôrera abagabo. Jêwé iyó ndamúkiwe kó adaherána ?

T : - Did you give the school fees to the child ?
- He will pay that later, it is just the begining of the year
- If he is dismissed for that, May I lose virtue if I don't summon a wisemen assembly to debate on your case.
Why is he always in order when it is my turn to pay for him ?

Situation 27.

An old woman and her grandson.
Grandson : Nyogóku, ndagîye ku Muhwêza rêró ?
Grandmother : Sinakubwîye kó uzôgênda ejó ?
Grandson : Eka ntáco ndíko ndakóra ndígîriye.
Grandmother : Umůsi mubí ntůrênge ngǎhoo,
ntîwôfata indóbo ukaja kuvôma ?
(He gives up)

T : - Grandmother, I am going now to Muhweza.
- Didn't I tell you that you will go tomorrow ?
- I am doing nothing, so there is no reason to stay here
- Don't try to go if you don't want me to remember the sad day. Why wouldn't you go to fetch water ?

Situation 28

A sister and her brother, new student at U.B.
Sister : Piwá, yâ Kravăte yá ba pwăle wayishize hé ?
(A threatening look from his brother).
(Smiling) Wari ubērewe kwĕri !
Brother : Ndakava mu bāntu we ntâkuvunaguye.
Wā muneyânte we uri nîvyó untwĕnga ?
Sister (still smiling) Egó Sháza !

T : - You "stinking student", where have you put the "wisemen's necktie ?
How well put you were !
- May I be banished if I don't beat you next time.
You "worthless", do you have to laugh at me ?
- Do smarten (yourself) up.

Situation 29

In a theater. The play is intitled "NZOKIRANTEVYE" written by E. MUYEHE and BARINDOGO.

NZORIPFIRA : Mbĕga NTARUKUNDO ntíwŏreka urya mwâna kumúburabuza ukamúha itōngo akîrimira ?

NTARUKUNDO : Ndakīshāka umugeni mū nda akazōmbonakó namba. Ntiyōja kwā sé ?

T : - Please NTARUKUNDO, why would not you let that child in peace and give him his own land to cultivate ?
- May I marry my daughter if he get anything from me. Why wouldn't he go to his father's ?

Situation 30

Two men in conversation.
A : Mbé shă wŭmvirije irādiyo kare ?

B : Eka. Kubêra ikí ?
A : Wâ mugabo mukoránа yāpfûye.
B : Oya !
A : Ndakamena ibānga

T : - Did you listen to the radio this morning ?
- No. Why ?
- The man who works with you is dead.
- It can't be !
- May I lose virtue.

Situation 31

A conversation between two roommates at the University Campus

A : Hewé aka ga sashe ní rwâwé ?
B (looks at it but gives no answer)
A : Ngira ndagaté ?
B : Ugakūye hé ?
A : Aha imbere y'úmuryângo
B : Mhm ! Oyaaa... (confused)
A : Ndagasara. Hewe ndagaté rēró

T : - Is the small bag yours ? (No answer)
Can I throw it away ?
- Where do you take it from ?
- Here in front of the door.
- Mhm ! Really ?
- May I be mad. So, I throw it away.

Situation 32

Two men meeting at Musaga Bus Station.

A : Mpa lĭft Maríko tudūgáne
M : Ndakamena ibānga utōba untábāye
Ahāntu nagirá mfaté iki kibarabara jênyené...

A : Aríko ní ukurí navyūtse nêzá.

T : - Marc, can you give me a lift up country ?
- May I lose virtue if I don't appreciate your company. I was about to take this long journey alone.
- How lucky I am today !.

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