

Unveiling the Pragmatics of Maguindanaon Greetings

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Abstract

This study examines the pragmatics of Maguindanaon greetings using the S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. tools of situation, participants, ends, speech acts, key, instrumentality, norms of communication, and cultural or traditional speech genres, drawing from the theory of Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication (1974). This uses an ethnographic research tool to investigate how greetings function among the Maguindanaon as a sociocultural linguistic practice. Participant observation, in-depth interviews, ethnopragmatics, and reflection are all used in this inquiry. The length and content of greetings may vary depending on the situation, the setting, and the people being addressed. It could be formal or informal, simple or complex. The standard Maguindanaon pleasantries serve as a vehicle for replicating dominating politics and social stratification, which ironically also promote social bonding and reciprocity.

Keywords : Ethnography, Pragmatics, Maguindanaon Greetings, Social Stratification, Politics of Dominance

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Introduction

Greetings are employed to acknowledge the presence of another person or persons (Goffman 1971). It is frequently used in everyday social interactions. A greeting can be as simple as a nod of the head or a wave of the hand. It also can be a statement that forms an adjacency pair, where there is an initiation of contact followed by a response, which can be either verbal or nonverbal and may conclude with a warm embrace (Omar 1991).

Appropriate greeting behavior is crucial for the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. As Firth (1972:30) comments, greetings are 'a system of signs that convey other than overt messages. Greetings appear to be a universal construct that all languages engage them in some form.

Maguindanaon interaction norms include greetings that are conventionalized, predictable, communally owned and shared communicative daily activities that use specific linguistic items and performances in routinized encounters. According to Foley, greeting is a setting in which ideologies of equal relativism of culture are portrayed through linguistic practices (Foley, 1997).

The complexity and diversity of the people's customs and behaviors are expressed and described through language. A person can examine and comprehend social customs and everyday actions of a society, including greetings, by using language as a tiny lens. Language acts as a microscope, moving beyond what is communicated to what is actually practiced in the socio-cultural reality.

There are literatures already available on greetings from Africa and other regions of the world. There has been research done by Duranti (1992, 2001) on Samoan society, Ferguson (1976), Salmani-Nodoushan (2006) on English and Persian greetings, etc. in non-African societies. According to Ferguson (1976), welcomes and expressions of gratitude are considered to be a universal phenomena of human languages. However, the use and structure of the routines may vary from language to language, despite the fact that their functions may be the same (Bonvillain, 1993).

Greetings in Africa particularly among the Yoruba and the Sesotho of South Africa had been investigated by Akindele (1990, 2007), the Limba of Sierra Leone was scrutinized by Finnegan (1969), the Wolof of Senegal was explored by Irvine (1974), the Swahili was examined by Yahya-Othman (1995). In addition, Dzameshie (2002) and Egblewogbe (1990) have also conducted research among the Ewes in Ghana.

Even though the pragmatics of greetings has been conducted by some scholars from some other countries, such kind of research is under research in the Philippines and has never been conducted under the Maguindanaon context. So, there is a need to conduct a research that evaluate the types, functions, and features of greetings of the Maguindanaon people using Hyme's ethnographic framework of SPEAKING.

Using ethnography, this research will explore on greetings; its main types, features and functions; the actors involved; the specific situations for greetings; the major changes in Maguindanaon greetings; and how do the elements of S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. such as situation, participants, ends, speech acts, key, instrumentality, norms of communication as well as the

cultural or traditional speech genres constitute the ideology on social stratification among Maguindanaon?

Main Types of Greetings

Maguindanaon people usually greet both familiar and strangers as part of their lingua-cultural courtesy and etiquette.

Simple greetings

Simple greetings conclude at the level of “How are you? or even before that as in the simulated dialogue 1 below.

Dialogue 1:

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. | Mapiya malulum umie. | Mother, good eafternoon. |
| B. | Na mapiya malulum bun. | Good afternoon too. |
| A. | Ngin a betad nengka? | How’s your day? |
| B. | I am fine. | Mapiya bun. |

Complex greetings

A Maguindanaon greeting that is complex and ritualized usually develops into a discussion and discourse. Complex greetings are longer and wordy. Dialogue 2 below is a meeting between two friends that basically starts with greetings and develops into conversation.

Dialogue 2:

- | | | |
|---------------|--|---|
| Sittie Aisha: | Mariam mapiya mapita. | Mariam, good morning. |
| Mariam: | Mapiya mapita bun. | Good morning too Aisha. |
| Sittie Aisha: | Ngen a bedtad nengka? | How are you? |
| Mariam: | Na mapiya bun. Seka? | Im good. How about you? |
| Sittie Aisha: | Na mapiya bun man. Ngen a
betad sa kaluma nengka endo
so mga wata? | Doing fine too. How’s your husband and
children? |
| Mariam: | Alhamdullilah, mapiya bun.
Seka? | Thanks to Allah, they are fine. How
about yours? |
| Sittie Aisha: | Metu bun ba sa ika. Ngen
a betad so galebek nengka? | Same with you, how about your job? |
| Mariam: | Mapiya bun, alhamdullilah.
Seka? | By Allah’s grace, its ok.
How about you? |
| Sittie Aisha: | Metu bun ba. Endaw ka mangay? | Fine too. Where are you going? |
| Mariam: | Pedlu ako ba sa padian. Seka? | Im going to the market. What about you? |
| Sittie Aisha: | Mangay ako sa baryo.
Aden pagasekasuen ko | Im going to town for a transaction. |
| Mariam: | Pya pya ka bu. | Take care. |
| Sittie Aisha: | Seka bun. | Ok. Take care too. |

In this exchange of pleasantries, it includes questions about the other person's family, job, and destination. Thus, greetings could also include additional topics related to social, political, religious, economic, and educational life. The environment, venue, participants, and amount

of time available to the interlocutors can all influence the duration and format of greetings. The Maguindanaon people hold that a brief hello might lead to a more in-depth conversation.

Informal and Formal greetings

Greetings can be formal or casual depending on the situation, the people involved, and the genre (Hymes, SPEAKING). According to Ferguson (1976), politeness formulas generally vary in constituency and severity in respect to a number of social factors. Dzameshie (2002) states that the form of greetings may also be influenced by the following factors: 1) the social distance between the communicators, 2) the communicators' relative social status, power, age, and gender, 3) the number of people in the relevant groups, and 4) the amount of time since the previous encounter. The complexity of the current greetings encounter may increase with the length of time between the last interaction, and vice versa (Dzameshie, 2002; Ferguson, 1976; Irvine, 1974). Accordingly, greetings could be categorized into informal or casual and formal and ceremonial.

Informal and casual

The use of honorifics in Maguindanaon is a basic communicative form in their culture. These may denote position, power, social status, age, achievement, gender, and kinship (Agyekum, 2003). There are address forms like tuwa(grandpa/grandma) ama/abe(father), ina/umie(mother), bapa(elderly man), babo(elderly woman), datu(a man from a royal blood or with high status), bai(woman from high status), madam, doctor, attorney, etc. that are used by Maguindanaon as they utter their greetings.

Dialogue 3:

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. | Mapiya maudtu abe. | Good noon father. |
| B. | Mapiya maudtu bun. | Good noon too son. |
| A. | Ngen na bedtad nengka? | How are you? |
| B. | Mapiya bun. Na seka? | I am fine, how about you? |
| A. | Mapiya bun abe. | I am fine. |

Dialogue 4:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. | Endaw kanu ebpun Madam? | Where are you coming from Madam? |
| B. | San bu. Ngen na bedtad nengka? | Just around the corner. How are you? |
| A. | Mapiya bun manisan. | Im doing well beautiful lady. |

Dialogue 5:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A. | Endaw kanu mangay mga manisan? | Where are you going beautiful ladies? |
| B. | Lo sa eskwela manisan. | We're going to school beautiful lady. |

Maguindanaon culture uses mapiya mapita(good morning), mapiya maudtu(good noon) mapiya malulum(good evening), ngen a betad (how are you), endaw ka'b pun(where did you come fom) endaw ka mangay (where are you going), as forms of informal or casual greetings. These are uttered to acknowledge the presence of other person. These expressions are commonly heard among ordinary individuals engaged in casual conversation in the street, at the market, at the farm, or in any public space.

Formal and ceremonial greetings

Based on specific locations, participants, genre, and anthropological elements, formal and ceremonial welcomes are tied to the norms of Maguindanaon interaction. Laver (1981), after studying British English, comes to the conclusion that the choice of linguistic routine depends on the formality of the context and the nature of the interaction between the participants.

According to the theory, language used in interactions that are more formal or institutional tends to be more sophisticated (Duranti, 2001). There are some rules that must be followed in institutional settings; for example, greetings in these contexts are dependent on the circumstances. One could describe a formal welcome as a ceremony in which cultural conventions, values, and diplomacy are scrupulously observed. Schools, offices, and other official public meetings are among the formal locations.

Formal welcomes are also exchanged in meetings where the interlocutors' cultural differences and social inequities are present. Recognition of the power, rank, prestige, and other social factors ingrained in communication is predicated on the diversity of language used in human contact. It also affects language usage styles and forms. Language distinctions, according to Gumperz (1982), play a crucial positive function in signaling information as well as in establishing and sustaining the fine lines of power, position, role, and vocational distribution that are the foundation of social life (Foley 1997; Irvine, 1974; Maryns and Blommaert, 2002)

Dialogue 6:

- A. Assalamu Alaikum Bapa.
- B. Alaikumi Salam.

Maguindanaon usually employs the Arabic greetings Assalamu Alaikum which means “peace be upon you” as a form of greetings when in formal occasions or events. The appropriate response is Alaikum Missalam which means “to you also”. This form of greetings is also used when interacting with religious people such as imam, pandita or ustadz. Furthermore, it is also utilized when talking to individuals viewed to have high educational attainment, political leaders, and those with high status in life.

Language of greetings

Both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, such as physical movement in the direction of one another along with gestures and facial expressions, hand waving, eye contact, and smiles, are a part of greeting rituals. Some gestures can be observed among Maguindanaon people. Others include kiss in the cheeks especially among women as they utter their greetings. Males on the other hand, put their hand on their heart as they express their acknowledgement to the other person. Sometimes, men shake hands while others hug. These non verbal behavior were not the original tradition of the Maguindanaon. According to an informant, the kissing, hugging, putting of hands on one's heart, and shaking of hands might be adopted from other culture such as the Arab especially those who have gone abroad to work.

The Maguindanaons employ greetings to negotiate status relationships; as a result, if an older and a younger person cross, the younger person is expected to welcome first. Failure to do so conveys contempt and suggests that the lower-ranking party is attempting to equalize with the

higher-ranking party. However, it is customary for the guest to introduce themselves to the host first.

When Maguindanaon individuals fails or refuses to greet, the socio-cultural norms and social contract which state that greeting must take place between two parties making contact is said to be disrupted (Foley, 1997; Salzmann, 2004). According to Dzameshie (2002), failing to welcome when the social situation demands for it is seen as a display of misdemeanor in Ewe society because it is such an expected sociolinguistic behavior. It is also known that the Asanthe greets everyone who attended after most public meetings at Manhyia, the asante kingdom's capital. He claims that this is a sign of his intimate relationships with the people, and the greeting thus denotes and honors multiple connections.

The chief displays mutual respect to the gathering people and conveys his responsibility for their welfare, as well as their great regard for him. Through repeated greetings from one another, this mutual understanding is achieved. The role of an Asante king named Kofi karikari, who would visit his citizens' homes in the mornings to inquire about their well-being and living situations, is described in Asante history.

Finnegan (1969) states the following in his discussion of the Limba chief's relationship with his people:

The idea that to welcome someone is to honor him, to acknowledge a relationship with him, and, very often, to commit oneself to recognizing his authority, seems to thread across different greetings, whether in the form of a brief interchange or a formal visit with gifts to greet a superior.

In Maguindanaon, there are similar ideas. Chieftains (datus) or political leaders (at the present time) are recognized appropriately by their subordinates through greetings. Christians, Muslims, and their religious leaders all share the same observation of African traditional religious practitioners. Words can operate as a type of active power to bring people together, just like gifts do. People can come together through performative behaviors like greetings that include both illocutionary and perlocutionary behaviors (Finnegan, 1969).

Modern Maguindanaon Society's Form of Greetings

Each change in the social, political, or cultural dynamics is accompanied by an equivalent shift in language use and style. A society may change its practices throughout time. For instance, a society might completely renounce a long-standing custom and substitute a foreign custom instead. The traditional Maguindanaon greetings have changed as a result of Maguindanaon society's evolving trends. Diachronic change is a phenomenon that causes other cultural factors to spread into the structure and usage of politeness formulas like greetings.

The majority of individuals in cities utilize the English greetings good morning, good afternoon, good evening, and hi! hello! etc. Some of the most common greetings and responses have been replaced by more archaic versions in young people's thoughts, and they are no longer used in casual conversation.

The Elements of S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G.

Greetings are expressive speech acts that are used in accordance with societal conventions. It starts a series of verbal and nonverbal interactional acts that express social meanings (Austin, 1962; Searle and Vanderven, 1985).

The analysis of the elements of S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. (situation, participants, ends, speech acts, key, instrumentality, norms of communication as well as the cultural or traditional speech genres) reveals that greetings in the Maguindanaon context are rule governed. Particular greetings such as Assalamu Alaikum are viewed as appropriate greetings to religious individuals, political leaders, and people with high status in life particularly the educated or professional one.

Maguindanaon greetings in a particular context reveal social class and denotes social inequalities. Moreover, it can be used to show power structure.

With these, we can say that linguistic routine of Maguindanaon greetings become a means of reproducing politics of dominance and social stratification that also ironically bring social cohesion and reciprocity.

Conclusion

Maguindanaon welcomes are used to categorize social norms amongst speakers. Age, sex, social standing, power, and occupation of the people involved in the meeting are all significant indicators of how a person is received and how they respond. The way greetings are structured can be used to determine if the interlocutors are equal or unequal, formal or informal. The variety in language use during interaction acts as both a cultural manifestation and a prerequisite for recognizing social factors.

Maguindanaon welcomes are intended to increase social ties and courtesy between participants. Additionally, it is utilized to lessen social anxiety and distrust. When welcomes are warmly received and reciprocated, both parties are optimistic that the interaction will improve. The speaker's socialization process and socio-cultural norms include greetings as necessary and expected cultural language practices. Depending on the situation, place, and interlocutors, greetings may vary in length and content. Greetings can be formal, informal, simple, or complex, and they are all predictable.

The many uses and variations of Maguindanaon greetings suggest that they have much to give to coming generations of Maguindanaon. Since greetings are a part of socialization, several actors in the development of the Maguindanaon language should assist in restoring them.

Better interactions are hampered by the absence of greetings and other linguistic customs.

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