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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the forms, interpersonal or social functions and patterns of terms used as address or reference resources in spoken urban Shona, integrating Hymes's (1962) *Ethnography of Communication* theory and a modified version of Brown and Levinson's (1987) *Politeness* theory as analytical tools. Our concern is the speaker's manipulation of address or reference terms to index social meanings that serve desired social functions. Although personal address or reference terms have obvious literal meanings that serve referential functions, native speakers of Shona recognise certain usages as social or idiomatic, rather than literal, in their reference to others. That is, linguistic resources carry meaning beyond their literal reference to persons and relationships. The discovery of social meaning may be accomplished by studying normative uses of address or reference terms in a wide array of contexts and relationships.

The usual assumption in personal relationship research has been, until recently, that only the relationship of the interlocutors, their individual qualities and needs and what they have communicated to each other about themselves determine their address behaviour. We take a broader approach attributing address choice and usage to factors pertaining to the interlocutors' personal relationship as well as the cultural premises, beliefs and values of their society. Thus, relationships and the social world are intertwined systems of meaning.

We obtained data from everyday interactions through triangulated research techniques. Ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews are the main methods of data collection, supplemented by casual conversations, tape recording and transcriptions of conversations and introspection.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis. The ideas and writing up of the thesis and the errors that may be found in this thesis, is the principal responsibility of myself.

Pedzisai Mashiri

DEDICATION

To all my teachers

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols

=	:	Same as
+	:	followed by
<	:	from (construction)

Abbreviations

AC	Agreement concord
Demon	Demonstrative
FFN	Full formal name
FTA	Face threatening acts
FN	First name
Fut	Future tense
JMC	Johanne Masowe Chishanu
LN	Last name
NP	Noun phrase
Per	Person
PN	Personal name
Poss	Possessive
Pres	Present tense
Pron	Pronoun
SN	Surname
TLN	Title + last name
TON	Title + occupational name
TPN	Title + personal name
TSN	Title + surname

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