

**COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: USE OF POLITE  
FORMS IN A CASE STUDY OF KAAGA GIRLS' HIGH  
SCHOOL**

**BY**

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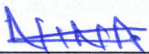
**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF  
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## DECLARATION

“This Dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University”

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## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving and supportive husband Mutembei and our children Cindy and Lenny. It is also dedicated to God for his Mercy that enabled me to finish even after I had an accident.

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I thank God for His mercy that has seen me through even after I had a terrible accident during my course and I had to lag behind. He, however, granted me a chance to complete this course and I thank Him.

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## ABSTRACT

This study is based on the established fact that the teacher has authority over the student, thus, the students should address the teacher politely. It aimed at finding out whether students in Kaaga Girls' High School in Meru are sensitive to teachers' feelings as politeness theory demands and if they use the polite forms and strategies that they should have learnt by now according to KIE Syllabus (2002) as they speak with teachers. The study also aimed at finding out the teachers' views about the use of polite forms by their students in the school. The background of the study and literature review gives some of the major studies on politeness in general and the findings of some of the specific studies on communicative competence and especially on politeness in English speaking communities and other languages both locally and internationally. Politeness is expected of everyone in society and especially when addressing a senior person.

The sampling techniques used are purposive sampling, for teachers and random sampling for students. The data was tape-recorded and observation method and questionnaires used to collect the data which was put into frequency tables and analyzed qualitatively.

The details in the summary of the findings established the students use polite forms while talking to the teachers but not always making 53.5% of the teachers say they rarely or never use polite forms. Finally, pedagogical implications of the study have been examined and suggestions made of that the findings can be useful in preparing the curriculum and examinations in English. More recommendations

for further research like studying other schools in this field are provided in the concluding chapter together with the limitations experienced of money and time to study many schools in the course of the study.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AGR</b>	Agriculture
<b>CHEM</b>	Chemistry
<b>CRE</b>	Christian Religious Education
<b>D/P</b>	Deputy Principal
<b>ENG</b>	English
<b>FTA</b>	Face Threatening Act
<b>GEO</b>	Geography
<b>GERM</b>	German
<b>HIST</b>	History
<b>KCSE</b>	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>KISW</b>	Kiswahili
<b>KIE</b>	Kenya Institute of Education.
<b>KNEC</b>	Kenya National Examination Council
<b>LAB</b>	Laboratory
<b>LIT</b>	Literature
<b>LWC</b>	Language for Wider Communication.
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>PTA</b>	Parent Teachers Association
<b>P</b>	Principal
<b>S</b>	Student
<b>T</b>	Teacher
<b>X,Y,Z</b>	Classes studied

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

<b>Declaratives</b>	Are used to warn or command or ask some one to do something.
<b>Expressive</b>	Shows the psychological state the students are in.
<b>Face</b>	It is the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself.
<b>Face want</b>	The respect for face.
<b>Frequency count</b>	How often a particular polite form appears in a communicative unit.
<b>Microscopic Approach</b>	An attempt to give detailed description of the communicative function of a particular polite form. For example the use of "pardon me," to request someone to repeat what he or she had said earlier.
<b>Negative Politeness</b>	The basic claim to territories preserves rights to non-distraction that is Freedom of action and freedom from imposition.
<b>Positive Politeness</b>	The desire that one's self-image be appreciated and

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Studies done on communicative competence report that a member of a society should be able to know the language of the community he is living in and also know how to address different people appropriately as the situation demands, Saville (1982 : 23). Being polite in one's speech is a mark of communicative competence since the student will be careful to avoid saying anything that will embarrass the adults in this case, the teacher, Brown et al (1978). In the studies reviewed, both local and international, the focus is on how the adults use politeness forms and the ones on the classroom discourse, deal with the structure of conversation and how the teacher influences it and not politeness. The studies that have been done elsewhere in the world show that adults are very careful to ensure their children learn to use polite forms by the age of five, Gleason (1980). Being able to use all aspects of language is the main objective of the KIE syllabus and so the study aimed at finding out whether the students use the polite forms they have learnt by the time they are in form four. This study thus sought to find out if our students had learnt the polite forms and if they were using them as they talked with their seniors who were the teachers.

The studies done in Kenya are mostly on other areas of language mainly on the types of discourse that go on between people, Ali (2000), Juma (1996) Walya (1996).

Hassan (2000) has studied how communication takes place in the intercultural discourse. In his study, he shows the various strategies that speakers will use

to save their own face or that of their hearer especially when they come from different communities.

Walya (1996) studied the Kenyan banking discourse and the strategies the interactants apply in their conversation and the effects they have on banking interaction.

Juma (1991) studied classroom discourse structure and explored the function that language is put into in a classroom by both the teacher and the learner. The study showed that the teacher plays a major role in structuring it. The study looked at discourse between participants from different cultures and the communication strategies employed in conversation.

The KIE overall objective in the teaching of English is to ensure students are taught the kind of English that should help them fit in the International Diaspora where they are supposed to use it as the main language of wider communication (LWC). English is a widely spoken language in the world and the teachers, KIE. and the Ministry of Education in Kenya would expect the Kenyan students to speak English with an appreciable level of competence, Paulston (1992). This means there is a level of competence in politeness for international communication which a student should attain. Politeness too demands that someone should show sensitivity to others and not embarrass them.

The primary and secondary syllabuses for English have stipulated the various forms that a student should have learnt by the time the student finishes the twelve year course. By the time the pupil is in standard eight, students have been taught greetings and responses, requests, commands, instruction, need to

say sorry, excuse me, thank you, welcome, please and polite forms like 'may I', 'can I,' titles of various professionals and other social values for example, honesty, goodness, obedience, respect, forgiveness, admitting wrong doings, politeness, truth and love.

Moreover, according to K.I.E. syllabus, by the time the student finishes form four, he/she should have studied these polite forms; thank you, excuse me, sorry, please, telephone etiquette, appropriate choice of register, interrupting and disagreeing politely, negotiation skills, turn-taking and paying attention. This means then, that by the time the students complete their study they should be able to use these polite forms appropriately which forms part of communicative competence that is needed in the society in which they belong. Politeness also demands that one addresses their seniors using titles. The students should also excuse themselves when they are interrupting others especially their seniors.

If they do not say 'thank you' when it is expected, it can be annoying and it can destroy an otherwise good relationship if the other person realizes that the students take their help or gift or compliment for granted. Responses, smiles and 'thank you' are often regarded as on-record acknowledgement of compliments in American culture which our students copy a lot nowadays, Annita Henderson (1978).

The politeness associated with rituals and formulas may arise from the fact that formulas suspend face threats. This is accomplished by virtue of their symbolic status as markers of mutually understood feelings and emotions Goffman, (1967). Therefore, formulas are viewed as on-record strategies.

All the above studies, though based on discourse, studied broad aspects of discourse but not whether the students use polite forms in English language that has been taught.

In view of the above areas of concern, we found there was need for a study to establish whether the students use the polite forms and whether they use them appropriately and finally which ones they do not use when they should use them. The current study thus, was to find out that and what the teachers in the school have to say about the use of politeness forms by the students in the school. Teachers are the immediate symbol of authority that the students relate with and since they teach the girls and relate with them they can give an objective assessment of how well the students use the polite forms.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Politeness studies have been done in western countries both on English speaking communities and other languages, Brown et al (1978), Gleason (1980), Paulston (1992), Saville (1982).

These studies focus on how various members of a community relate with one another politely and the politeness strategies they use. These studies show how the various members of the communities show politeness to one another in the language they use by using polite forms. They focus on how the use of polite language is a sign of communicative competence. Gleason (1980) says even a three year old is expected to be polite to the other society members meaning every one in the society including students is expected to be polite in their communication with others.

This study aimed at finding out if our students who are seventeen years old and above are polite to every one, especially the teachers, as part of their communicative competence. These studies agree that every one in the society has a face to protect in any conversation and each person in a given society should know how to protect the face of the one he/she is speaking to, Brown and Levinson (1978). People also need to modify their attitudes, knowledge and behavior to resemble the language they are learning according to acculturation theory, Mc Laughlin (1987). This study was to investigate the expected polite forms in English language which they are learning especially when talking now that their written work may have polite forms since they have time to revise it as they write.

The studies that have been done in Kenya have tended to investigate discourse as it occurs amongst adults and generally sought to find out how adults use various communication strategies in different situations like in the bank, Walya 1996), with people of other cultures ,Hassan (2000) and discourse as it occurs in a class room ,Juma (1991) and code switching, Kanana(2003), leaving a vast area of study on the use of polite forms as they are used by students as they talk with teachers. This study thus aimed at filling this gap of whether the students use polite forms with teachers in various contexts as they are expected to do or they use other strategies to show politeness.

So for purposes of knowing whether our students achieve communicative competence in politeness by the time they leave the high school, this study was necessary.

### **1.3 Research Questions.**

The study was to be guided by the following questions:

1. Which polite forms do the students commonly use?
2. Which polite forms do the students rarely use?
3. What are the teachers' views on their students' use of polite forms?

### **1.4 Research Objectives.**

The objectives of this study were to:

1. To determine which polite forms the students at Kaaga Girls' commonly use.
2. Investigate which polite forms the students rarely use.
3. To find out the teachers' views on their students' use of polite forms.

### **1.5 Research Assumptions**

1. Students know and commonly use some of the polite forms.
2. There are some polite forms that the students rarely use.
3. The teachers observe how the students use the polite forms.

### **1.6 The Justification of the Study.**

This study was important because, at times, the students may not consider using these forms as important whereas attainment of communicative competence by using polite forms is very essential to anyone who hopes to relate well in his / her society. This study was to show the students their pattern on the use of the polite forms, and show them whether they use them as they should with their teachers. They were to see where and how they need

to improve in order not to embarrass themselves or the teachers as they talk with them.

The study also aimed at establishing the problematic but essential polite forms that may not be used as often as they should be used in context where they should appear but do not appear. This information is expected to help teachers know which these forms are and as they teach, they could look for materials to emphasize them and create conversation contexts in which these forms can be used more.

The study was expected to show whether the studies done by others elsewhere like by Brown and Levinson(1978) and other researchers in the area of politeness and on the use of various politeness forms are applicable in our Kenyan situation.

We see that many parents are eager to teach their young children polite forms and even at the tender age of five years they ensure they have acquired the polite forms and use them, Gleason (1980).The study will show the parents whether their sixteen year old use the polite forms as they should.

The study aimed at identifying and describing usage of polite forms by students in high school. This will, therefore, positively contribute to language policy making for secondary school education and syllabus designing. As a result, since there are some polite forms that are used often like greetings and others like 'sorry' are rarely used in speech, then KNEC can adjust to such realities in setting, moderation and the marking of KCSE and the English text book designers can pay attention to these issues as they prepare curriculum materials.

The findings can enhance the public understanding of usage of polite forms in English in high school.

The teachers' views can be used in giving recommendations to the curriculum developers and policy makers in language learning to ensure more attention is given in developing materials for training in polite forms usage.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study.**

For the study, ten teachers were interviewed. The total number of teachers in the school is forty and those who were picked were drawn from those subjects that are compulsory and teachers in areas where they interact with students more outside class like in games, discipline committee, guidance and counseling and the office. The ten teachers were expected to represent the rest well since in language, a minimum of four informants is enough for it is said even if they are more the information they will give will be mostly the same, Labov (1982). The study sought to study all the students who would talk in each of the sessions that were to be analyzed. About eight students talked in the researcher's class session but in other classes most of the answers students gave in a chorus. The total number of sessions was seven and individual students who talked were twenty in all the sessions although those who were to talk were to be twenty four students. This, however, will not affect the results since in each session, there was the minimum number required of four individual participants in class except in one class where only three talked as individuals. In the sessions in the office each student was alone. The chorus answers were also studied. Also the time to study more than the twenty

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students that were studied without others knowing what was happening was not there. It was also assumed the other students with similar characteristics would behave or give similar information. The results of the study may thus be generalizable to other schools due to the fact that the students are likely to behave the same way in other girls' schools.

The study was only focusing on the verbal polite forms and whether they are used and how often and to find out the teachers' assessment of their students use of the polite forms. The time too for the researcher to visit other schools was limited since she was also working. The study focused on the use of polite forms that are taught especially from form one to form four and not those taught in primary school though most of them are similar since many of them were taught in primary.

Those taught in secondary include, please, greetings, thank you, sorry, turn-talking, excuse me, pardon, hedging and deference. The sessions in class where the teachers were present were expected to give students a chance to use the polite forms.

Mwaki (2006) quoting Marcathy (1990) notes that complete naturalness is not possible in a formal set up like a classroom, but the feeling that one is engaging in an authentic activity is important to the learner, as is the feeling that one is using authentic, and naturally occurring structures and vocabulary to use in simulation of real life. The structures obtained in the study were assumed to be what would be expected in real life since they were taped from natural setting in a natural conversation.

In the next section of literature review, the different studies that have been done by other researchers in different societies were reviewed to show how they inform this study and they showed what was to be expected in the behavior of students in this study and how the teachers' views were to be interpreted.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction.**

This chapter has been organized into various sections. The first section deals with the meaning of politeness and its importance in the society. The next section deals with the three main factors that determine politeness and the strategies speakers will use in the conversation.

The last part deals with the theories that have been used in the study and how they will be applied.

### **2.2 Literature Review**

#### **2.2.1 Definition of politeness**

According to Winnieman and Backwind (1980), communicative competence is the ability of the interactants to choose from available communicative behaviors in order that he may successfully accomplish his own interpersonal goals during an encounter, while maintaining the face of his fellow interactants. This definition ties up with that of politeness in that politeness demands that one maintains the face of a fellow interactant.

The study aimed at investigating whether the students choose the expected communicative

behaviour in order to successfully accomplish their communicative goals and if they protect their own face and that of the teachers.

According to Longman (1992) being polite means having or showing good manners, sensitivity to other people's feelings and or correct social behavior.

According to Perspective.html (26/10/2007), modern politeness goes beyond

language to include behaviour. It demands people greet relatives, friends and acquaintances with warmth and respect, and refrain from insults and prying. It requires one to offer hospitality equally and generously to guests. One should also wear clothing suited to the occasion. It demands that one contributes to conversations without dominating them and offer assistance to those in need. One must eat neatly and quietly and avoid disturbing others with unnecessary noise. People follow the established rules of the organization upon becoming a member and arrive on time. The society members are expected to comfort the bereaved and respond to invitations promptly.

### **2.2.2 Politeness Forms and Strategies**

According to Giles et al (1981), children must learn to use language appropriately in many different interpersonal situations. The acquisition of routines like 'bye bye', 'thank you', 'please', 'I am sorry' and greetings is an important part of linguistic socialization. Moreover, most parents clearly teach their children these routines and prompt them to produce them. They say mothers are more careful to teach their children to say 'thank you', and 'please'. 'Please' they say was said to be a magic word. Giles et al (1981) further observe parents want their children to learn these routines as it was shown by a research where the parents of deaf children were very glad when their children learnt the routines in Rhode Island since it made them fit in the society very well. This means society expects the young people in high school to be able to use routines in order to fit in the society. This study aimed at investigating if the students in the study use these routines.

This study was based on the politeness theory that holds that some acts are

intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening. By act we mean what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication just as one or more speech acts can be assigned to an utterance. The major factors that govern politeness among speakers are that model speakers have positive face and negative face and use various strategies to ensure that they maintain the face of each other. All model speakers, of whom our students are supposed to be, choose means that will meet their ends. Face loss ties up with the notion of being embarrassed or humiliated. Face can be lost, maintained or enhanced and so must be constantly attended to in interaction.

The participants are aware of each others face and the need to maintain each other's face in an interaction .It was therefore expected that the students would not say anything that would make the teacher lose his face especially now that the teacher is more powerful than the student. The study aimed at finding out if the students made their teachers lose face as they talked with them in various situations.

There are various kinds of faces; the negative face, and the positive face. Each of these has its own strategies that ensure the participants do not lose face. In the positive politeness, the speaker makes it clear he would want to be understood, approved, liked or admired. Both students and teachers want to be liked although, at times, may not show this openly.

In the negative politeness the addressee or the speaker would not want to be imposed on and would want the speaker to respect that. The teachers would not want students to impose on their face wants in the school setting. Also Speech Acts Theory was used to explain what acts one is performing in

speaking Levinson (1983; 233). Syntactic questions are paradigmatically (clearly) used to request information, make assertions, state facts, make imperatives or commands, etc.

Indirect speech acts function as hedges (expresses doubts or shows something is partially true or true only in certain conditions). The direct speech acts are used to convey the on-record strategy in the negative politeness. One does not issue negatively polite FTAs completely directly but intuitively one can come rapidly to the point avoiding further imposition of prolixity and obscurity. When using various strategies the speaker uses indirect speech acts especially in hedging and direct speech acts when using bald-on-record strategies.

Also Grice's Maxims are used where the co-operative principle is supported by the maxim of quantity; where one should just say enough; of quality; say what is true; of relation that requires one to be relevant; of manner which requires one to be clear and not vague, Brown and Yule (1983 pg 31). However, at times the speakers may choose to talk for so long without going to the point flouting the maxim of relevance and quantity but still be understood.

### **2. 2. 3 Language Acquisition and Culture**

According to McLaughlin (1987) in his book quoting Linton (1963) on acculturation theory where he studied American-Indian tribes, he observes that acculturation involves modification in attitudes, knowledge and behavior. The modifications were seen to require the addition of new elements to an

individual's cultural background, elimination of certain previous elements and the reorganization of others. Thus the process of acculturation demands both social and psychological adaptation. Part of this process involves learning the appropriate linguistic habits to function within the target language group.

He further states acquisition of another language can be seen as one of the aspects of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language as a result of several factors including domination, enclosure, size, congruence and attitude. Social distance is measured by the frequency of interaction and the kind of material and non-material goods (including face) exchanged between speakers. Could lack of acculturation sometimes cause some students to opt not to learn or use some of the polite forms of the Whiteman's language now that they may also be feeling that this language is being dominated by the white man's mannerisms? For example, keeping on saying 'sorry' instead of behaving the way their own language etiquette allows. For example the Chinese find it odd that American keep apologizing.

Psychological distance is as a result of affective factors that concern the learner as an individual for example resolution of language shock, culture shock and culture stress, integrative versus instrumental motivation and ego permeability.

Could it be that some of the students, especially those from local primary schools, might have language shock since the primary schools, at times, are taught in a mixture of languages? It is assumed that the more social and psychological distance there is between the second- language learner and the

target-language group, the lower the learner's degree of acculturation will be towards that group .

According to Schutz's interpersonal needs theory as quoted by E.M. Griffin (1991) he says people need people. He argues that the drive to develop interpersonal relationships with others is to satisfy three basic human needs which are inclusion, affection and control. The need for inclusion reflects the desire for social contact. When it is met, we tend to feel accepted, understood and worthy, and when it is not met, we tend to feel lonely and rejected. This means students need to know how to relate with others politely. This is so that they can keep the relationships going since if they are impolite people would avoid their company thus they would feel unwanted. The need for affection would help them develop close emotional relationship thus the need to use polite forms to be close to teachers. Griffin (1991) quoting Schutz says, the most balanced people on the issue of control are the democrats who know when it is appropriate to control and are able to do so, but they can also be comfortable submitting to others when necessary. The students were expected to submit to the teacher and use polite forms like 'sir' or 'Mr.' to show submission to the power of the teacher.

According to Carol M. Eastman in her paper: *Dissociation; A Unified Language Policy Outcome for Kenya* (LD7 1990:14), "English is a language of power and privilege." This means the students in school have to use polite forms if they hope to enjoy the privileges of a good job and international placing in good jobs since English and French are the languages for wider communications internationally.

According to Ileri (1996), language and culture are inseparable. To learn a foreign language, is to some extent, the same as learning a foreign culture. Ileri (1996 pg 7), quoting Ngugi says “culture is almost indistinguishable from language that make possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next.” This means learning a foreign language includes learning new values, tastes and also appreciating different forms of dress, foods, eating habits, music and dance, films, recreation, education system and religious practices. This means the Africans have to learn to accept the difference between formal and informal dress, the English table mannerisms and have to dress formally for official dinners or luncheons as their British counterparts do, Ileri (1996.) The students need to learn and use the polite forms because English in Kenya is the official language, language of higher education, law, international and wider communication to show they have learnt it.

According to Muthwii et al (2004), English was used as a language of power in many formerly colonized parts of the world and in some areas it is used vis-à-vis the use of ethnic languages .This aspect of English being a language of power has become part of the social meaning of English language. The use of English at work increases with the increase of education at quite similar proportions. Secondary school graduates use more English than the primary school graduates while the university graduates use English the most. Muthwii further says that the study showed the language choice among workers showed that 73% of the workers use English, 15% Kiswahili and 7.6% use mixture of

languages. These findings show the secondary school graduates were expected to know and use English properly including its polite forms.

Chambers (1995; 167) writing on parents and peers and their use of language notes that the youngsters will do their best to sound like their new found friends and acquaintances. At times the differences in language and aspects of behavior with their parents may bring generation-gap, although in normal circumstances, the generations do not differ from one another in attitudes, etiquette and language so much as to create a gap across the generation Chambers( 1995:168).

According to Saville (1982:23), communicative competence “involves not only knowing the language but also what to say to whom, and how to say it appropriately in any given situation”. In addition, both the knowledge and expectation of who may or may not speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, whom one may speak to and how one may talk to people of different statuses and roles is part of it. One needs to know what are the routines in turn-taking in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline new information , give commands, enforce discipline and all the other things language does, (Saville 1982:23). This competence is what was expected from form four students.

Politeness has been studied extensively by Brown et al (1978). Their study gives details of what politeness entails. Politeness shows sensitivity to other people`s feelings and /or correct social behavior. It also presupposes potential for aggression and seeks to disarm it, and makes communication between potentially aggressive parties possible. They say, quoting Goffman (1967),

that it does this through the diplomatic function of the virtual offence which is the same as worst possible reading of some action by one person that potentially trespasses on addressee's interests, equanimity or personal reserve. By orienting to the virtual offence, an offender can display that he has the other's interests at heart. However, failure to orient to the virtual offence counts as a diplomatic breach. The politeness theory basically holds that some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening.

#### **2.2.4 Factors Governing Politeness**

Face ties up with the notion of being embarrassed or humiliated. Hassan (2000) defines face as the image the speaker wants to preserve and present when interacting in public. Face can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in an interaction. In general, people co-operate (and assume each other's co-operation) in maintaining face in interaction. So the students were expected to be aware of each other's face and the teacher's face and the need to maintain each other's face and that of the teacher in interaction.

According to Levinson et al (1978), there is negative face where the want of every competent adult member wants his actions to be unimpeded or unimposed upon by others. There is a positive face where every member desires that his wants should be desirable to at least some others. Negative politeness which derives from non-imposition is familiar as the formal politeness. There are also some acts that threaten the face of the other person or one's own.

These are called face threatening acts. 'Act' here means what is intended to be done by a verbal or non-verbal communication.

There are two kinds of face threatening acts. Those that threaten the addressee's negative face want, by indicating (potentially) that the speaker (s) does not intend to avoid impeding addressee's freedom of action. These include offers and promises. There are those that make the addressee feel that he may need to take an action to protect the object of the speaker's desire or give it to the speaker. They include compliments, expressions of envy or admiration and strong expressions of strong (negative) emotions. There is another set of acts that threaten the positive face want by the speaker or the addressee by showing that the speaker does not care about the addressee's feelings, wants etc. There are those acts that show that the speaker does not care about the addressee's positive face. The above mentioned FTAs threaten both negative and positive face for example requests, complaints, interruptions, threats, strong expressions of emotion and requests for personal information.

There are also FTAs that offend speaker's negative face. There are others that directly damage speaker's positive face.

Any rational person will seek to avoid these face threatening acts or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat. He will consider three wants which are the want to communicate the content of FTAx,(x is a particular FTA), the want to be efficient or urgent and the want to maintain the addressee's face to any degree. Normally, unless the want to be urgent or

efficient is greater than the want to maintain the addressee's face to any degree, the speaker will want to minimize the threat of his FTA.

## **2.2.5 Factors that Influence the Choice of Strategies.**

### **2.2.5.1 The Pay Offs**

The prior considerations with the on- record strategy are that, a speaker can enlist the public pressure against the addressee. He can also get credit for honesty for indicating that he trusts the addressee, can get credit for outspokenness, avoiding the danger of being seen to be a manipulator, can avoid the danger of being understood and he can have the opportunity to pay back in face whatever he potentially took away by the face threatening acts.

By going off record, the speaker can gain by getting credit for being tactful, non-coercive, he can run less risk of his act entering the gossip biography that others keep of him, and we can avoid responsibility for the potentially face damaging interpretation. For going on record with negative politeness, the speaker can benefit by paying respect, deference to the addressee in turn for the FTA and can thereby lessen a future debt or not incur one. He can maintain social distance and avoid the threat of face loss or advance familiarity towards the addressee or can give an addressee a real way out (to offer a way of escape) for example if the speaker requests for something from the addressee but makes it clear that he really does not expect the addressee to say 'Yes'.

### 2.2.5.2 The assessment of the seriousness of a FTA (the calculations that members make).

This involves these factors:-

- (i) The social distance (D) of the speaker and the addressee
- (ii) The relative power (P) of the speaker and addressee
- (iii) The absolute ranking (R) of imposition

The three factors contribute to the seriousness of a FTA of an utterance  $x$  (FTA $_x$ ) that is measured by Weight of  $x$  giving us the formula  $W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$ .  $W_x$  is the effect of FTA of utterance  $x$ .  $D$  is social distance between the speaker(S) and hearer (H) and  $P$  is the power the hearer has over the speaker.  $R_x$  is the absolute ranking of impositions in that culture, Brown and Levinson (1978).

However these factors are also culture specific where different cultures look at the influence of each of these factors differently.

Power is measured as being great if the addressee is, for example, a prince, a priest, a thug with a gun, etc. Social distance is mostly measured by the frequency of interaction and the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between the speaker and the addressee.

Ranking is culturally and situationally defined as ranking of impositions by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or approval. The African culture demands that the students either use negative politeness strategy or off record when relating with people superior and distant and higher in rank than them like the teachers.

Other linguistic strategies include address forms, honorifics, passive and dative constructions, etc.

According to a research done by Hassan, (2000) he has described several strategies as stated below. Ali (2000) quoting Gumperz (1982) claims that for communication to take place effectively, participants need to draw on their background knowledge and assumptions in order to interpret the social meanings of other speakers. Gumperz shows that perceived dissimilarity of speech conventions and mismatching misinterpretation contribute to cross cultural misunderstandings. He uses spontaneous and naturally occurring data for his analysis. He investigated communication between Anglo and South African speakers of English in Britain interacting in what he called "Gate keeping encounters". These refer to situations where one person has the authority to make decisions that will control the social or economic mobility of the other. His findings reveal that those in higher authority exerted power on those below and this determines the politeness strategies they would use in communication. In this study, the teacher exerts more power on the student and this means the student needed to know how to relate with the one in power politely.

Scollon and Scollon (1980) assert that taciturnity (the avoidance of talking) reflects an assumption of deference politeness while volubility (much talking) reflects an assumption of solidarity. English speakers displayed positive politeness (solidarity) while the Athbaskan emphasized their distance or dissociated themselves from the monolingual English speakers. They concluded that the relative amount of talk is directly reflective of the assumed

face relation of the participants and the potential for miscommunication lies in the dimension of power.

According to Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977) in their discussion on the dimension of dominance and submission and the dimension of spectatorship and exhibitionism in different cultures, groups may link these two dimensions in different ways. They discovered that the person in the dominant position would be assumed to be the one to exhibit or display. The other person in the subordinate role, would be the spectator. They term this phenomenon end-linkage. Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977) observe that British fathers in the family, lecturers, editors and others in dominant roles are expected to exhibit or display while others watch as spectators. So teachers were to be the ones to exhibit while the students were to be spectators .

Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977) compared a British and an American family. From their findings, the American family setting shows a symmetrical solidarity politeness system. All family members are treated as close (-D that is little distance) and low power disparity (-P that is little power difference).

They saw the American family as a communicative system of solidarity relations characterized by high volubility and expression of common grounds for interaction. The British family however, exhibited an asymmetrical relation between father and children. The interaction is characterized by high distance (+ D) and power (+P).

As a result, the British will see the Americans as reversing roles because of the high volubility in the displays of children. In the same way, the teacher has power over the student so low volubility was expected from the student. The

Americans also see the British family as extended by unpleasant power structure for a domineering father and submissive children. It was observed that the perception of individuals and the strategies for communication are determined by underlying values placed on power (P) and distance (D).

Stubbs (1983) studied classroom discourse in an Edinburgh school and noted different kinds of metacommunications in teacher-pupil interaction for example attracting attention, editing, specifying topic and defining. Stubbs (1983) collected the conversational data in the classroom by observation, note taking and audio recording.

Juma (1991) also studied classroom discourse structure and explored the function that language is put into in a classroom by both the teacher and the learner. Her work looks at the sentence as the highest unit of analysis. The study concluded that the teacher plays a major role in structuring the discourse as well as in controlling it. The study looked above the sentence to an exchange as an interactional unit in a discourse. It also examines two party discourse but with participants from different cultures. This study also looked at, in addition, communication strategies employed in conversation.

Walya (1996) in a study on the Kenyan banking discourse outlined the strategies that the interactants apply in their conversation and the effects they have on banking interaction. She used the Speech Act theory but with specific reference to Edmonson's (1981) model. From her findings, it was clear that the structure of Kenyan banking discourse and the strategies were influenced by both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. This study uses tenets of an earlier version of Speech Act theory developed by Searle (1969).

It also has a similar inclination to the study on banking discourse strategies though in an intercultural context.

### **2.2.6 Common Strategies in Discourse**

Neil (1996) observes that turn-taking can be used as a strategy where a speaker takes his turn when he anticipates the completion of the other speaker's turn. He calls these pre-empted turn completions. Through pre-emptions, participants created shared meanings, supply lexical help when needed and shape out the conversation.

Coulthard (1977) observes that turns to speak occur successfully without overlaps or gaps between them. If overlaps occur, one speaker ends his turn quickly and gaps between turns are incorporated by another speaker to make the conversation flow. He further observes that in formal speech situations, it is possible for one speaker, whose role assigns him extra authority, to select speakers for several successive utterances thus controlling turn taking.

Sacks (1974) suggests that a current speaker can control the next turn in 3 ways:

- 1 The current speaker can select a next speaker either by naming him or alluding to him in the conversation for example through giving the first part of an adjacency pair for example question so the next speaker has to give an answer.
- 2 He may choose to constrain the next utterance but not select the next speaker.

- 3 Alternatively he may choose to select neither and allow other participants to continue the conversation by selecting himself.

The argument Sacks raises here is that conversation is made up of units which are recognizable as either incomplete or possibly complete and the next speaker can begin as soon as the current speaker has reached a possible conclusion.

Schmidt (1983) adds that when participants take part in conversation they bring to its process shared assumptions and expectations about what conversation is, how it develops and what contributions are expected of each. Schmidt (1983) says that turn pre-emption rely heavily on the principle of shared assumptions about what conversation is; for enhancing mutual understanding and reducing instances of miscommunication.

Tannen (1989), in a study between adult native speakers of English viewed repetition as a strategy used by speakers in conversation as a tool for creating meaning. She defines four major functions of repetition and interaction. She argues repetition adds to the efficiency of discourse by enabling the speaker to produce fluent speech while shaping out what to say next. It facilitates understanding by providing discourse thus achieving coherence. Neil (1996) agrees that for non-native speakers repetition can be used as a repair strategy in negotiating meaning. Other strategies include paraphrase and clarification.

Paraphrase gives the interlocutors a further opportunity to understand the message. Clarifiers are used by interlocutors to monitor comprehension as the conversation flows and to shape shared meaning. The speaker may use a comprehension check, for example, 'Do you understand?'

Interlocutor clarification strategies include;

1. Request for recapulation using polite routine formula for example, 'I beg your pardon.'
2. Request for more specific information isolating particular details.
3. Content summary for verification which is presented by the interlocutor to be confirmed or denied by the speaker.
4. Echoes which entail a repetition of the preceding utterance with question intonation.

J.B. Gleason (1980) also reports that air flight attendants insisted that children travelling alone should say 'please' when asking for a deck of cards and "I am sorry" when they stepped on someone's toe. This means everywhere and everyone, and especially people like the students in the study were definitely expected to use these terms.

Social speech goes unnoticed when it is there but its absence is noted immediately and if there is no obvious excuse like physical disability, the person who omits politeness formulas is judged very harshly.

### **2.2.7 The Variables**

Factors that influence the politeness strategies are power, social distance and the ranking of addressee and the speaker. The study sought to establish whether the students used various strategies when dealing with teachers in various situations depending on what they wanted from the teacher.

The independent variable is power that the teacher has while the dependent variable is the various politeness strategies that were used by students in different situations while relating to the teachers. Mead (1977) says that the

teacher is at the top and the students is at the lower end of the ladder in terms of power . Thus, the teacher has more power than the student and so the student should address the teacher politely. The study also aimed at establishing the problematic polite forms that were not used as often as they should be used in contexts where they should have appeared and did not appear.

According to the Kenya Institute of Education, 2002 syllabus edition students should be taught to have “appropriate language and respect other people’s character as well as other people’s culture.” This meant a student who used appropriate language, had learnt polite forms, although respect was also shown using non-verbal ways.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.3.1 Knowledge of the Language**

The analysis, interpretation and discussion of the findings of this study were based on the broad theoretical framework of communicative competence by Hymes as is quoted by Saville(1982;23). Saville says communicative competence involves “not only knowing the language but also what to say to whom, and how and even when not to talk.” Chomsky (1957) says speakers proficient grammatically in their language know what expressions are acceptable in the language and what expressions are unacceptable at the age of five. This means the students should already have known which expressions are acceptable in English. In the study, the students’ speech was expected to show whether they knew the polite expressions to use, when to speak and

when to remain silent, whom they may speak to and how they may talk to people of different statuses and roles. Here the competence in politeness was shown by the frequency of the polite forms that indicated whether they were polite or not. The students who knew how to speak to different people of different statuses displayed this in how often they used the polite forms as they talked to their teachers.

### **2.3.2 Status and Authority**

The teachers are of a higher status than the students, according to Bateson and Mead (1977). This means the students should have showed respect to them. The study aimed at investigating how often they used polite forms and which polite forms they used as they talked with the teachers who are more senior to them and which polite forms they rarely used as they talked to teachers.

### **2.3.3 Sensitivity to the Teacher's Feelings**

The research more specifically narrowed down to the use of politeness strategies. The study investigated the use of polite forms like greetings, apology, (sorry), appreciation (thank you), taking leave (good bye), intrusion (excuse me), asking someone to repeat something (pardon), deference and hedging.

The theory that was used was politeness theory by Brown et al, (1978) that states that a polite person shows sensitivity to other people's feelings and/or correct social behavior. A polite student then should have showed this

sensitivity to the teacher's feelings and also displayed correct social behavior in their speech by using polite forms.

Politeness also presupposes potential for aggression and seeks to disarm it and makes communication between potentially aggressive parties possible.

Brown et al (1979) quoting Goffman (1967) says, that politeness does this through the diplomatic function of virtual inference which is the same as bad possible reading of same action by one person that potentially trespass on addressee's, interests, peace of mind (equanimity) or personal reserve. By a student orienting to the virtual inference of the teacher, by talking to him/her using polite forms like 'excuse me' or 'sorry, ', the student, showed that she had the teacher's interest at heart.

However, failure of the student to orient to the virtual offence by refusing to use polite forms as she talked with the teacher was counted as a diplomatic breach. The politeness theory basically holds that every one wants to save or protect their face and not be embarrassed by others. This means both the teachers and the students had faces to protect. It also states that some acts are intrinsically threatening to face and thus require softening. A student thus was expected to show that they knew this and soften their acts by use of polite forms in their speech with the teachers.

### **2.3.4 Collecting and Analysis of the Utterances**

Also Speech Act Theory by Searle as quoted in Levinson (1983:233) was used to explain how various kinds of utterances were used in polite speech. He says syntactic questions are paradigmatically (clearly) used to request information make assertions, state facts, make imperatives or commands etc.

Students' utterances were studied to see whether those syntactic questions were present in their conversation with their teachers now that they help to make one's speech more polite.

Indirect speech acts function as hedges (express doubts or shows something is partially true or true only in certain conditions). Hedging is a primary and fundamental method of disarming routine interactional threats where the speaker has assumed the listener is willing and able to do what she is asking him to do. The use of phrases like 'I wonder' and tag questions in the students' speech would show they were using hedging especially when they are talking with their seniors, the teachers. The study was to investigate whether students use those hedges in their speech with teachers especially when they were negotiating with teachers to give or do something for them.

The use of direct speech acts too was investigated. The direct speech acts are used to convey the on-record strategy in the negative politeness. The bald on-record strategy are used to achieve maximum efficient communication.

Bald- on- record threatens face a lot and the study aimed at finding out if the students used this strategy as they talked with the teachers since it is known to threaten face a lot.

However, there are two kinds of bald-on-record usage. In one the face threat is not minimized and in the other, the speaker minimizes face threats by implication. The study served to reveal which of these two the student used more as they talked with the teachers.

The Grice's maxims (1975) was also used in the study. The maxim of quality which means speaking the truth, maxim of quantity where one should say only

what is required, of relevance where one should be relevant and the maxim of manner where one should avoid ambiguity tie with the bald-on-record strategy. The students speech was analyzed to help in establishing whether what the student said was truthful, whether it was what was required, if it was relevant and if it was ambiguous or not. Grice's maxims require the use of implicature where the hearer is expected to infer what is implied by the speaker especially when the speaker decides not to follow these maxims in order to save the face of the hearer. The speaker can decide to flout these maxims and not to be so direct in what he/she wanted to say to save the face of the hearer. The study sought to find out whether students were direct or they flouted some of Grice's maxims in order to be polite to their teachers as they talked to them.

Crystal, (1997) says for conversational success to occur, people need to feel they are contributing something to it or are getting something out of it in a social context. Every body must have an opportunity to speak, which means no one should monopolize or constantly keep interrupting.

The participants need to make their roles clear, especially if there are several possibilities, for example speaking as a teacher or priest or mother, etc. They need to have a sense of when to speak and when to stay silent, when to proffer information or hold it back; when to stay aloof or become involved. They need to develop a mutual tolerance to allow for speaker unclarity and listener inattention; perfect expression and comprehension are rare and the success of a dialogue largely depends on people recognizing their communication weaknesses through the use of rephrasing (for example, let me put that in

another way) and clarification for example ,are you with me?). There is a great deal of ritual in conversation ,at any random point, unless they wish to be considered socially inept or ill-mannered. They have to choose their point of departure (such as the moment when a topic changes) or construct a special reason for leaving.

To end a conversation, one says the first time he is leaving and the host ignores and it's the second time that he is released. These skills were expected in the students' conversation with the teachers.

#### **2.3.4.1 Conversations Turns.**

Explicit markers of who should speak in formal meeting can be shown by calling the name of the next speaker but turn- taking cues are subtle mostly.

People don't just stop talking when they want to leave the floor instead they can say (so anyway---, last but not least). They also lower the pitch, loudness or speed to show a turn is about to end. Look at the listener more steadily not moving eyes from one to another like when talking.

A listener who wants to be next to speak mostly will become the next speaker if he is the first to talk. But, other ways to show we want to talk are by increasing body tension leaning forward, especially to clarify what the other speaker said.

#### **2.3.4.2 Exchanges**

Because conversational discourse varies so much in length and complexity, analysis generally begins by breaking an interaction down into the smallest possible units, then examining the way these units are used in sequences. The

units have been called 'exchanges' or 'interchanges' and in a minimal form consist simply of initiating utterance (I) followed by a response (R). For example:

I: What are you eating?

R: Sausages.

Two part exchanges (sometimes called 'adjacency pairs') are common place, being used in such contexts as questioning/answering, informing/acknowledging and complaining /excusing. Three – part exchanges are also important, where the response is followed by an element of feedback. Such reactions are especially found in teaching situations.

Teacher: When do we see the stars? (I)

Pupil: At night. (R)

Teacher: Yes, that's right, at night.(F)

Constraints that are found in sequences include giving inappropriate feedback in the teacher- feedback sequence when the response given is not what is expected.

Unacceptable sequences can occur if the two speakers are talking of different things may be because of what they are looking at. For example if one is looking out the window you can have.

A: Where did you keep the knife?

B: It is raining outside.

Discourse analysts are always on the look out for such (as above) unexpected but perfectly acceptable, sequences in context.

A: Good bye

B: Hello (if A was leaving and meets B at the door)

Many jokes, too, break discourse rules as the source of their effect.

A: Yes, I can.

B: Can you see into the future?

### 2.3. 4.3 Conversation Manouvres

Conversation turn-taking is often marked by clear signals of direction.

Opening: Guess what, sorry to trouble you, lovely day; got a match?, excuse me, can I help you?, Good morning, Did you hear the one about?, Can you spare a minute? Halt! Who goes there? Not: how much do you earn.

Ongoing checks; By the speaker; Do you see? Can you guess what be say? Do not you think? Let me put it in another way! Do not get me wrong, what I am trying to say is.

By the listener; You mean, Have I got you right? Mhm, I do not get you, let's get that straight .

Changing Topic; introducing a new topic: that reminds me, incidentally, That's a good question by the way, speaking of John, where was I?

Concluding a topic so it goes, That's life, makes you think, doesn't it. Let's wait and see.

Ending; sorry, but I have to go now. Nice talking to you. Well, must go back to work. Gosh, is that the time? I mustn't keep you Gotta run (especially USA). Many of these forms were expected in the students' conversation with the teacher since they are part of a good conversation.

#### **2.3.4.4 Choosing the Right Situations to Study in a School.**

In finding out language development in school, samples would be collected from language in use. Pupils and teachers would collect samples of real linguistic situations both spoken and written and discuss the distinctive features of the language.

Typical situations used in 1970s with secondary school children were advertising news reporting, operation instructions, being tactful, using technical terms, collections of written materials, role play and other techniques that provided both involvement and realism. By choosing situation that would be meaningful and motivating, educationist hoped that pupils would explore the nature of their experience when using and responding to language and thus arrive at fresh understanding of its meaning for them. In this way, it was felt that they would develop their awareness of what language is and how it is used and by degrees, extend their own competence in handling it. This approach of language in use is still widely used and was used in this study to get as real data as possible.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 The Research Design**

The qualitative research design was used since the data that was collected needed to be grouped into the various categories. The data collected was analyzed and put into tables where possible.

### **3.2 Variables**

The independent variable was the teacher who is a symbol of authority since it was assumed the teacher's authority is higher than that of the student in the school setting. Being more senior than the student the teacher deserves to be talked to in a polite way by the student.

The dependent variable is the student's polite language usage in which case the student was expected to use polite language while talking with the teachers who are their seniors. The data that was collected were the utterances that were spoken as the students and teachers talked with one another in the sessions in the classes and in the offices; of the principal's and the deputy principal's.

### **3.3 Site of the Study**

The study was carried out in Kaaga Girls' in Imenti North District (Meru).

The school is purely a girls' school and it is the oldest girls' school in Meru having been started in 1932 by the Methodist church missionaries.

It is located about five kilometers from Meru town along Meru-Maua road. It is a provincial school and stands on a thirty two acre piece of land. It is an academic giant and has sent many of its students to the university over the

years. It is a four-streamed school with a population of 760 students. It has thirty eight teachers and it is a boarding school. The girls from the institution have placed themselves in various positions in the country and all over the world. It is thus expected to produce people who will fit properly in the society. Kaaga is a school which has students from different communities in Kenya with different social and culture backgrounds but who interact on day today basis among themselves and with their teachers.

The research sites are classrooms and the offices and around the schools which are the main sites where the students would be expected to speak formal English. The sites made good settings for the collection of data that would reflect use of polite forms.

In the classroom, the students were expected to be serious and this was reflected especially when there was a teacher present. The discussion on the strategies to pass in English in the KCSE was held in class and the students were first allowed about five minutes to think of the possible ways that they could think of improving in their performance in English.

This kind of a discussion was carried out termly especially among form fours to help them to keep their focus on the coming KCSE exam towards the end of the year. Different students were expected to come up with their own strategies and use language to express themselves to the class.

### **3.4 Target Population.**

The target population was the form four students in high school in Kenya who have studied the KIE syllabus in their four years of study. They were expected to have been taught the various polite forms as they appear in their syllabus.

The study sought to find out from the accessible population who are the form four students at Kaaga Girls' High school whether they use those polite forms as they relate with the teachers and what the teachers' views are about this usage by their students.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques and the Sample Size.**

The study used random sampling, a technique based on Glaser and Strauss (1967) discussed in Stubbs (1983:231). This is a concept of theoretical sampling, which involves deliberate and explicit choice of a sample, which will give a special insight into whatever one wants to study. People and situations which were suitable in providing a corpus for investigation were thus identified.

The random form four classes were picked depending on which first two held their class meetings first. The sample size consists of all those who spoke in those meetings since some conversation in some classes had several contributors and others a few in the time that the meeting lasted. Every student in those classes had a chance to be picked so long as they spoke.

Each class meeting had a teacher and the class members of that class. This means the sex was the same but ages varied slightly with an age difference of between 1-3 years on average. The number of students studied in form 4x and those studied in 4y were all those who spoke. The researcher was present in those classes together with the class teachers in charge of those classes.

During those meetings, the time limit was between 25-30 minutes. About two hours were needed to analyze each 30 minutes of recorded data.

In some of the meetings the classes were discovered to be passive and the researcher, like in her class, had to point at some of the girls and ask them to give their views. In one of the class meetings, however, the group was quite active in giving their views though they preferred talking as a group to talking as individuals.

The data collected amounted to fifteen hours for all the groups studied.

However, Milroy (1987) notes, large samples tend not to be necessary for linguistic survey as for other surveys. This is so because, it has been observed that linguistics behaviour is more homogeneous than many other types of behaviour. This was true for groups and for the sample size in this study.

Leedy (1993) describes research as the systematic process of collecting and analyzing information (data) in order to increase our understanding of the phenomenon with which we are concerned or interested. He further suggests that it involves the interpretation of data to draw conclusions.

According to Yin (1980) data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining evidence to address the initial propositions of the study, Mwenje (2006: 71).

There was no prior knowledge on the part of the students that they were being studied. But in the class meetings and in the offices, the teachers were informed that the researcher was there to collect data for MA dissertation.

The total number of students in form four is 186 but Labov (1982) says four informants are enough, so a minimum of four students was studied in each session described except in ones when one spoke as an individual like in the

principal's office. In the principal's and deputy principal's office, the researcher observed a total sample size of four students.

The sampling technique used to get the sample from the teachers was purposive sampling and mostly those teaching form four were picked. This is because only those teaching form four are better placed to give a valid assessment of the form four students since they are in contact with them constantly. The table below shows the gender and the years each teacher has taught.

**Table 3.5.1 the number of teaching years for each teacher and subjects**

TEACHER	SEX	TEACHING YEARS	SUBJECTS
T1	M	11	GERM/LIT
T2	F	11 1/2	ENG/LIT
T3	F	12	MATHS/GEO
T4	F	6	HIST/CRE
T5	F	2	MATHS/CHEM
T6	M	13	BIO/AGRI
T7	F	16	KISW/CRE
T8	F	21	CRE/GEO
T9	M	9MONTHS	KISW/HIST
T10	F	7	KISW/CRE
TOTALS%	M=30 F=70		

The number of teachers teaching form fours is twenty five and ten of them were picked to answer the questionnaire. Those picked were five among those who teach the compulsory subjects and four who teach optional or technical subjects. The study targeted 10 teachers who teach form four students in various subjects or deal with them in other non-academic areas or like in the case of the principal, deals with them directly on various issues and frequently. The questionnaires were given to the form four teachers only to ensure that whatever information that they gave was a report of what was happening then. The teachers who filled in the questionnaire were both male and female as shown in the table above. The table also shows how long they have taught in the school.

From the table, it can be seen that 3 (30%) are males and 7 (70%) are females. The staff consists of 38 members with 16 males and 22 females. This is why there are more females picked. Another aspect was also that of those who deal with students especially in teaching of compulsory subjects. The compulsory subjects are English, Kiswahili and Maths and at least two sciences which happened to be Chemistry and Biology in our school.

Another factor too that was considered in purposive sampling was how much contact the teacher has with the students outside class. Areas that were considered were office where the principal and the deputy principal were picked since they interact with them on regular basis on various issues. The other area considered was that of guidance and counselling and teachers in the committee dealing with students with discipline problems. A number of form fours have appeared before this committee on various occasions and the

researcher wanted to get information on how they behave when they appear there from one of the teachers who sits in it. The other area that was considered was games. Also language teachers were many in the group since they are the ones that teach the polite forms directly, so they were expected to give their views on how the students use them. The table below shows the study sample of teachers.

**Table 3.5.2 Level of education and the areas for each teacher**

TEACHER	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	AREA
T1	GRADUATE	CU/ GERMAN/LIT
T2	M.E.D	ENG (COMPULSORY
T3	GRADUATE	MATHS (COMPULSORY SUBJECT)
T4	MASTERS CONTINUING	DISCIPLINE /CRE/HIST
T5	MBA “ “	PRINCIPAL/MATHS COMPULSORY
T6	DIPLOMA	GAMES/BIO (COMPULSORY)
T7	M.ED CONTINUING	KISW (COMPULSORY)
T8	GRADUATE	COUNSELLING/CRE /GEO
T9	MA CONTINUING	KISW (COMPULSORY)
T10	GRADUATE	KISW (COMPULSORY)

The table above shows the distribution of teachers according to the areas they are involved in. This means the data collected represents almost all the areas that matter in a school setting. The table also shows the levels of education of

the teachers. It seems the teachers who were picked most of them have done or are pursuing masters in various fields which include education, business and project management. This, however, just happened to be a major coincidence since it was not in anyway intended to be so by the researcher.

The teachers, who are all known to the researcher, said they responded to the questions without bias having understood the nature and the purpose of the research from the researcher. They responded to the questionnaire within duration of one day to two weeks and were very co-operative since all the questionnaires were returned.

### **3.6 Data Collection.**

#### **3.6.1 Research instruments.**

The conversation that was studied was taped as the students discussed with the researcher in the class on the strategies to improve performance in English in her class. Another conversation that was taped was in a class meeting and later analyzed for the various polite forms to be picked.

The sessions lasted up to 30 minutes in the class sessions. In the principal's office, the sessions were shorter but the whole conversation was recorded and analyzed. The researcher made notes of the non-verbal behavior of the informants to help her to analyze the rest of the data. The teachers picked were given the questionnaire to fill and later, after two weeks, they were collected and the data in them analyzed.

The questionnaire that was administered to the teachers is attached to this dissertation in the appendix section.

The first question showed how long the informant has been in the school. Those who have not interacted with the students for more than a term were not to answer the questions for they may not have very objective views about them.

The second question was useful since someone like the principal or the deputy may not be teaching them yet they answered the questions to give their views on how the girls use polite forms when they go to their offices.

Question 3-10 gave data from the teachers on how well the students use the actual polite forms. Those who thought the students use them more gave more positive responses like always or often and those who thought they use it less, gave less positive responses like never or rarely to indicate this.

Questions 11-15(a) gave the teachers' general observations on the students' general usage of polite language.

Question 15(b) gave data on what the teachers think can be done to improve the use of polite language by the students.

### **3.6.2 Data Analysis and presentation**

The data collected was analyzed using the qualitative approach. The first step was to transcribe the tape recorded data on paper. The transcribed texts were studied to identify the various polite forms that the speakers used. These polite forms are tabulated, analyzed and presented in frequency tables in the next chapter.

The results and observation notes gave useful information on how the students actually behaved during the research and helped in the analysis of the use of

polite forms by the students as they talked with teachers. The presence or absence of the polite forms in the tabulated data showed whether the students used the polite forms or not.

Then the tabulated data is analyzed and compared with the existing theories on how polite forms should be used and when. The results showed there are some polite forms that didn't appear where they should have appeared thus showing they are rarely used.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION.

#### 4.1 Introduction

The presentation will start by showing when the students used the polite forms in their conversation with the teachers as they should, according to the first objective. It will be followed by the presentation that will show instances when students did not use the polite forms correctly according to the second objective. Finally, the teachers' views will be presented that will show what they have observed from their students. After each objective the interpretation of what was observed will be given and compared with what is expected according to the syllabus and politeness rules conventionally.

#### 4.1 The Polite Forms the Students Used.

##### 4.1.1 Silence, Apologies, Hesitation, Turn-Taking and Deference

Table 4.1.1

#### SITUATIONS ANALYZED

Polite Forms	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
Silence	3	1	0	0	1
Apologies	3	0	0	0	0
Hesitations	2	0	0	0	1
Turn Taking	0	0	4	5	1
Deference	1	0	0	1	2

In the conversation that takes place in the principal's office (Appendix 2)

a student was called in to explain why she had gone to the gate though she knew it was against the school rules. When she was asked several questions, to some she decided to keep quiet especially when she realized she had been caught lying.

Principal: Is he known to your parents?

Student: Eh. No.

Principal: But you said he was sent from home? (Student keeps quiet).

The Principal noticed that the student was lying about the man being sent from home yet he was not known to the parents and when she asked her about it, the girl kept quiet. This showed she knew she had been caught. Silence here is seen as a way of consenting to her mistake and also a show of politeness instead of going on arguing to get out of the trouble the lie had put her in. And since by saying openly she was lying, she would lose her face in front of us all, she decided to keep quiet. So silence here was communicative according to Brown and Levinson (1978:187-190). She keeps quiet two other times but it could be said she was taking time to prepare an answer just as it happens in the researcher's class.

There is the use of apologies. After the principal talks to the girl, showing her her mistake of going to the gate which was against the school rules, the girl says that she is sorry.

Principal: Do you know it is wrong to go to the gate without permission?

Student: I-----I----- know (twisting her hands and bumbling with words).

I -----I-----do not know what force compelled me to go towards the

gate. I am sorry, I am very very sorry. Please forgive me .I will not repeat that.

The student knew how to apologize and also uses various other strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1978:187-190). She uses hesitation, "I... know". "I...don't know." She also gives overwhelming reasons, "I do not know what force compelled me to go towards the gate."

By also going bald on record and admitting the mistake she did, saying, "I am sorry." "I will not repeat that." she apologizes. She also uses the strategy of bumbling with words to express deference. This is a strategy that Brown and Levinson (1978:186) say members of the dominated groups or lower strata use to express deference to the dominant members. The women also use the behaviour pattern of deferent, self-humbling in front of men, with lowered eyes, shy or embarrassed silence and kinesic self-effacement. Here, the student is a girl and so displays most of these behaviour patterns which include lowering of eyes, embarrassed silence, self-humbling and bumbling before the Principal who is more senior to her. The student pleads to be forgiven but since she was not very co-operative earlier, she is dismissed with instructions to come later. In various ways, this conversation shows what is expected when a person wants to save his/her face. The student decides not to tell the truth that she had not known the man for long. Since it will be embarrassing to be seen as loose morally by her teachers for having her fare being paid by a stranger and being visited by a man whose second name she didn't know and who she had met only once. So she decides to save her face by not telling the truth, not being relevant and not giving enough details.

The strategies she uses combine bald-on record strategies and indirect strategies. Bald on- record strategies are when she begs for forgiveness, uses polite forms "I am sorry," and she promises not to repeat the mistake.

With the indirect strategies, she uses bumbling and hesitation in her speech.

This shows that a student knows and uses the necessary polite forms when in a situation where she feels they will save her from impending trouble. In this case, the student knows the principal has the power to determine what happens to her which includes punishing her or even sending her home. So the student tried to use all the politeness strategies she knew to save herself from any of this.

In the same conversation, the Principal complains that the student is wasting her time and that of others by not telling the truth. The student apologizes and promises not to repeat the mistake.

Principal: Now, we are wasting a lot of time. And since you have refused to tell us the truth, I want to give you up to 4:30PM today when the lessons end. If you don't tell me the truth that time, I will send you home and you will come back when exams will be starting. Now go.

Student: I am sorry. (Shaking her hands). Please, please. Do not send me home. I will not repeat such a mistake again.

Apologizing is an act where the speaker regrets an action that he/she has already done. This is done towards achieving continued harmony between interactants, Brown and Levinson (1978), Edmondson (1981). The student apologizes to achieve harmony with the principal so that she is not sent home. Although turns -taking took place, they were controlled by the principal

or the deputy and the student responded and spoke when asked to or when she thought it was polite to talk. She kept quiet at times when she was expected to speak and instead just shook her head.

Principal: But you said he was sent from home?

Student: (keeps quite).

In the above instance, the student did not speak since the principal made a statement in form of a question just to voice what the student had said earlier and confirm if it was true or not. The student then did not find it necessary to talk.

Principal: So, what is his other name?

Student: I do not know. I know him as John.

In the above instance the student takes the turn to provide an answer to the question she was asked about the name of the man who had come to visit her.

D/ Principal: So you meet a man whose second name you do not know and he pays your fare and then he comes over to visit you. Is that normal?

Student: (looks fearfully at the D/P and shakes her head).

#### 4.1.2 Greetings, Honorifics, Chorusing and Appreciation

Table 4.1.2

##### SITUATIONS ANALYZED

Polite Forms	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
Greetings	0	1	1	1	1
Honorifics	0	1	0	0	1
Chorusing	0	0	8	12	6
Appreciation	0	0	1	3	0

In the conversation that takes place in the deputy principal's office (appendix A3 ;(i) ) it is the teacher who greets the student and then she responds correctly and politely.

D/Principal: Yes. How are you?

Student: I am fine. Mwalimu- Ningependa kukuambia nilienda kwa motivation class yah Mr. Y today morning.(I would like to inform you I went to Mr .Y's motivation class)

The Deputy Principal greets the student and the student responds politely as a way of creating rapport. Edmondson (1981:149) talks of internal illocutions to refer to those acts that 'Concern rituals necessary for commencing or terminating an encounter'. Greetings are the most common in an official situation to establish rapport to the advantage of smooth running of the conversation. This shows the students know how to respond to greetings and do so politely. By using the honorific "mwalimu", meaning "Teacher" show that she respects the teacher.

When the researcher and the teacher went in one of the form four classes, 4x, during a class meeting (Appendix 4), we found the students were reading the bible and after that the prefect led in prayers. After that, she, the prefect, started the meeting by greeting the class. This shows that students know the purpose of greetings as that of creating rapport and use them to create it to be able to start speaking to the class. These pre-exchanges seem to be part of what she was doing only that this time it was used to show the start of the new exchange after the exchange of prayers.

Prefect: (She stands in front) Good afternoon?

Students: Good afternoon.

Prefect: I don't have much to say, I just want to say you co-operate. The noise has gone down..... Ya. (Looking at the teacher to mean he can talk to the class)

The class teacher in (AppendixA5) has come to his class at 5:30 pm to attend a class meeting accompanied by the researcher, since at lunch time when he was supposed to meet them they were out for an English discussion at a neighbouring school. He has also brought them goodies that their PTA representative had given him to give them. The researcher is with him.

Teacher: Good evening .Some one lead prayers for us.

Students: Good evening Mr x.

Student: (Prays)

The students respond to greetings using the honorific 'MR.' showing they know the right way to address the seniors and appreciate that greetings are necessary in creating rapport in any conversation.

The prefect in (Appendix 4) commends the class by telling them the noise had gone down. By telling them that, she is showing her appreciation of their improved conduct.

Prefect: I don't have much to say, I just want to say you co-operate. The noise has gone down..... Ya. (Looking at the teacher to come and talk).

This shows students know how to tell when people are behaving well. This showed the class was doing well. She used declarative to give information. "The noise has gone down". She looks at the teacher and tells him to go on. She has controlled the turn-taking by so doing.

There is the use of chorusing where the students talk all of them at the same time to introduce a topic or give a response to the teacher.

Students: (Chorus) Lights.

This strategy is used to ensure no particular student is handpicked either to ask or answer any question or give a clarification as a way of saving their faces. Chorusing has also been used by students as they insist that the student who was to be moved to another sitting position should stay where she is (Appendix 4).

Some Students: (Chorus) – Ebu akae kae hapo. (Let her sit there for a while)

Chorusing is used by the students as they point out to the teacher that there is a tree outside their class that is stinking.

Students: The plant outside- the green one. It's stinking.

Teacher: It sends away mosquitoes.

Some Students: (Chorus) It attracts flies.

Even when the students are telling the teacher he has a class with them after the meeting, they still say it in a chorus.

Teacher: Time is up and next week we meet in the morning.

Some Students: We have a lesson (After that)

After the greetings, the teacher gives the students the goodies their PTA representative had sent and he asks for the feedback that he will give her.

Teacher: Some go to Meru School and learn but what's important is what you remember. After the prefect has given you the sweets and biscuits some of you will tell me what to do for you and will tell me what to tell Mrs. Z since she wants to know how you are doing.

Prefect: Tell her we are grateful for the clock, sweets and biscuits. We will make her proud.

Student: We miss her. We would want her to come and visit us.

Students: Tell her we are grateful that she remembers us.

Teacher: Ok. Tell her we are grateful.

Student: Tell her to come and visit us since we are in the last year.

The prefect, may be due to her position as the leader, feels obliged to give this feedback and tells the teacher to tell her they are grateful for all the gifts. Here, the student expresses gratitude which is a sign of politeness on behalf of the class. She also uses a commissive where she promises on behalf of the class that they were going to make her proud. Commissives commit a speaker to some future course of action for example, promising, offering etc.

Another student used an expressive which shows the psychological state the students are in. She tells the teacher to tell the PTA representative they are

missing her and thus seem to suggest they would want her to come and visit them. Another student uses an expressive to suggest to the teacher to tell her they were grateful.

All that shows students know how to verbally appreciate when someone has done something for them especially when it was not bought with their money. Another student uses a directive which is meant to get an addressee to do something, to tell the teacher to tell the PTA representative to come and visit them.

The teacher can notice that there is a student who wants to say something from her body language and the way she is smiling. When he gives her a chance to talk, she says that the PTA representative should be told 'thank you'. This shows students use polite forms to thank those who they feel have gone out of their way to do them good like what the PTA representative had done. The student also gets a turn to speak.

The teacher repeats for the third time that they should not carry the sweets or the wrappers outside the class. Repetition is used here to create meaning and clarify communication.

Teacher: No I gave you the document to take to your parents. Please don't take any of this stuff outside,( pointing at the sweets and biscuits they were eating.) Are there complaints or requests or you are happy?

Students: Yes.

He wanted to make it clear that the students were not allowed to carry the sweets or their wrappers outside. The teacher wants to ensure every thing is in order and so he asks the students if there were any requests or complaints or

they were happy. (This is an adjacency pair of question and answer when the students reply since they did not raise any requests.)

The teacher still controls the turns-taking and the topic and that is why he is able to change the topic easily. Coulthard (1977) observes that turns to speak occur successfully without overlaps or gaps between them. If overlaps occur, one speaker ends his turn quickly and gaps between turns are incorporated by another speaker to make the conversation flow. He further observes that in formal speech situations, it is possible for one speaker whose role assigns them extra successive utterances thus controlling turn-taking. In this case the teacher has authority not only to choose the next speaker but even the topic. Here he controls the turns by shifting to the topic of the money for a trip a class was to make.

Teacher: Make sure you give Ksh .300 to the prefect.

Students: No. This Friday (chorus).

Suggesting occurs when the speaker assumes that the hearer will do what the speaker asks since it is intended to benefit the hearer and may affect both the speaker and the hearer. The students suggest that they should bring the money on Friday instead of that day which was a Wednesday. However, the teacher seems to object since he feels they had enough time to bring it. The exchange seems to have ended since they become silent and no student gives the feedback on whether they will do it that day or not. It was not established whether the students brought the money that day or on Friday. But silence here communicated that they understood what the teacher had said and that is why

they did not pursue the matter further by asking more questions or saying more.

The teacher still controls turn taking by selecting the next topic by shifting to the discussion groups and asking the students whether they were using the groups that were listed and posted on the wall of the class.

Teacher: Are you making use of these? (Pointing at a list of discussion groups posted on the wall of the class.)

Students: Yes

The teacher issues a warning in a directive by telling them they were the ones to learn and cover the Syllabus and not the teacher. The students' response is still in the affirmative showing they are polite and it shows they know how to keep the conversation going by showing they are listening.

Teacher: Have you covered the syllabus?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: It's up to you as an individual to cover the syllabus. It is you to learn not the teacher.

Students: Yes (chorus).

Teacher: Work hard, very very hard.

Students: Yes.

The students chorused 'yes'. This marked the end of that exchange with just one adjacency pair of question and answer or according to Crystal (1997) initiating utterance (1) and a response (R).

The teacher issues a post-exchange in wishing them all the best.

Teacher: All the best.

Students: Thank you.

This shows he was the one in control of the conversation and when he decided to end it he just used a post-exchange "All the best" to show the conversation was over.

The students ended the conversation with a Thanks-Maximization and said 'thank you'. This shows the students use the polite forms of showing appreciation for what they have been given. It also means they were happy with how the conversation had gone and the sweets and everything that had taken place in this meeting.

The findings in this conversation show that the students know how to express their gratitude politely as it can be seen in what they told the teacher to tell the PTA representative. They told him to tell her 'Thank you'. The students also use various acts to communicate. They use directives 'Tell her we are grateful that she remembers us.

It was noted that most of the answers the students gave in this conversation; they did so in a chorus. The researcher concluded this strategy was meant to save the face of individual students very few of them wanted to be picked to talk and even when they were, they would show signs of shyness like lowering their eyes before speaking.

Turn taking in this class was controlled by the teacher mostly as has been shown on several instances. One student, however, uses a starter. A starter shows a speaker intends to say something. They were used here by the student who showed that she wanted to speak through use of body language of leaning

forward and smiling .The teacher noticed that one student was smiling and wanted to talk and when he called her, she talked and said “Tell her thank you” in reference to the PTA representative.

#### 4.1.3 Starters, Suggesting, Softening Phrases, Negotiation Skills, Plurality.

**Table 4.1.3**

##### SITUATIONS ANALYZED

Polite Forms	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
Starters	1	0	0	1	1
Suggesting	0	0	3	2	5
Softening Phrases	2	0	0	4	7
Negotiation Skills	1	2	3	3	5
Plurality	0	0	1	3	21

In the conversation where the researcher was talking to her class to find out what strategies they were going to use to pass the KCSE exam (Appendix 5) the students use a number of politeness forms. When the teacher greeted them, they responded formally showing they know how to use the conventional greetings that include the use of honorifics ‘MRS.’ with the teacher’s name.

Teacher: Good afternoon.

Students: Good afternoon Mrs. M

Teacher: I want us to discuss the strategies we will use to pass the coming exam .Can you take five minutes and think of some (all are

quiet for a while).

The first student that talked was given a chance to talk after she indicated she wanted to talk by lifting her hand. This shows she wanted a turn to talk and it shows she knows how to indicate that she wanted to talk using body language which is acceptable though non-verbal cues were not being studied here.

Student A: (Lifting her hand) As a class we should present topics in  
Literature books that were not presented.

The student who talked next used the starters "Mmm--- Uh" and a declarative by saying,

Student B: (Lifting her hand) Mm...Uh. Do other papers from other  
districts.

The use of a starter shows the student wants to speak and does so politely.

The student who gave a suggestion next used a directive.

Student C: Do other papers from other Districts.

This shows what she would want them to do as a class. This is used as suggestion here and it shows politeness.

The third student uses broken English

Student C: To what A has said, I think we find literature questions and do  
them.

Student C talks rather shyly although she is the class prefect and does well in written grammar. This is a show of deference by using language incorrectly now that she was addressing her senior, the teacher, as Levinson and Brown (1978: 186) say. She quickly acknowledges the teacher's correction that they

“will revise and not do the paper” with a ‘Yah.’ Showing she did not want to talk a lot which is also a sign of politeness when one is with her seniors.

The next speaker who talks uses deference by using the softening words ‘I think’ to suggest they can be taught more of Poetry. Another student too uses the deference phrase to show politeness to suggest to give the strategy of practicing more on cloze tests.

Student D: I think, on the poetry side you teach us more about it” (waving her hand to emphasize).

Here, she uses negotiation skills. She does not want to say she has not been taught in order to save the teacher’s face and hers, and also does not say she did not understand what was taught thus losing her own face, Levinson and Brown (1978: pg 185). This shows she knows how to save her face by saying she did not remember what was taught and that of her seniors by saying directly there is something they did not do or did not do well. The frequent use of that phrase shows the students know how to soften their requests when addressing their seniors and shows they use negotiation skills. It was found all the groups used one strategy or the other. In negotiating with the teachers, the girl in the principal’s office promised not to repeat what she had done again. Others used suggestions and resolves like in the researcher’s class, “...we will write compositions .....and mark for ourselves,” (A6). In (A4), they chorused their suggestion of what they wanted their teacher to look into that is lights, windows and the stinking plant.

The use of ‘we’ also by many students is a sign of respect. Levinson and Brown (1978: pg 200) say use of Plurality is an ‘honorific’ feature.

Student A: We should make a point to work on punctuation, types of speeches, read the dictionary to get the right spelling to avoid being deducted marks for wrong spelling.

Student F: We set aside some days that we will speak in English.

The teacher noted that there was this girl who talked so often. At one time, she was the school's beauty queen so she was considered an opinion leader in the school. In this class discussion, she also seemed to dominate the talk since she talked more times than any one else. She uses the suggesting tactic whereby she suggests whoever would be caught dozing in the class should be given a topic to work on and present her findings in class as a punishment. The murmuring and the talking that ensues afterwards showed that the students found the suggestion would be quite involving for them though none objected to it loudly.

Student A: To make sure people are not sleeping in class, when they are caught sleeping they should be given a certain topic to work on and present later in class ( the rest of the students started murmuring and talking among themselves and laughing too).

#### 4.1.4 Repair strategy, Leave-Taking and Resolves.

Table 4.1.4.1

##### SITUATIONS ANALYZED

<b>POLITE FORMS</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>A3</b>	<b>A4</b>	<b>A5</b>	<b>A6</b>
<b>Repair Strategy</b>	0	0	0	2	1
<b>Leave Taking</b>	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Resolves</b>	1	0	0	0	10

When one of the speakers spoke in (Appendix 5) and she was not loud enough, a student near the teacher said, "Pardon". This is conversation manouvre where the listener seeks to have what was said repeated in order to get it right. The teacher directed the turn by asking the speaker to speak loudly now that the teacher was in control of turn-taking here. The speaker repeated what she had said earlier. This shows the students know the repair strategy of asking and repeating what was said to ensure the conversation runs smoothly. This shows students know the polite forms needed to ensure one gets what was said. The teacher controlled the turn too by asking the speaker to repeat loudly what she had said.

Teacher: Ok then. (Student near me murmurs but is not loud. Students say to

her 'Pardon'.)

Teacher: You said something and they didn't hear it. Repeat it aloud.

Student F: We set aside some days that we will speak in English.

Students: (Chorus) Yes. (clapping and talking among themselves)

When the students make a suggestion that they should write compositions the teacher asks them what they would do with them. The students then talk in low tones and murmur. This shows they are showing deference since they do not want to talk a lot in the presence of their seniors. This is shown by the fact that even the teacher points it out that only few students talked during the discussion.

Students: (Murmurs then loudly). We mark for each other. (They go on murmuring and consulting and a few hands are up but they are the same students who have talked before).

Teacher: Now, it looks like there are three people who we have heard before.

Are there others whose opinion we need to hear? (Students go on talking among themselves. Some are laughing. Several hands go up.) So who will be heard first?

At one point the students have a suggestion that seem exciting but there was no one to air their view. One student who had talked several times before offered to speak on behalf of the rest. The suggestion is offered in a deferent manner by using the phrase, 'We were proposing if it is possible.....' showing they are showing deference by making it a proposal to the teacher leaving her with the choice to grant it or not as politeness demands. The teacher later discovered the students wanted to hold the discussion with other schools especially boys' schools. The rest of the students laughed showing the student her suggestion was interesting.

Student B: We were discussing here and we were proposing if it is

possible we do discussions with other groups often. (Other

students laugh at this for they know what it means; they will meet with boys in those discussions.)

Teacher: Ok.

Another student contributing on the same point uses a term the students consider honorific. 'Teacher' though this is not a title like 'Mr.' or 'Madam' according to Politeness, (10/2/2007) from Wikipedia.

Student D: Mine was the same one with B. You know Teacher, we as

girls we fear messing up when we are with other schools. So we are going to revise thoroughly to prepare for the discussions (Other students laugh loudly and keep talking to each other. It seems an exciting point.)

One of the students makes a suggestion through asking a question. This is a polite way of making a request that shows students know how to make a request using indirect politeness.

Student B: Is it possible for us to go to a school far away?

Students: (Chorus.) Others like? Where?

There is an interruption when a student came to ask for permission to be allowed to go out and the teacher had to use an aside where she had to talk to a speaker while still talking to the class, Walya (1996).

Student: (A student comes to the teacher) Excuse me teacher, May I go out?

Teacher: Yes.

This showed respect for the teacher and it is a sign of politeness since the student knows how to take leave. This shows the students acknowledged the teacher had authority in this class, Mead (1977), and also has power, Levinson

and Brown (1978) and so they needed to be asked for permission when they are present.

The students showed deference to the teacher by using the softening phrase "I think" or "I suggest....." Showing they respect the teacher.

The students used internal and external illocution. Requesting was used by students where the students asked the teacher to organize symposiums and debates for them with other schools. Suggestion was used by the students when they suggested they should write compositions and read the set books several times. Willingness is shown by the teacher to help the students but at times, some of their suggestions could not be taken without the teacher having to consult with others in the department and in the school. That is why when they suggested they should go to a school far away, the teacher told the students that she had to consult with others in the department. Allowing licensing is seen when the students suggest they can hold debate with other schools and the teacher does not object to it showing she has allowed it.

Telling here is equated to informing. The students were informing the teacher what they had planned to do to improve in their performance by saying they would read the dictionary and write compositions. Claims were made here by the students about what they were doing and the teacher believed they were doing these things like speaking English more. Resolves occur when a speaker wishes to give an opinion. Most of what the students said were their opinions on what they had decided to do as can be seen when they say they will read the set books many more times.

From the questionnaire answers of (Appendix A7) shown below in the (Table 4.1.4.2), the question whether they use Mr. / Mrs. (Q11) 60% of the teachers said they Always use these forms and 40% said 'Sometimes'. This shows that the students are generally keen to use the titles when talking to the teachers showing they acknowledge teachers are more senior than them.

This may be explained by the fact that when they are calling the teacher, it means it will be a one-on-one conversation and so the student would not want to be noted as the individual who does not respect the teacher by calling him/her by their first name and using a honorific. The table below shows the teachers' answers to Q4\_12.

**Table 4.1.4.2 showing the questions, teachers and the answers for Q4\_12**

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Totals%
Q4	R	R	R	O	R	R	_	R	0	R	R=70 O=20 _=10
Q5	R	R	R	R	0	R	0	R	0	R	R=70 O=30
Q6	R	R	R	0	R	R	0	R	0	0	R=60 O=40
Q7	R	R	R	R	0	R	0	R	0	R	R=70 O=30
Q8	R	N	N	N	0	R	0	0	A	A	R=20 N=30 0=30 A=20
Q9	S	S	VF	S	VF	S	S	VF	S	A	S=60 VF=30 A=10
Q10	NWS	W	R	NWS	W	NWS	W	NWS	VW	W	NWS=40W=40 R=10 VW=10
Q11	A	S	S	S	A	A	S	A	A	A	A=60 S=40
Q12	A	S	R	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	A=10 S=80 R=10

**KEY**

T-Teacher Q-Question Q4\_8 N- Never R-Rarely O-Often A-Always

Q9 A-All S-Some VF-Very Few Q10 VW- Very Well Q11&12 A-Always

S-Sometimes R-Rarely.

From the table shown above question 12 shows students value “greetings” which, though it has no particular purpose apart from the social function of

creating rapport or for purposes of social interaction are taught very early, Troike (1982 :225-6).

This means those students, who are members of the society, should be able to greet their teachers as they have been taught. The results from this question indicate 8/10 (80%) teachers reported that the students greet them Sometimes. One reported to have been greeted always and one reported to have been greeted rarely. This shows 80% of the teachers reported that 'Sometimes' the students greet them. This shows of the social forms studied, the students have learnt and use the polite forms for greetings in a relatively regular way for it to have such positive response from teachers.

#### **4.2 The Polite Forms That Were Rarely Used**

From the session that involved a student who came into the principal's office (Appendix 2) and found the three of us seated it was found that she did not greet us. This is unusual, for greetings and pre-exchanges according to Walya (1996) are supposed to be there to serve the social function of creating rapport. However, it can be understood since the student was too anxious and wanted to get on and finish this conversation by telling the principal what happened. However, she, the student, does not seem polite by failing to greet her seniors to create rapport. This does not show the student's sensitivity to the teachers' face since she does not show respect to them by greeting them.

The principal asked the student the first question without greeting her. This means there is no rapport that is established between the two groups. The

principal, however, is allowed to do this since she has higher dominance and is the one displaying while the student is the one spectating thus showing submission according to Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977).

In her response to the principal, she flout's Grices maxim of relevance by saying nothing about who the man was and instead saying he was sent from home. She did this may be to justify why she had to talk to the man though it was against the school rules.

Principal: Who was that who came to see you on Monday?

Student: He was sent from home

The student's lie that the man was sent from home is discovered when she says the man is not known to her parents.

Principal: Is he known to your parents?

Student: Eh. No.

This reveals that the student had flouted Grices maxim of quality in not telling the truth earlier when she had said he was sent from home and it shows lack of respect for her seniors, something she should not display. Why she lied may be explained by the fact that the girl might now have realized the matter was more serious than she had thought and was also growing tense and nervous since her lips were quivering.

The Principal comments about the clear display of extravagance in the expensive things the girl had been brought and yet she could not afford to pay her school fees. The girl says nothing all this while except lowering of her eyes that showed she felt embarrassed. This study however, doesn't focus on the non-verbal signs of politeness but this was noticed as the sign to show

what the girl felt since the researcher was making observation notes. She, the student, in her reply as to whether she knows what the school rules are about foodstuffs, decides to flout the maxim of quantity (not saying enough) about the rules but instead decides to save her face by defending herself. She defends herself by saying she did not tell him to bring her food instead of apologizing for being visited at the wrong time and being brought food.

Principal: I am surprised that you have such friends who can bring you such things (removes the big card, the packet of queens cake and chocolate bars) yet he cannot afford to pay your fees. Do you know what the schools rules are concerning food stuff?

Student: Yes, But I didn't tell him to bring me food. (Shaking).

Turn taking is controlled by responses that the girl gives and questions from the principal or the deputy.

Principal: How did you meet him?

Student: I met with him when I was stranded in town without fare to go home for mid- term. I was introduced to him by my cousin.

Principal: What is his other name?

Student: I do not know. I know him as John.

Edmondson (1981) says Post-exchanges avails the interactants an opportunity to get back to issues previously negotiated. Likewise, topics that required further details too were characterized by Post-exchanges. Post-exchange occurred where the Principal needed more details about the man (as seen when she asks the girl the other name of the man after talking so much about him) who had come to see the student. These details also seemed to make turn

taking difficult at times. Like when the deputy asked a question, it is more of a summary of what she thinks of the girl than controlling turn taking.

Deputy Principal: So you meet a man whose second name you do not know  
 and he pays your fare and then he comes over to visit you. Is  
 that normal?

Edmondson (1981) observes that post-exchanges make the conversation more complex in terms of multiple topics and turn-taking skills. In the conversation, we see that the Principal decides to get the details of how the girl met the man. This shows there are several topics being pursued here since at first the only issue was that of the going to the gate but now it has turned out that this person who has come to see the girl is not well known to the girl and whose details she does not have and also the fact that he is not known to her parents. The issue of the school fees and the food also came up making the conversation a bit complicated and turn-taking difficult. When the deputy principal talked, she talked about the way the girl's behaviour was strange since she had been paid for fare by a stranger. He had also come to visit her in school.

She asks an information question, "Is that normal?" to get things right.

Also, there is the use of implicature when the girl said that she was stranded in town during mid-term and the deputy principal took that to mean the man who she was introduced to by her cousin paid her fare to go home. The deputy principal applies the maxim of relevance where all that the girl said is related to what led her to where she is now, where she is being visited by the man.

The girl doesn't answer verbally but just shakes her head to show that it is not normal. Shaking of the head is a non-verbal way of agreeing with the speaker in this case. And silence communicates the fact that she is too embarrassed by what she has done and cannot talk and is a way of saving her face.

The girl again flouts the maxim of quality by not telling the truth of how comes she happened to be at the gate at the very time the man was alighting, by saying she was told there was a message for her at the gate. She also decides to flout the maxim of relevance by saying that there was a girl who had told her there was a message for her at the gate. This shows she has not answered the question of timing truthfully but instead has decided to bring in other details that are not so relevant to this question thus flouting the maxim of relevance. This does not show politeness for she is talking to her seniors.

Principal: Can you tell us how you happened to be at the gate the very time that the man, you said John, happened to be alighting from the taxi at the gate?

Student: I was told by one of the students that the watchman, the gateman, had my message. So I went to the gate to get it.

The Principal has to repeat the whole conversation after the student decided not to be relevant and flouted the maxim of quality by not telling the truth. This does not portray the student as polite. The Principal repeats the question and asks about the coincidence in timing of the girl and the man.

Principal: I cannot forgive you before I know the truth. How did you know he was there? I mean, how come it is when you happened to be there?

Student: I had just been told by x that I had a message at the gate then I went

there.

Principal: There is something you are not telling us. How comes that that was the very time he was being dropped by the taxi at the gate on the road?

Also when the girl pleaded to be forgiven the Principal told her she will not forgive her until she has known the truth about what really happened. Here we see a prime occurring since the one interactant, the principal is in-control of both the topic and turn-taking, Cuff and Sharrock (1985). The Principal is in charge of the topic and thus decides the topic is closed.

The student still insists on flouting the maxim of quality by not telling the truth by maintaining that she was called by another student to go and get her message at the gate. This shows the student is not ready to apologize, for by insisting it was a coincidence she is not guilty of going to the prohibited places to meet an outsider. Also by saying another student called her to go and get her message at the gate, there is no coincidence about her going to the gate and the man coming at the same time and so she is not on the wrong, thus she will not need to apologize. This interferes with the smooth flow of the conversation since she does not apologize. Apologizing is the act where speaker regrets an action that he/she has done. It is done towards achieving continued harmony between interactants, Brown and Levinson (1978), Edmondson (1989).

She also flouted the maxim of quality by not revealing why there was such a big coincidence so that the very time she arrived at the gate is the time the man alighted at the gate. And since the student refused to co-operate, the Principal decided to bring the conversation to an end but not in the normal way of

thanks-Maximization as Edmondson (1989) says. He says thanks-maximization occurs when the speaker says "thank you". This doesn't occur, since the Principal actually sends the girl away from her office with a threat that if she doesn't tell the truth at 4.30 pm when she comes back, then she would be sent away until the exam time. This, the Principal did because she was the one with more power and the student had little power and yet had decided not to cooperate according to Levinson and Brown (1978). Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977) say the lecturers and fathers have the right to display while others spectate and this is what we see. The student is a spectator and cannot say anything to change what the Principal has said. The principal orders her to go and she had to go though the matter had not been resolved.

Principal: Now go.

This conversation shows the student chose not to own up for her mistakes and by so doing she would not need to apologize. This however did not work for her since she was sent away without being forgiven and with a threat of being sent home for not telling the truth about the crime. This shows the student either did not value honesty as part of politeness or underestimated its importance in correcting a situation to ensure the smooth flow of a conversation.

We see she doesn't succeed in being acquitted since she decided not to cooperate by telling the truth. This led the Principal to send her back to class, until she, the student, could decide whether she wanted to tell the truth or not. Telling the truth could be costly for her and may be that is why she decided

not to do so. Later, this student was sent home. This shows she still did not cooperate in telling the truth.

This makes one wonder why she said she was sorry. Maybe, she said she was sorry so that she could be forgiven and not face the consequences of her actions. Whether this was the case or not, we see the occurrence of polite forms and strategies in her speech at a point when she realized the Principal had to get the truth from her and not getting it meant trouble for her, the student. This shows the use of polite forms by the student was meant to save her from any further trouble from the administration. It shows the students use polite forms appropriately in a situation when they know they are likely to save their face and not get into trouble.

In the conversation between the deputy and the student who had missed her remedial class (Appendix A3:i) the deputy asked an information question to get to know why the student was missing her class. The student replied in Kiswahili in her reply. The deputy considered this improper and demanded that the student stop mixing languages which the student does for she repeats what she had said in Kiswahili in English. This shows the deputy considered the student's code switching impolite since only her, being senior here, has the right to code switch. She decided to flout the maxim of quality by saying that she had attended Mr. Y's class. She did not want to lose her face by saying "Yes" since it would mean she does not respect the teacher and that is why she did not attend her lessons. She would also need to apologize for it, thus losing her face in the process.

D/Principal: Yes. How are you?

Student: I am fine. Mwalimu- Ngingependa kukuambia nilienda kwa motivation class ya Mr. Y today morning.

D/ Principal: Why are you mixing English and Kiswahili? Why are you missing my motivation class?

Student: I started attending Mr. Y's

She does not apologize at the end though this situation called for it now that she had not done what was expected. This student shows that students do not always apologize even when they have done something wrong especially if there is no threat of a punishment ,since the teacher here does not threaten to punish the student at all.

In (Appendix 3:ii) student has been called to the Deputy Principal's office to explain why she moved to another group. (She had done the same thing as the last one above.)

The Deputy Principal starts the conversation with an information question seeking to get information on why the student decided to move to the group of Mr. Y. There are no greetings from any of the two interactants. This could be because the teacher had already talked to another student on the same issue and there was no change in the location. The student on the other hand doesn't greet her now that her role is that of a spectator while that of a teacher is that of the exhibitor and she did not greet the student.

D/ Principal: Why didn't you attend the motivation classes today?

Student: You are too fast for me.

The student's response that the teacher is too fast for her is face threatening to the teacher. Since according to Levinson and Brown (1978:187) a junior

should use indirect strategies and not say something negative and so directly to her seniors. This shows no deference on the part of the student since the teacher is more senior and is in a position of dominance.

This declarative puts the teacher on the defensive to protect her face in front of the student. She goes on and challenges the students' ability by asking her how she hoped to cope in the future in the university where no one will be so careful to attend to individual problems.

D/ Principal: How did you attend that group and you are not supposed to? You were put there due to your marks. I thought I was teaching the cream of the school?

How will you cope in the university where you will be taught faster and do research on your own?

Student: (Just looks at her and continues smiling silently.)

D/Principal: You (points at her and those who had gone out) will carry Mr. Y with you to the university? You are disobedient enough to change groups. Have you heard no one is allowed to change groups? How do the form ones pass and I teach them too? You must change your attitude.

Girl: They have got used to you.

By so doing the teacher has managed to save her face by showing it is the student who has a problem and not her. The teacher embarrasses her further by telling her indirectly that the form ones are better than her now that she teaches them and they pass. The student doesn't take this last remark kindly and still goes on to show the teacher is the one with the problem by saying the

form ones are used to her. By so saying, the student shows she doesn't acknowledge the teachers' dominance over her so she doesn't show her any deference as she should.

The deputy has to use her authority to order the student to remain in the groups they were assigned and also work on the past papers and pass them to her for marking.

D/ Principal: Remain there in the groups you were assigned since we will rotate next week. (She lowers her head and continues writing while standing.) Do the Limuru Papers and hand them in and no one is allowed to move. Go back to class.

The student realizes that the teacher has given an order and leaves and it is hoped that she complied. This conversation ends without the student saying she was sorry for what she had done. This shows there are situations in which the students do not apologize to teachers even when they are supposed to.

In (Appendix 3 :iii) the deputy principal talks to a student who has come to her office still on missing the remedial/motivational lesson and asks her to explain why she had moved to another group.)

The student comes in and doesn't greet the teacher. The teacher asks her information question to know why the student has not been attending her class. Since the student was near the door and had heard all the teacher had said to those before her, she just smiles and repeats what the one before her had said.

D/ Principal: Who gave you permission to go to another group?

Student: (Smiled) . You are too fast for me.

This shows it is like the students had agreed on what to tell the teacher since they don't seem scared of her as students would when they have made a mistake like in the case of the student who was caught with food. Instead they complain to the teacher directly. Complaining occurs in cases where the speaker believes that the listener has carried out an act that is in his favour. The speaker as a result may criticize or blame the listener, Edmondson( 1981). She threatens them by telling them they would still meet her even if they moved but concludes by giving them directive to go on and do the Limuru revision papers and the directive that they should continue attending their groups. Directives are used to command or ask some one to do something.

D/Principal: You will continue attending in the groups you were assigned and even if you moved I will still meet you in those other groups since we will rotate next week. Do the Limuru Papers and hand them in and no one is allowed to move. Go back to class.

Student: (Leaves without saying anything).

All the three students do not apologize or show deference like the other student in the principal's office who knew she was on the wrong. This shows politeness depends on what the student views as her position. If she views her position as lower than that of the speaker she will show deference and be polite but if she doesn't view herself as vulnerable, like in this case, she behaves like her and the speaker are equals. Here the student feels right and justified to go to any group, so she is more courageous and thus does not show the teacher deference by apologizing.

However, this is not to be expected among students since the teachers are still in authority in school and have a position of dominance, Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977).

In (Appendix: A4), a class meeting in the presence of the class teacher and the researcher, the teacher started his talk without greeting the class. This could have been explained by the fact that the conversation was already going on and was not starting a new one although the greeting would have helped create a rapport with the students. He started his exchange by asking "Who is uncomfortable?" This was in regard to the sitting arrangement. The students already seemed to be aware of this and many of them answered together "X". This is what Schmidt (1983) says that when participants take part in a conversation they bring to its process shared assumptions and expectations about what conversations is, how it develops and what contributions are expected of each. The students know what is expected here and that is why they say it together.

There was use of short curtly answers from the students. They appeared to be in a jocular mood with their teacher and gave their answers in a chorus and did the same with the questions. They do not answer as individuals although it is more courteous.

The teacher switches code to Kiswahili 'Hapa ni kwa Y?' (This is Y's desk) This is an information question that is meant both to inform the class where 'X' will seat and also confirm whether the teacher is right in saying that was where 'Y' stays. The students protest at this directive given by the teacher and

insist that the student remains where she was thus assuming more authority than the teacher, something that is unacceptable.

Teacher: Enda Pale (Go there). That will solve the problem.

Some Students: Ebu akae kae hapo. (Let her sit here for a while).

The teacher uses directive to give guidelines where 'X' will sit. Some students use the same sort of acts, directives, 'Let her sit there for a while' this shows they do not show the teacher deference since they are not supposed to repeat the same kind of a language the teacher uses, Brown and Levinson (1978: 186.)

When the teacher reprimands the students for bringing problems to him, he does it on a light note and uses a declarative. Some students talk at once and say "lights". This shows disrespect in a way since they could have told their prefect all these things to avoid talking all of them at a go. This shows what was pointed out earlier by Schmidt (1983) that they know what to expect from this conversation. This means this conversation with the teacher should serve to provide solutions to all their problems.

One student goes ahead to explain that lights come and go after sometime. The students do not wait for the teacher to respond showing lack of deference and again mention the windows but do not say what is wrong with them. To ensure that they follow his directive to solve some of the problems and not to bring all of them to him, he uses a directive and tells them the store man will solve those ones of the light and windows for them.

Teacher: You are supposed to solve problems yourselves. Must every problem come to me?

Some Students: Lights- (Pointing at the bulb up to the ceiling)

One Girl: lights come and at a certain time go off (Laughs from students)

Some Students: (Chorus) Windows.

Teacher: Store man will solve that. Go to him.

The students mentioned a plant that was outside their class. They said it stunk. The clarification had to be given by the students and they told the teacher "it's stinking". In a reply, the teacher used a declarative and told them, it sent the mosquitoes away. The conversational turns seem to be controlled more by the students than the teacher although he is the one who is in front and is supposed to be giving the speakers a chance to speak. The students speak more in a group rather than individual speakers. They are using the adjacent pairs of information and acknowledging and complaining and excusing for example, in the issue of the plant. The students complain and he still gives excuses why it cannot be uprooted.

Students: The plant outside –the green one. It's stinking.

Teacher: It sends away mosquitoes.

The teacher takes control of the conversation and uses a declarative to remind the students their goal is passing the final exam. He also reprimands them for not coming back to class on time the previous day. He can reprimand them since he is displaying, according to Mead (1977). However, the students do not apologize for coming late to class the previous day.

Teacher: Our goal is passing and giving good results. Yesterday you went to donate blood.... You must come back on time.

You heard the other time the story of a man and the elephant. He

ended up with a squirrel. Our trial results show we had .....

Students: (Chorus) 61 %.

The teacher, who is in control of the topic and turn taking, turned it to the list of shame. He asked who was in that list the previous week and a name (A) of one of the students was given. The student protested by saying 'NO' showing that she did not like it that she was publicly embarrassed and was losing her face. This shows the student felt that no one had a right to shout at her 'shame' for that is too embarrassing. In shouting 'NO' the said student showed no respect for the teacher or the other students since she could have used a polite form to protest like 'I beg to differ' but she did not. This was the class' agreed way of ensuring that no one misbehaved in the class. It was, however, embarrassing for those who found themselves on the spot like this girl. Then the teacher threatens her by telling her that if she did not go to the front, the class would shout shame three times at her. They actually went ahead and shouted 'shame' three times. This was an ultimate way of making one lose their face in public and it was quite hard for the girl for she lowered her head. This showed the class did not find it necessary to save the faces of those who were on the wrong.

Teacher: OK. Let's try to help one another to work hard.

And then there is the shame list- who is it on the shame list?

Some Students: (A)

Student A: No. (Lowering her head)

Teacher: If you don't go there (pointing to the front of the class) then we  
will Say....

Some Students: Shame times three.(shouting) Shame on you . Shame on

You. Shame on you. (The student lowered her head).

The teacher used a declarative and informed the class that time was running out and he added that they could not shout 'shame' at him, since he cannot go on teaching them after that. This is a clarification that he provides so that they will know that he is above them in authority and even if he made a mistake he would not be punished by them, Mead (1977).

Teacher: Time is up and everyone who is misbehaving will be told shame, shame except me since I cannot continue teaching you after that. So you can't tell me shame, shame.

This indicates the teacher might have thought the students might attempt to shout shame at him otherwise he did not need to warn them about it. This view, that students could attempt to embarrass a teacher, seem to be weakly supported by the views of other teachers who answered the question in the questionnaire that asked them to say whether they think the students here generally use polite language (Q15A Table 4.2.1), 10% of the teachers who responded to it said the girls were rude.

In ( Appendix A5), where the teacher attended his class meeting in the evening accompanied by the researcher it was noted that the students were generally more polite and the teacher used polite forms often. However, a few times the students did not use polite forms when they should have.

The request the student makes through the teacher to the PTA representative is not put in a very polite way. The student would be expected to soften the act

by using 'please' as she addresses the teacher since the way it is now is like she is ordering the teacher and it is like the teacher is at her command.

Student: Tell her to come and visit us since we are in the last year.

The teacher is more polite when he uses the softening word 'please' as he gives them the directive not to litter the compound or the class.

Teacher: Please, I don't expect you to litter the class or compound (with the sweet wrappers). .....

The teacher uses this opportunity to remind them the time was over to hand in the money for the trip now that they had been given the letters to requests for it over the holiday. It was now a month after the schools had opened. So they should have brought the money.

Teacher: Make sure you give Ksh. 300 to the prefect.

Students: No. this Friday

Teacher: No .I gave you the document to take to your parents.....

The students were still requesting for more time but they didn't use the softening words 'please' or any other phrase and instead they just spoke all of them at once and shouted 'NO'. This is not polite since they made the teacher defend his face by asserting his authority when he told them 'NO' and had to remind them they had been given enough time. He also used a declarative to remind them he had given them enough time to get the money.

In the conversation where the researcher was talking to her class to find out what strategies they were going to use to pass the KCS.E exam (Appendix A6), it was found out that the students do not use polite forms all the time. Most of the students did not talk but used non-verbal signs of lifting up their

hands instead of verbally excusing themselves by saying 'excuse me' or any other words to indicate they wanted to talk.

When the speaker who happens to have been the first speaker in the discussion speaks, she goes straight to her point without showing any deference and says, " We should make a point to work on punctuation, types of speeches, read dictionaries to get the right spelling to avoid being deducted marks for misspelling." She goes straight to the point to show the urgency of what she had to say now that she was speaking for the second time in a short time though there were others who had not said anything yet. So although it could be polite to say what she had to say very fast, yet, that she did not excuse herself for talking so soon it is impolite.

At one point, a student sneezes but she does not apologize for it and no one puts the rejoinder "Bless you" as it should be. This shows the students are not keen to do it the way the Western culture do it where the speaker offers the rejoinder when a person sneezes. The speaker was not able to establish whether the students did not know how to conduct themselves when they find themselves in such circumstances or they did not find it too necessary to do it the way the Western culture do .

The teacher noticed there were about three students who had talked throughout and she points out this by saying, "It looks like there are three people who we have heard before. Are there others whose opinions we need to hear?" This could be an indicator that these students have assumed solidarity with the teacher as Scollon and Scollon (1980) points out.

When one of the three most active participants talked and suggested that they should have debate with the boys also, the students agreed saying, 'Eh, eh' also suggesting she should continue with similar suggestions. However, the way the students talked together could be viewed as impolite in the presence of the teacher. This shouting was unbecoming. 'Eh' is used when showing surprise or doubt or when asking someone to agree with you. In this case, the students used it to persuade the teacher and others to agree with those who had suggested the idea.

The next student echoes what the previous speaker had said, showing solidarity with the fellow students by saying, "Mine was the same one as X". (The previous speaker). Then she goes on to use a cajoler "You know" as she explains why it is necessary to go out since it will help them to practice more to avoid being embarrassed when they speak in front of the boys. The same student goes on to suggest they should watch live performances by performing theatre groups to help them understand the set books 'An Enemy of the People' the set book for literature better. The use of 'you know' is meant to suggest the teacher should see things the same way the students see them and thus agree with them. This denies the teacher a chance to refuse a request which is against indirect politeness according to Levinson and Brown (1978).

At this point, all the students started talking and even disrupted the sitting arrangement with some facing the back of the class showing their backs to the teacher. This is an interruption in the conversation. Interruptions come in a conversation when speakers are addressing others and not the initial speaker.

and listener. Here the students started addressing one another without considering the teacher was in class and was the one who was controlling the turn-taking and the topic. This shows no deference to the teacher.

One of the three outspoken students suggested they should make a trip to the language labs and the class made a joke by asking, 'To England' and are excited as can be seen from the discussions going on among them. When the teacher asks what the students think about it, the students said in a chorus answer, 'Yes, It's very good'. 'Perfect'. They seemed happy with the suggestion as could be seen from the giggling and laughing and showing using signs that it is a good idea. This shows their speech convergence as a group as students now that they are working for a common course as a group which is to pass exam. The teacher however, said the suggestion may not work now that the language labs were abolished. When the teacher said there are limitations, the outspoken student said the bus is provided. (The School had just acquired a new bus). This information does not fit in with the teacher's information but the student does this on purpose to remind the teacher they had a new bus and could go anywhere the lab could be found. The teacher tried to offer clarification that it is because the language labs were found not to help but the students still insisted that one would not forget what they had practiced. This does not show deference especially in the British set-up since teachers and others do the display and the students and children are not expected to argue a lot or shout in the presence of the seniors, Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977).

A student who had asked the question earlier speaks without indicating she wanted to speak and thus be allowed to speak. Crystal (1997).says a speaker indicates she wants to speak either through body language or speaking the last words with the last speaker. This shows no deference on the part of the student for she does none of these.

When the teacher announced the end of the discussion the student said 'yap' 'yoh' 'yes' showing they were happy to be released from the discussion. This also doesn't show deference since it shows the speaker or the session was boring or they didn't like what was going on and are happy to be free at last. This is very bold of them to show the teacher clearly they were bored or did not like what was going on and is not an indicator of politeness.

Also it was noted after the bell was rang ,soon after this conclusion of the discussion, though the teacher was still in class, a student just walked out of the class and went out without excusing herself. This shows she didn't show respect to the teacher because if she did she could have asked for permission from the teacher.

As it has been shown, students who have assumed solidarity with the teacher show more volubility. This is why there are about three students who spoke most of the time in a class of forty seven students where the rest kept quiet or just giggled or laughed at the suggestions made by the three students.

However, at other times, the students did not show deference like when they spoke without waiting to be given permission to speak, or spoke all of them at go or left the class without asking for permission like one student did.

From the responses given by the teachers in the (table 4.1.4.2) below ,from the data on whether the students in form four use polite forms, we find that on the use of “excuse me”(Q4) when they come to class late 60% (6 teachers) said their students do not say “excuse me” and one didn’t answer that question. This shows that most teachers feel that the students don’t use this form of politeness often times. The table below shows how the students answered the questions Q4\_12.

**Table 4.1.4.2: showing the questions, teachers and the answers**

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	Totals%
Q4	R	R	R	O	R	R	_	R	0	R	R=70 O=20 _=10
Q5	R	R	R	R	0	R	0	R	0	R	R=70 O=30
Q6	R	R	R	0	R	R	0	R	0	0	R=60 O=40
Q7	R	R	R	R	0	R	0	R	0	R	R=70 O=30
Q8	R	N	N	N	0	R	0	0	A	A	R=20 N=30 0=30 A=20
Q9	S	S	VF	S	VF	S	S	VF	S	A	S=60 VF=30 A=10
Q10	NWS	W	R	NWS	W	NWS	W	NWS	VW	W	NWS=40 W=40 R=10 VW=10
Q11	A	S	S	S	A	A	S	A	A	A	A=60 S=40
Q12	A	S	R	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	A=10 S=80 R=10

**KEY**

T-Teacher Q-Question Q4\_8 N- Never R-Rarely O-Often A-Always

Q9 A-All S-Some VF-Very Few Q10 VW- Very Well Q11&12 A-Always

S-Sometimes R-Rarely.

On the use of polite form "sorry" when they have made a mistake and offended the teacher 70% according to the teachers do not use the polite form to apologize when they have offended a teacher. 30% of the teachers said that the students apologize by saying sorry when they have offended a teacher. This shows many students don't verbally apologize when they have offended a teacher. This was also discovered by Brown (1978) who said that saying sorry makes one lose face and that is why many people including students do not feel comfortable saying 'sorry'. However, saying 'sorry' is among the expressives that are very important in serving the social function of establishing good rapport, Searle (1969).

On whether students use 'please' when making requests from the teacher, 60% of the teachers said the students rarely say "please" while 40% of the teachers said the students often do say "please". This shows that the students mostly will not say please when requesting for something from the teachers. This is a sign of low usage of polite forms in their everyday language usage especially in English.

On whether the students say "Thank you" when they have been given something by the teacher, 70% of the teachers said the students, rarely say "Thank you" and 30% of the teachers said they often do say "Thank you".

This shows the students rarely say "Thank you" for what they have been given. Partly, this may be explained by the fact that many of the things the teachers may be in-charge of giving are things bought with their parents' money, for example books. This may in a way make them feel they deserve these things and so have no reason to say "Thank you". This is shown during

the time students were being given sweets when only five students in a class of forty five students said 'thank you', even though the sweets were bought with the PTA member's money.

On appreciating the help that the teachers give them by saying 'That was very kind of you', 20% of the teachers said students rarely said; 'That was very kind of you', 30% said never, 30% said often and 20% said always. I tend to think that this question received such varied answers because those words are much more easily replaced by "Thank you" and the situations when they may be used are more or less the same. It also turned out that one of the teachers who said they always say the words also said they often do say "Thank you" and is also only nine months old in the school. This might mean he has not had a lot of contact with the girls or may not have actually been in a situation that required the girls to give this kind of a response or it could be that those girls he has dealt with always said 'thank you.'

It was found that 29/60 possible times according to teachers (which translates to 48.5%) the students rarely will use the polite forms that are supposed to be known and used by students in high school to make the conversations and relationships flow or go on. There are three counts of 'Never' that can be added to those counts making them 32 times thus becoming 53.5% according to the teachers' report when students do not use the polite forms. This could be a worrying trend knowing that these students are leaving school soon to go out to the society where these forms are expected to be used by those same students

Also the fact that if the tally of 'Often' and 'Sometimes' are considered it would give us 31.5% of the time that students use these common polite forms, then we need to realize that this is a problem because it means more is the time that our students do not use the polite forms that are supposed to be part of their conversation as they relate with teachers who are a symbol of authority just as their employer will be in future.

From the( table 4.1.4.2), it can also be seen that Kaaga Girls students use polite forms 24/60 times if, "sometimes", "often" and "always" are added up together to make 40% of the time.

Also it can be said that they use Mr./ Mrs. Most with 60% of the teacher saying that they always or sometimes do. This is followed in percentage by the use of "That was very kind of you" which has 50% usage if "often" with "always" are added together from the data. The use of "please" comes third with 40% of the teachers feeling the students use it often. The other two forms that follow in the percentage of usage are 30% for "Sorry" and 30% for "Thank you".

"Excuse me" comes last on the percentage of usage according to teachers with 20% usage. However, on this question one teacher did not indicate how often the form was used. This may or may not affect the fact that this form is used the least by the students according to the teachers.

Question 13 in (Table 4.2.1) which required the teachers to indicate what their assessment of their students' behavior is when they, the students, are persuading them to give them something, the responses were 80% of the time the students are very demanding. This shows the students appear demanding to

the teachers. This is unusual because according to politeness rules when one is asking for something they are supposed to be very polite.

Brown (1978) calls this demanding behaviour coercion where the speaker doesn't give the hearer an option but to do what he is telling him. This is against negative politeness principle which is the most elaborate form of politeness in English. Negative politeness demands that you "don't coerce it and you give it (hearer) an option not to act by being indirect with your request, or by not assuming it is able or willing to do A and also by assuming it is not likely to do A and also minimize the threat by showing clearly that you value the social distance power and ranking values." IBID. This means the students should not directly make demands on the teachers since their teachers have more power than they and also are not close to them socially like the way the other students are to them. The students should give the teachers room for escape by making it clear to the teachers it is not a must that the teacher gives them what they are asking for

### **4.3 Teachers' Views**

On whether the students generally use polite language the answers on questions (13\_15A) in (Table 4.2.1) and percentages are shown in the table below.

**Table 4.2.1 showing the question, teachers and answers for question****13-15A****Respondents and answers**

	Q13	Q14	Q15(A)
T1	VD	R	NO
T2	VD	P	-
T3	VD	R	S
T4	VD	P	-
T5	U	P	-
T6	VD	R	S
T7	VD	LP	S
T8	U	LP	S
T9	VD	P	S
T10	VD	P	S
TOTAL%	VD=80 U=20	R=30 P=50 LP=20	NO=15 S=80 _=30

**KEY**

13. V.D Very demanding R-Rudely

U- Understand

14. V.P- very polite

P-Politely

L.P\_ less politely

R-Rudely

15 (A) Y-Yes

NO-No

S-Sometimes.

15% of the teachers said ‘ No’, 85% said ‘ Sometimes’ the students use polite language. Three teachers didn’t respond to this question making 30% of those who did not respond. This shows majority of the students use polite language sometimes. This is an issue that needs to attract the attention of all the stakeholders to ensure that the students use polite language always. This is because as we all know, one instance of rudeness to the wrong person can be very costly. This is so especially now that those we are talking about are young people who are known to be very emotional and yet have a long way to go in social and career development thus using polite language is of great importance to them.

From the findings of this research up to this point, they indicate the teachers feel the students do not use polite language always and as educators and shapers of these young lives that have great potential, the teachers expressed their views on question 15 (B) on what they think can be done to help the students use the polite language more often.

The table below shows their recommendations on what can be done on this issue of using polite language.

The respondents were free to write as many answers as they wanted to.

#### **4.4 Comments ,the number of Respondents (Teachers)and %**

(A)-Teachers should be role models on the use of polite language (4)57.2%

(B)\_Christian and religious values should be instilled in learners (1)14.3%

(C)\_Teachers should cultivate a reading culture to enrich the students’  
knowledge on relevant knowledge (1)14.3%

- (D)\_Resource persons should be invited to the school to talk about the importance of polite language (1)14.3%
- (E)\_Teachers should talk about importance of polite language during normal classroom teaching.(5)71.5%
- (F)\_Teachers should correct students on the spot when they fail to use polite language (2)28.6%
- (G)-Social background/ up bringing has a role in use of polite language so parents should insist on their children using it (1)14.3%
- (H)\_Showing students using polite forms like sorry is not humiliating (1)14.3%
- (I)\_Oral exams in polite language use will help student to keep using it (2)28.6%
- (J)\_During school workshops parents should be reminded to train their children early to start and continue using polite language (1)14.3%

Three teachers did not respond to this question. The data indicates that most teachers, (5) 71.5% of those who responded to this question, said the teachers should emphasize on the use of polite language in their lessons and in the class room and generally when they relate with students. Then (4)57.2% of the teachers said that teachers themselves should be the role models in the usage of polite languages. This means teachers should use the polite forms and polite language generally when relating with students so that “it will help them know using forms like “sorry” is not humiliating” said one of the teachers in response.

Two teachers (28.6%) said that oral exams could help our students in using polite language since they will practice in the use of the same verbally. This, they said, would help since our system is exam-oriented to value what is tested in the exam.

It is, however, important to note that there is a written part of KCSE English exam in paper1 that tests written polite forms.

It is worth while to note that one of the teachers who said this is himself a teacher of German and there are oral exams in German. He must have noticed that they help students take what is taught seriously and practise using it. Also, the other one who recommended oral exam is a master's student in Education specializing in Curriculum Development. This means they are very informed on those areas of oral exam and know they can work.

One teacher (10 %) suggested that a reading culture should be encouraged among the students so that students can get relevant knowledge on politeness. This is not very directly related to what this study was dealing with but it is, in an indirect way. Knowledge of the polite language, some of which is further explained in written works or has been used in written works would help the students in their use of polite language as they try to use what they have read.

Two teachers (28.6%) said teachers should correct the students on the spot when they fail to use the polite forms or polite language in general. They argued that this would encourage students in using the polite language .14.35% said that social background and up bringing play a role in the way a student uses polite language. This is also noted by Troike (1982). Some

teachers suggested that parents should insist on their children continually using polite language.

One teacher said her father was so strict that if he or someone else gave you something and you failed to say 'Thank you' he would ask you to give him the item back and you would never get it again. This taught her to say "Thank you" up to today. She didn't however say where and when the parents will be told this. However, another teacher recommending the same said, it can be done during the school workshops, which parents attend. The teacher said that during these workshops the parents should be reminded to train their children early enough to start and continue using polite language. What should be noticed is that teachers are saying parents need to be reminded not told, since it is assumed they already know the importance of teaching and having their children use polite language.

One teacher (10%) was of the idea that resource persons should be invited to the school to talk about the importance of polite language. It is hoped that the students will listen to the outsider and do accordingly; that is, use the polite language.

The same teacher who said a resource person be invited also suggested that Christian /religious values should be instilled in learners.

This shows politeness is viewed to be a virtue of godly people and if they learnt and practiced godly values they would definitely be polite. No wonder the Bible says God hates pride and arrogance, evil behaviour and perverse speech. (PS 8:13 B NIV1984)

The above recommendations point to the fact that teachers have realized that students in the school rarely use polite language as they should and this is not good for their present or the future success. The present because being polite and respectful in behaviour is something expected of each student in the school and the future since where they will go to work, they will be expected to be respectful/polite and this needs to be seen now in their use of polite language.

Levinson and Brown (1978) say that in formal setting, negative politeness is more practiced and from the teachers' assessments and recommendations, the students need to be sensitized and encouraged to practise it more in school.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION:**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings from the research, conclusions and the recommendations.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The interpretation of the findings of this work has established that the students from Kaaga Girls' use the whole range of the polite forms showing the first objective has been achieved. The study showed that the students used what they are supposed to have learnt by the time they are in form four. The forms that were used by students are apologies, hesitation, turn-taking, deference, silence, greetings, honorifics, chorusing and appreciation. Other forms that were present in the study are starters, suggesting, softening phrases, negotiation skills and plurality. Some of the polite forms occurred more often than others. This is a wide range of polite forms; some that were not in the syllabus but that form part of the polite forms and strategies that people need to know and use in order to relate politely with others in the society, Gleason (1980).

The polite forms that the students commonly use are greetings, chorusing, plurality, softening phrases, suggesting and deference. These polite forms are the ones people are supposed to use in order to save their own face and that of the hearer according to Brown and Levinson (1978). The study showed students will greet the teacher when he/she greets them. It was found that the

students will answer questions in a chorus and when they need something they will suggest it in a chorus. Softening phrases were common in their spoken language. This is in order since when a junior is speaking to a senior he/she is expected to use these forms. The study showed that the students used a different form of honorific “Mwalimu” or “Teacher” as was the case in the researcher’s class. It was thought this happened since in Kenya the word “Teacher” is supposed to show respect to the teacher though it is not a honorific according to (2007) by Wikipedia.

Also students occasionally use non-verbal signs to show politeness and to show that they want to talk. For example, the student who smiled in one of the classes and the teacher gave her a chance to talk. This shows they know how to ask for turns to speak and they often use the skills well.

Silence was also used just as politeness demands to show as a way of saving her face in the principal’s office. Bumbling with words too was a strategy that was used by the girl that went to the principal’s office. All these polite forms and strategies have been used just as the earlier researchers like Brown and Levinson (1978) had found out except for the word “Teacher” which is said not to be an honorific.

Other polite forms like resolves, leave-taking, negotiation skills and repair strategies were all used by the students. These show the students commonly use many polite forms and strategies. The polite form ‘sorry’ was used by the student who was called by the principal to her office to explain why she was at the gate.

Teachers' views indicate that 40% of them said students use polite language most of the time. This shows students then use the polite forms that they are supposed to use sometimes.

The study showed that the students know and use all the polite forms depending on what the circumstances demand at that time. This can be said to be so because some of the polite forms like 'sorry' and 'excuse me' were sometimes used and other times left out. The polite form 'sorry' was used by the student who was called by the principal to her office to explain why she was at the gate. However, in a different scenario, in the deputy principal's office, though the three girls who were called by her to come and explain why they had abandoned her group and joined another one were on the wrong, none of them apologized. Instead, they told her boldly why they had left the group. By so doing they threatened her face instead of being sorry for what they had done. This shows students used the polite forms to apologize rarely and mainly when they realized they had been caught and it had been proven they were on the wrong and not when they felt what they did was justified thus was not wrong. This is in agreement with what Brown and Levinson (1978) say that saying 'sorry' is hard since it makes one lose face in front of the hearer.

The teachers' answers to questionnaires on whether there are times when students do not use some polite forms show that they have realized the student's rarely use polite terms. Over 60% of the teachers indicated 'rarely' to most of the questions where they were requested to give their views on

whether the students use polite language by ticking the options from the given list that would show how the students show politeness.

May be the teachers feel students are rude now that they rarely excuse themselves to be given a chance to talk as shown in most of the classes, instead they choose to talk as a group and give chorus answers as seen in the most research situations.

The teachers also said that on average the students' language is not polite. This can be seen from the findings that came from the research done directly on the students where they controlled turn-taking often and topics even when the teacher was in class. For example, in one of the classes where it is the students who were suggesting the topics that would be discussed for example the lights and the stinking tree. This could also show they rarely used forms like 'excuse me' to be allowed to talk.

There are some students that show solidarity with the teacher in the class. Like in the class where the researcher was discussing strategies to pass in the exam, some five girls dominated the talk showing they had assumed solidarity with the teacher. This shows lack of deference on the part of the students.

The students use face-threatening acts to the teacher at times, for example, 'Tell her to come and visit us.' Students also threatened the face of other students for example, when they shouted 'Shame, shame, shame' at one of them.

Those students who went to the deputy principal's office did not show much deference to her when she told her she was too fast when teaching.

It can be seen that the students do not show deference to the teachers sometimes and use more bald –on record strategies like use of directives to make requests and when addressing teachers .They also rarely excuse themselves when they want to take leave like what happened in the researcher's class when one student left the class without excusing herself. Also they do not excuse themselves when they want to talk instead they talk as a group or give chorus answers. This reflects lack of deference. They also rarely use bumbling so much as it would be expected of juniors as they are talking to seniors, Brown and Levinson (1978).All this impolite use of language might be what made teachers say students were not polite sometimes.

### **5.3CONCLUSION**

From the findings, it can be concluded that the students know the polite forms that they are supposed to know at this stage in their acquisition of education as other researchers have found out, Gleason (1980). Teachers and those involved with education can capitalize on this fact and use it to ensure that the students use them. The students also use the various polite forms that are there in English. Students, however, use these polite forms sometimes in their speech as it was found out in the taped data from what they talked in the classes and in the offices and not always, but when they deem it necessary to do so just as Brown and Levinson (1978) have said. The girl who said sorry to the principal when she realized her lie was found out and others who refused to apologize to the deputy principal show this clearly. This shows the students

know when it is necessary to use the polite forms to get out of trouble and when they think they are safe, they do not use them. Students should be encouraged to use polite forms all the time.

It can also be concluded that the students of today appear to have more solidarity with teachers unlike what other researchers like Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977) have found. While Bateson and Mead say it is the teachers who display while the students submit, we find in this research this balance is affected to some extent since we can see the students as a group could take charge of discussion and control the topic and turns-taking while the teacher is in class by suggesting as a group what the next topic to discuss is. This behavior has its own implications for it can bring unnecessary collisions between the students and the teachers and so teachers need to be aware of this change in behaviour. Teachers also can insist that students have to ask for permission to speak when the teacher is there.

Also, it can be concluded that the students rarely use polite forms like 'thank you' and 'sorry' but this will depend on the context. 'Sorry' is face-threatening for the speaker according to other researchers and this explains why it has rarely occurred in the situations where it should occur. The research from the classes show that "sorry" was rarely used since it did not appear at all except by the student in the principal's office. This student also did not apologize promptly as she should. Instead, she waited until the principal proved to her that she was lying, something that made the principal distrust her and not take her apology as genuine when she finally apologized. This behavior should show the teachers that students will not easily own up for

their mistakes and so teach them using different materials and settings, since when they do not own up, it ends up becoming costly for them like in this case for she was sent home.

The students who went to the deputy principal's office never said, 'sorry' as a way of showing they did not intend to threaten the face of the deputy principal, by failing to attend her class. They instead tried to explain why they did not attend the lesson, and when they talked they accused her of being too fast. This would not be expected from a junior, to tell a senior is on the wrong on the face, for it is face-threatening to him or her so teachers need to find ways of ensuring that students always apologize when they have made a mistake even if they feel justified to do it like in this case. .

The students also use more of chorus answers and suggesting which could also explain why some of the polite forms do not appear as often as they should in the spoken language of the students. The teachers need to take note of this behaviour since it is not a polite one and insist their students answer or ask questions as individuals so that they can practise using polite forms. This can happen because in the researcher's class the student who wanted to take leave came and asked for permission but even when others would have used polite forms like when they wanted to talk, they did not , instead they talked as a group.

It can also be concluded that the students know they should use the honorifics, but instead of using the conventional ones like, 'Mr, Mrs, Sir' they have come up with 'teacher'. This title is not applicable according to politeness (2007) by

Wikipedia. Teachers need to encourage the students to the proper honorifics by correcting the students every time they miss it.

It can also be concluded that the students generally do not show a lot of deference to the teachers and that is why the teachers in their views, 60% of them said the students are not generally polite. This could be attributed to borrowing from other cultures like American culture where children display in the presence of their fathers and lecturers unlike the British one where fathers and lecturers display according to Bateson (1972) and Mead (1977). Our system of education has more of British culture than American.

The teachers made recommendations in the questionnaires that the students need to be reminded on the spot when they do not show politeness. This lack of deference in their behaviour and their speech as students as they relate to the teachers is a source of concern to the teachers. However, this may not really be an indicator that students do not know the polite forms to use, may be it is because students are used to seeing the teachers and so do not think they are very senior and deserve respect.

Teachers also said in the questionnaire that the students should be encouraged to use polite forms always and even parents can be reminded to insist their children (the students) should use polite forms when they are at home.

The teachers further pointed out in the questionnaires that resource persons should be brought to the school to talk to the girls to show them the importance of using polite forms. This shows teachers would not want to release impolite students to the world of work for they know they would not succeed.

Another observation that was made is that in the class where the teacher was very polite with his students and used the form 'please' often (Appendix A5) his students were also polite and kept telling him to tell the PTA representative 'thank you' and appeared more subdued by the presence of the teacher than other classes. This could be as a result of the teacher setting a good example in the use of polite forms. This in a way agrees with what some teachers suggested in the questionnaire that teachers should set a good example on the use of polite forms and as can be seen, it might work.

Although the findings from this work show how what the students learn is used verbally in their speech, they can also in a way explain why sometimes the written work of students may not contain the polite forms. The factors that determine whether they will use polite forms are many and although it has been established they know the polite forms, it has been seen they at times, will not use them depending on the situation and this too may apply to the written work.

#### **5.4 Pedagogical Implications of the Study**

Although the study focused on spoken polite language in one school, the results of this study have important implications for both the teaching and learning and using of polite forms and English language in general. The teachers need to be aware of the disparity between the taught polite forms and the use of the same by their students in their spoken language and handle the disparity objectively.

The teachers said that the girls use polite language sometimes and this means there are times they do not use polite language. This should draw the attention of the teachers to this language behaviour to be alert always as they teach or mark or talk with students so that they can sensitize them to use polite language always in order to succeed in talking with others in the society. This is important since English is the official language in Kenya and it means it is used in offices and in formal settings. The students thus need to use the polite forms found in English always so that when they go to the world of work they will find it easy to cope.

The ministry should provide more materials that show the effects of impoliteness since this is what can make students practise the use of polite forms more. The MOE can also be requested to provide funds to finance oral exams in order to practice on use of polite forms since students take seriously what is tested in the final exam.

The teachers generally need to assess their role in helping their students in the use of polite forms since they are the immediate symbol of authority students have. Some teachers, 56.8%, recommended that the teachers should also play a big role in how the students use the polite language and so they should set good examples to the students in this area by using these polite forms always.

The syllabus designers should be in a position to provide a syllabus that will encourage the use of the polite language more and even the materials that are prepared should show the importance of using polite language.

## 5.5 Recommendations

As much as it is in order to borrow from one culture, it is good to keep that which is good in one's culture so that relationships will not experience friction as people relate whether at school or at work or at home. From this case, it can be recommended that schools, parents and all stakeholders take part in ensuring that our students are showing deference to the seniors since this is an important asset of communicative competence in them.

Areas recommended for further studies are:

1. The study does not focus on the use of non-verbal signs in showing politeness among students in high schools so further research can be done on that area.
2. Further study can be done to find out what teachers do when students do not use polite forms in high schools.
3. Further research can be done to find out what the society does when high school students does not use polite forms.
4. Research can be done comparing both boys' and girls' use of polite language in many High schools.
5. This study further recommends that more research be done in high school where all the students in all the forms will be studied.
6. Further research can be done to find out how the American culture is influencing the use of polite language among high school students in Kenya, where the school systems are British- based.

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**APPENDICES****A1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION****Mwarania P.K****Kenyatta University****P.O BOX 43844-00100****NAIROBI.****June 2009****TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**I am Mwarania Pennina, a postgraduate student at Kenyatta University. I am conducting a linguistic research in spoken English by secondary school students for my M.A dissertation. The findings of this study are aimed at finding how to improve the performance of secondary school student in spoken polite language usage. Kindly let the teachers answer the questionnaire attached hereunder and allow the researcher to do research in class and in the office for this purpose.**

**Yours faithfully,****Mwarania P.Karambu****Encl.**

**A2: A CONVERSATION IN THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**

**(Situation 1.** A student who had been brought food in school by a man unknown to her was called to the principal's office. She is also suspected to have called him to come on that particular day and time since when she arrived at the school gate it is when he came in a taxi. Present: The principal, the deputy principal and I, the researcher)

Principal: Who was that who came to see you on Monday?

Student: He was sent from home.

Principal: Who is he to you?

Student: (Silence.) A friend.

Principal: What is his name?

Student: John.

Principal: Why didn't he come on Saturday when we had prayers?

Student: He was working.

Principal: Where does he work?

Student: Meru General Hospital.

Principal: When did you meet him lastly?

Student: When we were out for mid term.

Principal: Is he known to your parents?

Student: Eh. No.

Principal: But you said he was sent from home?

Student: (keeps quite).

Principal: I am surprised that you have such friends who can bring you such things

(removes the big card, the packet of queens cake and chocolate bars) yet he cannot afford to pay your fees. Do you know what the schools rules are concerning food stuff?

Student: Yes, But I didn't tell him to bring me food.(shaking).

Principal: How did you meet him?

Student: I met with him when I was stranded in town without fare to go home for mid- term. I was introduced to him by my cousin.

Principal: So, what is his other name?

Student: I do not know. I know him as John.

D/ Principal: So you meet a man whose second name you do not know and he pays your fare and then he comes over to visit you. Is that normal?

Student: (looks fearfully at the D/P and shakes her head)

Principal: Can you tell us how you happened to be at the gate the very time that the man, John you said, happened to be alighting from a taxi at the gate?

Student: I was told by one of the students that the watchman, the gateman, had my Message. So I went to the gate to get it.

Principal: Do you know it is wrong to go to the gate without permission?

Student: I-----I----- know (twisting her hands and bumbling with words). I -----I-----do not know what force compelled me to go towards the gate. I am sorry, I am very very sorry. Please forgive me .I will not repeat that.

Principal: I cannot forgive you before I know the truth. How did you know he was there?

I mean, how come it is when you happened to be there?

Student: I had just been told by x that I had a message at the gate then I went there.

Principal: There is something you are not telling us. How comes that that was the very time he was being dropped by the taxi at the gate on the road?

Student: I----- I don't know what force compelled me to go to the gate at that very time. I am sorry.

D/ Principal: You have not yet told us what you were doing at the gate at that time.

Student: I had gone to pick the message that I had been told was there.

Principal: Now, we are wasting a lot of time. And since you have refused to tell us the truth, I want to give you up to 4:30PM today when the lessons end. If you don't tell me the truth that time, I will send you home and you will come back when exams will be starting. Now go.

Student: I am sorry. (Shaking her hands). Please, please. Do not send me home.

I will not repeat such a mistake again.

Principal: I said so long as you will not tell me the truth you will go home. Now go out. You have up to 4:30P.M today to decide to tell the truth or not.

Student: (She leaves crying but says nothing more).

**A3: (i) A CONVERSATION IN THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**

(Situation 2: The conversation took place in the Deputy Principal's office. The student had been called to come and explain to her why she was not in her class for remedial class also called motivation class, in the morning that day.)

D/Principal: Yes. How are you?

Student: I am fine. Mwalimu- Ningependa kukuambia nilienda kwa motivation class ya Mr. Y today morning.

D/ Principal: Why are you mixing English and Kiswahili? Why are you missing my motivation class?

Student: I started attending Mr. Y's

D/ Principal: You have to continue attending your groups.

Student: Mmm.

D/ Principal: Listen. You must continue attending my classes.

Student: I moved this morning.

D/ Principal: Do the Limuru papers and hand them in for typing.

Student: (Looks at the teacher then leaves).

**A3:(ii) A CONVERSATION IN THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**

(Situation 3: A student has been called to the Deputy Principal's office to explain why she moved to another group. She had done the same thing as the last one.)

D/ Principal: Why didn't you attend the motivation classes today?

Student: You are too fast for me.

D/ Principal: How did you attend that group and you are not supposed to? You were put there due to your marks. I thought I was teaching the cream

of the school? How will you cope in the university where you will be

taught faster and do research on your own?

Student: (Just looks at her and continues smiling silently.)

D/Principal: You (points at her and those who had gone out) will carry Mr. Y with you to the university? You are disobedient enough to change groups. Have you heard no one is allowed to change groups? How do the form ones pass and I teach them too? You must change your attitude.

Girl: They have got used to you.

D/ Principal: Remain there in the groups you were assigned since we will rotate next week.(She lowers her head and continues writing while standing.) Do the Limuru Papers and hand them in and no one is allowed to move. Go back to class.

### **A3: (iii) A CONVERSATION IN THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE**

(**Situation 4:** D/ principal talks to a student who has come to her office still on missing the remedial/motivational lesson and asks her to explain why she had moved to another group.)

D/ Principal: Who gave you permission to go to another group?

Student: (Smiled) .You are too fast for me.

D/Principal: You will continue attending in the groups you were assigned and even if you moved I will still meet you in those other groups since we will rotate next week. Do the Limuru Papers and hand them in and no one is allowed to move. Go back to class.

Student: (Leaves without saying anything).

#### **A4: A CONVERSATION IN A FORM FOUR CLASS MEETING 4X**

(**Situation 5:** A class meeting in the presence of the class teacher and the researcher. Prayers are prayed by the prefect and she reads the Bible.

Prefect: (She stands in front) Good afternoon.

Students: Good afternoon.

Prefect: I don't have much to say, I just want to say you co-operate. The noise has gone down..... Ya. (Looking at the teacher to come and talk)

Teacher: (Comments on sitting arrangement) who is uncomfortable?

Students: X (Chorus)

Teacher: Ya-X. X where do you want to be sitting?

Hapa ni kwa Y? (Here at Y's Enda pale (Go there.) That will solve the problem.

Some Students: (Chorus) – Ebu akae kae hapo. (Let her sit there for a while)

Teacher: You are supposed to solve problems yourselves. Must every problem come to me?

Some Students: Lights- (Pointing at the bulb up to the ceiling)

One girl: lights come and at a certain time go off ((Laughter from students)

Some Students: (Chorus) Windows.

Teacher: Store man will solve that. Go to him.

Students: The plant outside- the green one. It's stinking.

Teacher: It sends away mosquitoes.

Some Students: (Chorus). It attracts flies.

Teacher: Our goal is passing and giving good results.

Yesterday you went to donate blood.... You must come back on time.

-You heard the other time the story of a man and the elephant. He ended up with a squirrel. Our trial results show we had .....

Students: (Chorus) 61 %.

Teacher: Our class mean must improve and we must keep on working and working. (Teacher looks at an empty seat and asks) Who is the friend to the absent student? Who is the friend?

Some Students: (Z)

Teacher: When is she coming?

Some Students: (Chorus): Her days are over.

Teacher: OK. Let's try to help one another to work hard.

And then there is the shame list- who is it on the shame list?

Some Students: (A)

Student: NO. (Lowering her head)

Teacher: If you don't go there (pointing to the front of the class) then we will say

Some Students: Shame times three.(shouting) Shame on you . Shame on you. Shame on you.

Teacher: Time is up and everyone who is misbehaving will be told shame, shame except me since I cannot continue teaching you after that. So you can't tell me shame, shame.(the student lowered her head)

Teacher: Time is up and next week we meet in the morning.

Some Students: We have a lesson (After that)

**(A5): A CLASS MEETING IN 4Z WITH THE CLASS TEACHER AND THE RESEARCHER**

Teacher: Good evening .Some one lead prayers for us.

Students: Good evening Mr x.

Student: (Prays)

Teacher: Some go to Meru School and learn but what's important is what you remember. After the prefect has given you the sweets and biscuits some of you will tell me what to do for you and will tell me to tell Mrs. Z since she wants to know how you are doing.

Prefect: Tell her we are grateful for the clock, sweets and biscuits. We will make her proud.

Student; We miss her. We would want her to come and visit us.

Students: Tell her we are grateful that she remembers us.

Teacher: Ok. Tell her we are grateful?

Student: Tell her to come and visit us since we are in the last year.

Teacher: Please, I don't expect you to litter the class or compound (with the sweet wrappers). Now that you've come back from discussing set books sit down and revise. (A student smiles) You seem to want to say something. The way you are smiling shows you want to say something.

The student: Tell her thank you.

Teacher: Make sure you give Ksh .300 to the prefect.

Students: No. This Friday (chorus).

Teacher: No .I gave you the document to take to your parents. Please don't take any of this stuff outside,( pointing at the sweets and biscuits they were eating.) Are there complaints or requests or you are happy?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: Are you making use of these? (Pointing at a list of discussion groups posted on the wall of the class.)

Students: Yes

Teacher: Have you covered the syllabus?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: It's up to you as an individual to cover the syllabus. It is you to learn not the teacher. Ok?

Students: Yes (chorus).

Teacher: Work hard, very very hard.

Students: Yes.

## **A6: A CONVERSATION IN THE RESEARCHER'S FORM FOUR**

### **CLASS 4Y**

**(Situation 6:** The researcher is discussing the strategies her students will use to pass their KCSE exam in her class. All are quiet. The teacher greets the class and starts the discussion).

Teacher: Good afternoon.

Students: Good afternoon Mrs. M

Teacher: I want us to discuss the strategies we will use to

pass the coming exam can you take five minutes and thing of some  
(all are quiet for a while)

A: (Lifting her hand). As a class we should present topics in Literature books  
that were not presented.

B: (Lifting her hand) Mm ... Do other papers from other districts.

C: ( Shyly) to what A has said.... I think we find literature questions and do  
them.

Teacher: And do them or revise them?

C: Yah

D: I think on the Poetry side, you can teach us more about it (Waving here  
hand to emphasize)

Teacher: Mm- somebody else. Yes A.

A: We should make a point to work on punctuation, types of speeches,  
read the dictionary to get the right spelling to avoid being deducted  
marks for wrong spelling.

Teacher: Somebody else: Yes D.

D: I think we should form some discussion groups.

Teacher: Mm. One more may be. Now why is it only a few people are  
contributing?

OK? Go on A.

A: To make sure people are not sleeping in class when they are caught  
sleeping, they should be given a certain topic to work on and present  
later in class ( the rest of the students started murmuring and talking  
among themselves and laughing too).

E: I think in the part of doing the cloze test, as a class we should do more practice in order to get more marks. (A student sneezes and doesn't excuse herself)

Teacher: Ok then. (Student near me murmurs but is not loud. Students say to her 'Pardon'.)

Teacher: You said something and they didn't hear it. Repeat it aloud.

F: We set aside some days that we will speak in English.

Students Chorus: Yes (clapping and talking among themselves)

Teacher: Ok. I will give a chance to those who have not talked. G

G: We should set aside a few lessons in a week, at least three, so that we can be able to write compositions, may be in groups.

Teacher: What will you do with the compositions?

Students: (Murmurs then loudly) We mark for each other. (They go on murmuring and consulting and a few hands are up but they are the same students who have talked before).

Teacher: Now, it looks like there are three people who we have heard before.

Are there others whose opinion we need to hear? (Students go on talking among themselves. Some are laughing. Several hands go up.)  
So who will be heard first?

B: We were discussing here and we were proposing if it's possible we do discussions with other groups often. (Other students laugh at this for they know what it means; they will meet with boys in those discussions)

Teacher: Ok.

A: On the point of symposium, I suggest we also include debate. (Other students laugh and seem to agree saying eh, eh).

Teacher: Ok.

D: Mine was the same one with B. You know Teacher, we as girls we fear messing up when we are with other schools. So we are going to revise thoroughly to prepare for the discussions (Other students laugh loudly and keep talking to each other. It seems an exciting point.)

Students : Shhh. (To silence them)

Teacher: Do we have any more suggestions? Mmm. A go on.

A: We get people to act the set books like the Planet theatre.

Students: (Chorus) Especially 'The Enemy'. (To mean An Enemy of the People)

(Now students are facing others, some are facing the back even though the teacher is in front.)

Teacher: A, you seem to be the voice of the people today. Mmm. Go on.

A: We plan English trips to English labs and aah.....yah. (Nodding her head)

Students: England: (They talk excitedly about the lab among themselves.)

Teacher: Now. What do think about that suggestion?

Students: (In Chorus) Yes. It is very good, perfect, very healthy. (Students talk some more about the idea and some are clapping others laughing and giggling. ) Aah Uh! (Then using gestures show each other it is a *good idea*)

Teacher: Well. Although we think that's a good idea there are limitations of the same.

F.: Transport is provided (referring to the new bus)

Teacher: Well. It was found the Labs don't help a lot.

Students: Kwa nini. Eeh! Wacheni mambo mingi. (Why? Do not bring in more issues)

Teacher: The reason is because; it was found people practice and speak well in the lab and when they leave, it what happens they go on the way they used to before.

Student A: They will motivate us. When one student. ....Teacher (To draw the teacher's attention), If you go somewhere and you are challenged, you will not forget it for you are doing it practically (She emphasizes R and L: and others repeat; 'Practically')

Teacher: The language Laboratories which were there were abolished.

Student A: We can go to Alliance.

student B: Is it possible for us to go to a school far away?

Students: Others like? Where?

Student H: (A student comes to the teacher) Excuse me teacher, May I go out?

Teacher: Yes.

Teacher: Well, Where we will go and with who we will discuss with other teachers and whether near or far, it will be decided by the department. I cannot decide that alone. It will also depend on who invites us and whether they are from near or far.

B: We can invite them (doesn't excuse herself)

Teacher: We can. I think that brings us to the end of our discussion.

Student: Yap. Yoh. Yes. (The bell goes and the lesson ends. A student leaves the class, though it is not break time, without asking for permission to go out.)

## A7: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

### Introduction

This questionnaire has been prepared as a component of a study to establish whether students in Kaaga Girls' High School use polite forms and those that they rarely use. It is the belief of the study that your views will give helpful information on the use of polite forms by students.

I request you to spare a few minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire and I will be very grateful. Your response will be treated with total confidence. Do not write your name. Thank you.

### Questions

1. How long have you taught in this school?
2. Do you teach form fours?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you teach polite forms for example Thank you, please, excuse me,  
 Yes or No
4. Do your form four students use "excuse me" when they want to get to your class late?  
 Never  Rarely  Often  Always
5. Do your form four students use 'sorry' when they have made a mistake and offended you?  
 Never  Rarely  Often  Always

6. Do your form four students use 'please' when making a request from you?

Never  Rarely  Often  Always

7. Do your form four students say 'Thank you' when you have given them something say a book?

Never  Rarely  Often  Always

8. Do your form four students appreciate the help you give them with words, for example, 'That was very kind of you.'

Never  Rarely  Often  Always

9. Do your form four students show respect to you especially when they are asking for what they deserve?

All  Some  Very few  None

10. How do they behave when reminding you something?

Very well  Well  Not so well  Rudely

11. Do they address you as Mr. / Mrs. when calling you?

Always  Sometimes  Rarely

12. Do they greet you?

Always  Sometimes  Rarely

13. When trying to persuade you to do or give them something, how do they behave?

Very demanding  Rudely  Understanding

14. How do they ask for information?

Very politely  Politely  Less politely  Rudely

15(a) Do you think our students generally use polite language?

YES  NO  SOMETIMES

15(b) If (NO) or (SOMETIMES) is your answer, what do you think can be done to improve their use of polite language?

A8: A MAP OF KENYA SHOWING THE LOCATION OF MERU

