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CHAPTER 16

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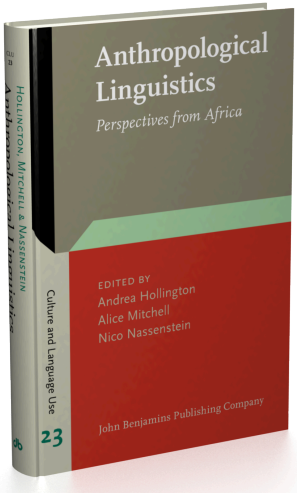

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CHAPTER 16

On politeness and taboo among the Zande

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Azande living in rural areas have to obey many rules of behavior, many of which are determined by politeness or are rules determined by taboos, which are often interrelated. Politeness rules concern behavior towards other people, and they depend on age, social hierarchy and in-law-relationships. If these rules are disrespected, offenses can be corrected. Taboos, however, are absolute prohibitions with regard to certain persons, places or phenomena, which are complied with by everybody. Neglect of taboos may lead to sanctions which cannot be undone, such as hair turning red or the body becoming uncontrollably obese. The impact of taboos is stronger than that of politeness rules.

Keywords: Pazande, taboo, politeness (strategies), FTA, child-parent-interaction

1. Introduction

Since the times when the first travelers to the geographical center of Africa visited the Zande,[1] the male members of their ruling class have been known for their polite behavior, which, according to Evans-Pritchard (1957b, p. 61), was "unsurpassed by any aristocracy in the world". It was characterized by generosity and a strong sense of justice towards subordinates. This behavior was learned by the young princes during their sojourn of many years at the court of the king (Evans-Pritchard, 1962).

Today the Zande aristocracy has lost its political power, but now it is the Zande as an ethnic group, i.e., the commoners, who are described by their ethnic neighbors as very polite; even in urban centers, Zande in the Central African Republic (CAR), in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and in Uganda

1. *Pazande* is the autoglottonym of Zande language, the prefix *pa-* being derived from the noun *pai* 'thing, matter'.

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are known for their polite behavior.[2] They reportedly pay their rent on time, they handle rented housing with care, they do not destroy other people's belongings, they are never rude nor do they raise their voices against other people and they are friendly colleagues in their work places. The current reputation of the Zande as being particularly polite indicates that the politeness, as described by Evans-Pritchard, was not only a characteristic of the aristocracy, but of Zande society as a whole.

The aim of this paper is to discuss those aspects of Zande politeness and of taboos which appear to be the most important ones for our consultants and to outline in what way the two regulatory forces overlap. Some aspects, like the use of bad words (see Nassenstein & Storch, 2020) or linguistically tabooed words and phrases related to sexuality (see Culpeper, 2019) are not investigated.

Our research is based on the evaluation of texts published by Evans-Pritchard (1933, 1957a, 1957b, 1957c, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1965, 1970, 1974, 1967), the contributions by Isaac Waanzi to several blogs, and on Faustin Dusa's personal experience as a Zande growing up in a village near Niangara, later living for a couple of years in Isiro and finally moving to Kisangani.[3] He provided the examples for which no other source is indicated; for missing pieces of information or for explanations he contacted friends in Kisangani or relatives in his home area by telephone.

When we asked several Azande living in Kisangani about Zande politeness rules, they did not discuss their actual urban behavior, which according to them is determined by the conditions of urban society and hence is not very different from that of other ethnic groups in town. They rather referred to their "traditional" rules that are valid in rural areas, but not in urban centers, rules the value of which they nevertheless still highly appreciated. Most of these rules belong to two categories: the first concerns the rules of respect and obedience towards persons of power or higher social status, in particular by women with regard to their husbands, children towards their parents and everybody towards older people and persons of power. The second category concerns honesty, trustworthiness and reliability towards other persons of equal or different social status and the readiness to help fellow Zande in need. Rules of respect are considered a social

2. The Zande territory covers the triangle of South Sudan, DR Congo and CAR. Today many Zande who have fled from war in Sudan, RCA and DRC live in the urban centers of Uganda, where they are known as Azande people, and in other countries on the continent or overseas where they are seen as immigrants from Sudan, DRC or CAR.

3. The authors met when Helma Pasch worked as a visiting professor at the University of Kisangani in March and April 2020. We express our deeply felt gratitude to the German Academic Exchange Service for sponsoring that travel. Pasch and Dusa filled the time of the first COVID-19 lockdown, when the university was closed, to carry out research for this and some other texts.

necessity, non-compliance with which may result in direct sanctions by the disrespected persons. By comparison, in non-hierarchical situations, proving to be an honest, reliable and supportive person is not a question of obedience, but rather of kindness and a sense of solidarity and responsibility, while neglecting to do so will in the long run result in social and economic problems irrespective of the social status of the person concerned. Despite the difference between the two categories of politeness, the following proverb (Example (1)) applies to both of them.

(1) *iris9 na-yug9 gu ra-ka na manga pai rengbe Zande ka*
politeness PROG-teach DEF life-PLUR PREP make thing obligatory Z. SUB
du nâ ni kɔ̀yɔ̀ dú[4] *kura-ni ní*
COP PREP ANAPH towards COP.REL other-ANAPH ANAPH
'Politeness teaches life and the matters which are obligatory for a Zande to follow them towards another one.'[5]

Iris9 is given as an equivalent for 'politeness, courtesy' when politeness is the topic, but in most other contexts the term is translated as 'awe, respect'. The term is a nominalization of the verb *irisa (i)* 'to be polite, to honor, to favor, to esteem',[6] which is the causative extension of the verb *irã (i)* 'to be honorable'. This basic verb describes the subject as a person with the inherent right to be honored and respected. It follows that *iris9* results to lesser extent from a person's free decision to show good behavior towards another person, than from that other person's status according to which he may expect people of a lower status to honor him, because respect for a person of power is normal.[7]

The fact that the observation of given rules of politeness towards persons of higher status is obligatory entails that non-compliance with these rules leads to punishment. This applies in particular with regard to children, who may be scolded or beaten for behaving in a face-threatening way towards their parents by being undutiful or disobedient. Gross impoliteness, which implies a severe viola-

4. The high tone is the relative marker.

5. The literal translation is: "Politeness teaches living and doing things (which are) compulsory for a Zande to be with them towards where the other one is."

6. Lexicon entries of verbs give the imperfective forms (most of which end in /*-a*/) plus – in case of vowel changes – the final vowel (*-u, -e, -i* or *-o*) of the perfective form in parentheses.

7. It is important to note that the term *iris9* ('politeness') is not as frequently used in conversations as is the case with the respective equivalents in European languages and that politeness terminology is not rich. Children are taught polite behavior from a young age, but there are no standardized sets of rules of verbal politeness such as those in England which children learned by heart in order to be well accustomed to the use of the most important politeness rituals (Aster, 1878).

tion of social norms, e.g., an adolescent son beating his father, means breaking a taboo, and it may lead to a cursing rather than physical punishment.

Taboos are defined as prohibited or unacceptable individual behavior that affects everyday life by causing discomfort, harm or injury. Breaches of serious taboos may be associated with metaphysical risks when sacred places, objects or people are concerned, and they may lead to physical punishment when powerful persons are affected. Breaking less serious taboos can lead to nothing more dangerous than scolding or disapproval (Allan & Burridge, 2006, p. 1). Unlike politeness rules, taboos must be followed by all members of the society, but since some taboos are related to social hierarchies, superiors are less restricted in their lives than inferiors.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 2 discusses some theoretical points of politeness, with the subsections discussing hierarchical (2.1), non-hierarchical (2.2) and avoidance-based (2.3) Zande politeness. Taboos are the topic of Section 3 with a theoretical introduction and subsections on food taboos (3.1), taboos prevailing in the initiation camps (3.2), taboos concerning the oracle (3.3) and the oracle (3.4). The borderline between politeness and taboo will be outlined in the conclusions in Section 4.

2. Zande politeness

Politeness has been a topic of linguistic investigation for about 50 years. Among the most influential studies are those by Brown and Levinson (1987), Leech (1983), Lakoff (1973, 1989) and Culpeper (2011), in which pragmatic solutions are discussed which people use in order to prevent conflict in communication and establish a peaceful and friendly coexistence. The basic rules of politic politeness are claimed by these authors to apply universally. In the terms of what is often referred to as Brown and Levinson's "face-saving theory of politeness" (Watts, 2003, p. 85), speakers aim to save the interlocutor's positive face (the desire to be appreciated in social interaction) and his negative face (the desire to act freely or the need not to be imposed upon), or, more specifically. they try to avoid threatening the face of the interlocutor by doing a face threatening act (FTA). It is important to note that Brown and Levinson, the most influential among the abovementioned authors with regard to the discussion of politeness, have an individualistic concept of face. They discuss politeness in dialogues of two or few participants in which a Model Person, as a competent speaker of a natural language, willfully decides on a personal level how to address the other person and which strategy of politeness to apply in order to satisfy communicative needs and at the same time avoid threat-

ening the face of the interlocuter. Their model is based on the speaker's choice of behavior, while the reaction of the hearer is neglected.

Matsumoto (1988) and Ide (1989) reject the claim of the universality of politeness strategies in the politeness literature, which are based on an individualistic concept of face and which neglect the impact of the cultures of given groups. They show that in languages with honorifics, like Japanese, the alleged universality of politeness does not easily apply. With regard to Japanese society, where strong social distinctions are encoded in the grammar of the language and the speaker must indicate his own social position as well as that of the interlocutor, Brown and Levinson's notion of face, and particularly negative face, is not easy to apply. Here, politeness strategies do not depend on volitional choice but rather on prescribed social norms. When talking to people of higher social status, to people with more power or to older people, different sets of pronouns and different classes of verbs must be used, and there are also special politeness forms to be used in formal situations.

Matsumoto (1988, p. 405) furthermore criticizes that the way Brown and Levinson use the term "culture" with so many different senses, in most cases without a definition, arguing that it is a "vacuous notion" which may be helpful for the discussion of politeness$_2$, but which will hinder the consideration of politeness$_1$ and the ways in which polite behavior is discussed within social groups.[8] Another point of criticism is that Brown and Levinson's model applies better to the Western world than to many other parts of the world. Watts considers it rather a theory of facework than of politeness (Watts, 2003, p. 97).

Kopytko (1995, p. 487, cited in Archer et al., 2012, p. 87) considers the model of Brown and Levinson "decontextualized pragmatics", and he criticizes it for not taking into consideration the dynamics of communicative interaction where interlocutors do not merely plan their own utterances, but respond to turns. All participants, hearers as well as speakers, assign politeness to utterances within a given communication. In this sense, Archer et al. (2012, p. 87) regard politeness more as interactive social practice than as a set of rules of behavior.

Watts (2003, p. 89) criticizes, among other things, the view that actions might look either polite or impolite depending on the context and that "facework is not necessarily coterminous with the attribution of politeness". More importantly, researchers need a lot of interactional context in order to know whether the par-

8. Politeness$_2$ is "a term within a theory of social behaviour and language usage" which has commonly been interpreted as social adequacy [e.g., don't impose]); politeness$_1$ is a closed inventory of learned forms [e.g., "please", "thank you"] or behaviors that in and of themselves communicate politeness (Watts et al., 1992, p. 3).

ticipants would consider given actions and utterances polite or not, and to be able to evaluate a given interaction.

Brown (2015) responds that many studies on politeness have an emphasis on cross-cultural differences, with insufficient attention on the theoretical front addressed to the cross-linguistic or cross-cultural parallels. She stresses that politeness has a significance far beyond "the P's and Q's of appropriate behaviour and speech",[9] i.e., politeness$_1$, and that the aim of Brown and Levinson was to "formulate a cross-culturally applicable 'etic' set of concepts in terms of which politeness can be analyzed in 'emic' terms for any particular society", i.e., politeness$_2$. While emic concepts are meaningful within given societies and can be used to describe given societies in their own terms, etic concepts belong to a universal set and are defined from outside the perspective of a given culture, and they are used to compare behavioral or linguistic systems across different cultural groups.

It is important to take into consideration that all interactions contain face-threatening acts "that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee" and they may do so also with regard to the speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 65). It is, among other things, (self-)humiliating actions like expressing responses to the hearer's faux pas, gratitude, excuses, making promises and offers or accepting the hearer's thanks or apologies which threaten the negative face of the speaker. His/her incapacity or unwillingness to save Alter's face may, however, have the same effect. This is why in many cases a speaker considers it appropriate to fulfil the role ascribed by their status in appreciation of the higher social status of the Other (Raible, 1987, p. 151). During a university event, for example, an undergraduate student would not even think of asking a person of considerably higher social status, such as a professor or the dean, to go and fetch him a drink, since this would primarily embarrass himself; in neglecting the differences of social status he would have forgotten about tact and the rules of good behavior. As an individual, the professor or dean might feel offended or merely astonished and amused by such a request, which is so incompatible with the difference in status that it is downright absurd, but as an official person he cannot easily tolerate it. The student's behavior would humiliate the professor himself, above all and cause him to lose face because of the non-recognition of his own status and the role he has to play in given situations.

With regard to politeness among the Zande, our consultants stated quite clearly that there are fairly strict rules which people of low status have to comply with. This means that there is more need to be polite towards social superiors than towards social inferiors. In complying with the given rules, inferiors do not only aim at saving the face of superior interactants, but also their own. They save their

9. Cf. Lakoff (1973).

own face not just as persons of lower status, but as members of a social group, e.g., as women or children, who are well aware of the prevailing allocation of rights and duties that are given between themselves and persons of higher social status.[10] They know how to play their roles according to their status and they do so willingly.

This is apparently in contradiction with Evans-Pritchard's (1957b, p. 61) description of Zande politeness as a feature of male aristocrats which they practiced according to their own decisions. Self-determined politeness is, however, given in non-hierarchical situations and in downward politeness.

2.1 Hierarchical politeness

The strong social hierarchies explain that rules of politeness which a person has to comply with are determined by his social position; hence, upward and downward politeness must be differentiated. For most Zande, however, upward politeness is more important and the rules of upward politeness were the first and "most important ones" to be discussed by our consultants. This means that their application aims not only at saving the face of interlocutor as an individual, but even more at saving the face of a person of power or higher status. We did not get any information concerning a rejection of such rules, and our consultants said that they had no problems showing reverence to a person of higher status, like local chiefs or the elders in the Zande community in Kisangani.[11] Respect for the superior person, combined with the recognition of the own lower status and the capacity to deal with it, may be considered a face-saving strategy since it shows that one is able to behave in compliance with one's status. Respect for a person in power as the "assignment of high social and personal appreciation", and the recognition of social stratification with self-humiliation or even self-subjugation, is a way of gaining protection from the interactant in power. Since the inferior also profits from the situation, this helps them to comply with the rules of politeness willingly (Raible, 1987, p. 151, 155).

Formal linguistic encoding of upward positive politeness is, however, far less developed in Zande than, for instance, in Japanese. Apart from a small number of morphemes indicating politeness, major linguistic devices to express politeness include talking in a low voice, keeping silent and obeying avoidance strategies

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10. For a discussion of status and role see Goodenough (1965, p. 8), who states that "[t]he duties that ego's identity owes to alter's identity define ego's duty-status and alter's right-status" and vice versa.

11. Note that all of them were men who enjoyed the upward politeness of their wives and children.

with regard to personal names (see Section 2.3.). These are accompanied by ritualized non-verbal communicative behavior such as keeping one's distance from a superior person, assuming a submissive posture, or not looking into his eyes.

The first linguistic device is the pronominal plural form to address a single interlocutor in order to express reverence and respect (see Head, 1968); this is the most frequent morphological device indicating positive upward politeness. When addressing a single person, speakers of Zande distinguish a T-form (*mo*), the 2nd singular pronoun, and a V-form (*oni*), the 2nd plural pronoun. It is good behavior for a speaker to use the V-form in cases where the interactant is a person of power, a rule which children must learn at an early age as they have to apply it with respect to their parents, in particular the father, but also other elder men in the family. In Example (2), the visitor, for his part, addresses the child by the singular noun *wi-re* 'my child', thus indicating the lower status of the child. With regard to the owner of the toilet, *ga-oni bambu a-geno*, he uses the plural form *oni*, and it is evident that this pronoun refers to the father or some other male relative of the child,[12] who is apparently not related to the visitor; hence the V-form of the pronoun is required. In agreement with that politeness strategy, he softens his request by using the subjunctive marker *ka*.

It is worth mentioning that such a T/V-distinction is practiced in rural areas and also in urban centers, and not only in Pazande but also in other languages, including French. In Example (2), the child appropriately addresses the visitor with the 2PL pronoun *oni*; he also uses the plural form of the address term *buba* 'father'.

(2) a. *E wi-re ka mi ndu ku rogo ga-ani bambu a-geno?*
EXCL child-1SG.POSS SUB I go DIR in POSS-2PL1 house PL-guest
'Hey, my child, if I go to your (family's) toilet?

b. *a-buba, bambu a-geno ka boro sana-he tipa-ha*
PL-my.father house PL-guest SUB person ask-INAN2 because.of-INAN
mbata… oni ndu a-ndu
PL-before 2PL1 go III-go
'Father, the toilet, as if one ever asks first about it…, you simply go ahead …' (Isaac Waanzi)

Children also apply the V-form to their parents; the first time a child neglects this rule the father may scold him or her, but the second time s/he may be beaten in public so that other children will learn the lesson as well.

In many of the stories documented by Evans-Pritchard where people talk to princes, the use of the V-form and the other ritualized verbal expressions of polite-

12. A child cannot be the owner of real property.

ness are not found. They are, however, documented in the story of a person who tells by which strategies he manages to deceive people. The first consists of giving wrong information and the second of hiding deceit behind the utmost non-verbal and verbal politeness, using the V-form pronoun *oni*, the subjunctive from of the verb and in addition the reverential suffix *-nga*, as shown in Example (3). The narrator wants to make clear that without the second strategy the first one would not work. It is, however, obvious that the simultaneous application of so many positive politeness strategies is overdone and it makes the utterances incredible. Note that the term of address, *nda*, is singular, as if the speaker wants to indicate to his actual listener that he is not overpolite to him, but a trustworthy person.

(3) *ko ki ya ʻnda, oni e nga ko, ko pe-ke nga ha,*
3M SEQ say comrade 2PL1 let REV 3M 3M tell-PLUR REV INAN2
oni ongo nga ka gia nga ga-ko pai.
2PL1 be.silent REV SUB hear COP POSS-3M word
'He said "You there, you let him speak his piece, but you be quiet and hear what he has to say first"'. (Evans-Pritchard, 1974, p. 62)

This story teaches that merely applying formal rules of politeness is not enough, but that this must be supported by honesty and sincerity, an experience which people have in all societies. Weinrich (1986) investigates how and why overdoing such politeness makes utterances implausible, with clear reference to the statement by the protagonist Faust in a tragic play by Goethe:[13] "*im Deutschen lügt man, wenn man höflich ist*" ('in German to be polite is to tell a lie').

Many speakers assume that the *mo/oni* distinction to address a single person dates back to precolonial times, that the second person plural pronoun was not used then to indicate horizontal social distance as it is in Romance languages (see Brown & Gilman, 1960), but that it was used only as a honorification strategy encoding vertical distance or status hierarchy. After independence, the French T/V-pattern would have been borrowed from French as spoken in CAR and DRC and conflated with the old Zande pattern. As a consequence, the criteria which determine the use of the second person pronouns differ from those in modern European French. While in European French the V-form is used among adults as a sign of social distance when talking to people with whom there is no close personal relationship, irrespective of their social status, the T-form is normally no longer used by the upper class to address people of a lower social class. This, however, is what many Zande in rural areas do: the higher person addresses the lower one with the T-pronoun *mo*, and the lower person addresses the higher one

13. Faust is the protagonist in the most important tragedy (*Faust*) of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

with the V-pronoun, *oni*, in particular when addressing a chief, but also the adult men in the family. The use of the T-form towards children or as a sign of disdain towards certain adults like beggars is a remnant of its function of marking vertical distance (Pasch & Mbolifouye, 2011, p.7), which is also given in modern French.

Other formalized morphological and lexical expressions of politeness are the frequently heard terms *tambuahe* ('thanks [for] it') or *tambua pai* ('thanks [for the] matter'), which are used to verbalize gratitude in positive politeness. Less frequent is the use of the so-called *nga-* of reverence, often translated as 'please', which is suffixed to the verb in requests addressed to higher status persons. In Example (4) it is combined with *ani nahõpai bero* 'we ask from you', which Jehovah's Witnesses apparently created to overcome the lack of an equivalent for the English "please" or French "s'il vous plait" as an expression of negative politeness. It is based on the verb *hõ* 'to ask' and the direct object *pai* 'matter'.

(4) *Ani*[14] *na-hõ-pai* *be-ro* *mo* *gedi-nga* *gu* *keke-a-pai*
1PL PROG-beg-matter hand-2SG 2SG1 read.IMP-REV DEF write.RED-?-matter
na ye fuo *gere.*
come after this
'Please [= we ask this from you], read the following article.' (From Glosbe)

It is striking that several of the stories documented by Evans-Pritchard (1957, 1962, 1963, 1974) do not give evidence of the use of second person pronouns as indicators of vertical distance, but princes address commoners with *mo*; the latter use the same pronoun to address the princes and the verbal suffix *-nga* is not used either. Formal politeness may, however, be expressed instead by the reverential address term *gbia* 'chief, prince', by the subjunctive form of the verb marked by the subordinator *ka* and by the fact that the request is accompanied by an explanation giving evidence of the speaker's goodwill, as is shown in Example (5).

(5) *gbia,* *ka* *mo* *mbiri nga* *gu* *buda re* *ya,* *mbiko* *si* *wa* *ngua*
prince SUB 2SG1 drink NEG DEF beer DEM NEG because INAN1 like poison
rogo *yo*
inside there
'Prince, do not drink this beer because it appears that there is poison in it.'
(Evans-Pritchard, 1962)

Brown and Levinson's statement that superiors are less polite to inferiors than the other way round also applies to Zande society. The fact that, with regard to the Zande aristocracy, Evans-Pritchard observed only the opposite might indicate

14. Occasionally this pronoun is replaced by the first person singular pronoun *mi* 'I'.

that the aristocrats performed well in presenting their forefathers as fair and caring rulers.

While neglect of upward politeness is likely to be sanctioned, downward politeness cannot easily be claimed. Nevertheless, there are many situations when it appears wise for higher status people to behave politely towards people of lower status and Evans-Pritchard (1957b, p. 61) explicitly mentions the politeness of the princes towards their subordinates, which he describes more precisely as "generosity and a strong sense of justice". Yabuuchi (2006, p. 330–331) considers downward ingratiation a necessity in order to be liked by the subordinates and maintain power. Such ingratiation is perceived rather as kindness or friendliness than a type of politeness; it enhances the reputation of the person concerned, but the notion of face plays no role.

An example of a caring and generous prince is given in the story "Ongossi wounded", where Ongossi was badly wounded by a wild animal while hunting and Prince Basongoda ordered that he was not to go hunting again lest a beast kill him (Evans-Pritchard, 1963).[15] [16] Some princes, particularly Gbudwe (1870–1905), who was apparently the most popular prince in the Zande Empire (Evans-Pritchard, 1971), served food quite generously to all visitors who came to their courts.[17] Furthermore, in the stories by Evans-Pritchard, Prince Ndukpo, son of Gbudwe (Evans-Pritchard, 1957b), is praised by some men because they gave them wives, helped them in difficult situations, e.g., by giving them spears with which to pay the bride price, and – quite importantly – did not abuse his power in order to plunder the possessions of his subjects or take their wives (Evans-Pritchard, 1963).

Generosity was expected to be reciprocal, and people were allegedly ready to provide food and water or beer to a prince who treated them well, when he came to see them. This attitude is shown in the following text (Example (6)), where people explain to their new prince, Gangura,[18] how they had treated his predecessor, indicating indirectly that they would be likewise generous towards him as the new prince if he treated them well, and that they might respond to ill-treatment by moving their allegiance to another prince.

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15. Ongossi, who as a commoner had become governor under King Ngangi, settled in Gbudwe's territory after Gbudwe had conquered Ngangi's territory in about 1875 (Evans-Pritchard, 1960, p. 15).

16. Basongoda was the eldest son of Gbudwe (Evans-Pritchard, 1960, p. 10).

17. On the basis of many stories Evans-Pritchard managed to establish the genealogy of the kings and princes of the Zande Empire (1957a, 1957b, 1960), but by then it was impossible to find out at what time some king or prince had performed specific acts.

18. Gangura was another of Gbudwe's sons (Evans-Pritchard, 1960).

(6) *Mbiko ani a-inga nga iliso te; gbia na-ta kura ani ki*
because 1PL1 III-not.know NEG politeness NEG king II-yet appear 1PL1 SEQ
zi kina kondo wa ta du mara-a a-ki pai-ko ti gbia
seize just hen like yet be metal-INAN2 III-import side-3M at meet
na-ni, ki ya 'Gbia, mo ye te ba?' Si du ni iliso.
with-ANAPH SEQ say prince 2SG1 come NEG place INAN1 be MANNER politeness
'For we did not omit courtesy [we were not ignorant of courtesy]; as soon as the prince appeared we caught a fowl or took some metal objects to salute him with them saying "Prince, have you not come here?" That is in courtesy.'
(Evans-Pritchard, 1963)

For a chief who treated his subjects in a fair manner and who was a valuable source of support and good advice, even when deprived of political power by colonial government it was possible to maintain his influence. An example is the chief of Ligwa, a village in the east of CAR, who as late as 1955, i.e., towards the end of the colonial era, was still a highly respected moral authority (Leynaud, 1963).

In families, top-down orders are of the same type. A hungry husband may ask his wife for a meal bold on record *fu riahe fere* (give food for.1SG) 'give me food' or just by the term *riahe* 'food', and nobody would consider such behavior impolite. The wife, however, and the children (those old enough to master the language and the politeness rules), would ask the head of the family for some water using explicit polite forms, i.e., *ka mo fu-nga ime fe-re* (SUB 2SG give-REV for-1SG).[19] But although the head of the family is also entitled to the best piece of food, we were able to observe on several occasions that when we gave a piece of fruit or bread as a farewell gift to our consultants, they would take it home for their girlfriends, wives or children.

Some speakers of Zande repeatedly asked the first author for water in a bold on record way, like the head of the household. When we asked them whether they considered that way of asking polite, they confirmed it, but when asked whether a woman could ask for water in the same way, they negated it categorically. After that question they changed their way of asking for water to that of subordinates. There was apparently a cognitive dissonance with regard to Pasch, on the one hand as a woman, who could hence be asked for water in a direct command, and on the other hand in her role as a visiting professor.

Little children ask only indirectly for water by describing their need: *gomoro ime na-manga-re* (hunger water PROG-make-1SG.2) 'I am thirsty', an expression which adults may use as a politeness strategy when they want to avoid giving direct orders.

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19. Situations when they would do so are not frequent, since it is normally the mother's task to provide water to drink.

2.2 Non-hierarchical politeness

In non-hierarchical situations politeness is not requested by some from others, but exchange is voluntary because people want to be on good terms with each other in order to establish conditions for solidarity, mutual assistance and cooperation.

Where groups of people of the same social status carry out hard work and hence do not have the time to care about politeness rituals, they express their demands and orders to each other directly, without being impolite and threatening the face of the interactants. They may use imperative forms, i.e., the verb without a pronoun and without further explanation, or even by only naming the item they want, e.g., *(fu) ngume*! '(bring) sand!', *(fu) gire*! '(give) rope!' The employer will give his order in the same way, again without being regarded as impolite.

In such non-hierarchical situations explicit linguistic politeness would not be helpful, since economy of words makes the work more efficient. Even outside such working situations the use of the second person singular pronoun (Example (7)) instead of the mere imperative form is normally sufficiently polite.

(7) *mo pe pa-ha fe-re*
2SG1 tell matter-INAN.2 for-1SG2
'Tell me about it.'

Among Zande people, keeping silent plays as much of a role as the appropriate use of verbal politeness forms. The most important rule is not to dispute or complain in public or in a way that a third person would notice. For women, this applies in particular with regard to marital problems and other family affairs, which have to be solved inside the house, and it means that the rule must be obeyed by wives and bigger children. Even the physical punishment of women is carried out inside the house and no cries of pain must be heard outside. A wife who complains aloud about her husband or cries when beaten loses her face as a person and as a wife, because she has shown in public that she is unable or unwilling to be a good wife, who does not commit mistakes that deserve such punishment, or because she is not strong enough to endure the pain. It must, however, be noted that such rules, even though confirmed by our consultants, give an unrealistically harsh description of life: in many cases, reproaches by the head of the family to his wife or children can be invalidated by reasonable explanations. There is normally no need for formal apologies and even a strong apology without explanation may not do. Such strategies allow the "lower" person to keep his/her positive face, which might be damaged by the apology strategy, as Nureddeen (2008) describes with regard to Sudanese Arabic.

A noteworthy example of politeness based on the feeling of solidarity and the readiness to give mutual assistance is given by Isaac Waanzi, who describes how Zande refugees are supported by their ethnic fellows. Displaced people quite often manage to find 'relatives' (*agume*) in the host community who integrate them into their families, although they are not really members of these families but belong only to the same clan. And even Zande who are not members of the clan of the host may be welcomed as new relatives because giving help in times of need is considered normal, as is expressed in the following proverb (Example (8)).

(8) *boro ga-mo ni nga gu ni na-dusio-ro rago kerepai*
person POSS-2SG1 ANAPH COP DEF ANAPH II-meet-2SG2 place difficulty
'Yours is the one who comes to your aid when you are in disaster.'
(Isaac Waanzi)

While people are reluctant to ask for someone's personal name, it is normal to ask visitors about their clan in order not to pass relatives unknowingly, because relatives are as close to a person as a scar is to his body (Example (9)). In areas where there are many Zande, at least one out of ten households hosts a new family member as the normal duty of a relative. They give them good food, clothes and land to cultivate.

(9) *gume wa séro áro*
relative like trace wound
'A relative is like a scar.' (Isaac Waanzi)

2.3 Avoidance-based politeness

In many situations politeness rules require a lower status person to be silent in the presence of a higher status person, who may be the head of the family, or the chief. Particularly with regard to the latter, an applicant must position him- or herself at an appropriate distance in order to wait for attention and must assume a specific humble posture when talking to the chief. For example, a woman who wants to ask the chief for help because her husband treats her badly will wait in silence at some distance from him until he invites her to come closer. She will crouch beside him, avoiding looking into his eyes but casting down her gaze and raising her concerns in a low voice only after being invited to do so. Like other applicants, she will not call him by his name, but by his title, *gbia* 'prince, chief'. The non-verbal self-humiliating behavior of the woman constitutes negative politeness; waiting in silence and using the title rather than his name as an address term are practices of avoidance-based negative politeness (see Brown, 2015, p. 327). Allan and Burridge (2006, Chapter 6) call taboos on names "fear based", since a person's name is regarded as an inalienable possession, i.e., a proper inseparable part of the owner

and not just a symbol but "the verbal expression of his or her personality". Sorcerers can do harm to a person if they are in possession of that person's true name (Burridge, 2012, p. 84).

A chief is not the only category of person who must be addressed by his title; persons of the older generation are quite generally called by their genealogical status and not by their names: *tita* 'grandfather', *(b)uba* or *baba* 'father', *nina* or *nana* 'mother', *ando* 'uncle' and *deliba* 'aunt'. A widow, in particular, must not pronounce the name of her late husband lest she might become uncontrollably obese and from time to time lose control of her speech, which are typical consequences of taboo breaches. Its mentioning would demonstrate a closeness which is not necessarily given. The brothers and the adult sons may mention the name when it is asked for, but not otherwise. These avoidance rules differ clearly from in-law avoidance rules in Southern Africa, Hlonipha (Finlayson 1982) and among the Kambaata in Ethiopia described by Treis (2005), where names of male and female relatives must be avoided and both men and women have to respect them, although stricter compliance is expected from women than from men.

The rule not to pronounce the names of certain persons, e.g., the prince, have been qualified by some speakers as being determined by politeness, while pronouncing the names of elderly relatives has been described as breaking a taboo, and the type of sanctions that follow are typical of sanctions of taboo breaches. This is an indication that the borderline between politeness and taboo is not easy to determine, and that on a *politeness-taboo* continuum avoidance strategies must be located in the middle. While disrespecting certain avoidance rules may lead to punishment by the addressee affected, disrespecting other rules will have consequences as for breaking a taboo, e.g., normally some form of bodily damage which cannot be ascribed to the action of a person.

The reason why the rules of name avoidance are almost gender neutral is that the name of any person is the antinomic of death, and it is only when giving a person a name that he or she is made a human being. As a consequence, the name of a person is very much tied to his personhood, and it must be used with caution since it deserves the same respect as its owner and to use it inappropriately is to break a taboo. In order to avoid such a risk a Zande will tell someone his name only when s/he has confidence in the other person, since to convey one's name is to surrender oneself. In order to protect the name of another person, nobody will pronounce it in dangerous circumstances, e.g., at night, in the bush or at the river (Kpikumbano, 1996, p. 32–36).

An important rule of saving a speaker's face, which we were given on several occasions, says that "a Zande man does not show emotions" and does "not raise his voice against other people", "he avoids quarrelling" and should "keep silent" when confronted with reproaches, which may be qualified as negative politeness.

Such a way of keeping silent is a face-saving strategy for terminating futile discussions with interlocutors who are unwilling to accept a given situation. It can in fact be easily observed that Zande do not talk much and – even on request – they normally do not repeat an utterance. This makes it difficult to decide, in a given situation, particularly when there are several interactants arguing, whether keeping silent is a polite or an impolite strategy.

Keeping silent when not explicitly invited to speak constitutes an important ritualized non-verbal communicative behavior of inferiors towards persons in power. Politeness towards a high-status person is often expressed by remaining silent instead of talking, by speaking in a low voice and/or in a submissive posture. The silence of petitioners who come to see the chief and have to wait for him, even though this is not volitional, is considered polite behavior. It indicates respect for the chief's position and the latter's right to begin the communication, eventually allowing the petitioner to voice her or his concern, or to refuse communication. The submissive posture and avoidance of direct eye contact underlines the face-saving strategy of the petitioner.

Zande chiefs may use silence and even total refusal of communication to express their power towards lower status interactants, while for the latter being silent and waiting is the way of being polite. By Western standards, a chief's refusal to answer questions is not an act of politeness, but in Zande society, where social hierarchies and demonstrations of power are accepted, it is not regarded as impolite since it can be expected, and may be called politic (cf. Watts, 2003). Non-Zande likewise do not call the silence kept by Zande interactants impolite, but they describe them as difficult persons to deal with.

By keeping silent a speaker may keep dignity and face, and in many cases this is also a way of saving the face of the interactant, since it helps to calm emotions on both sides. It may, however, be that the interactant is confused, because positions cannot be clarified. What may be a face-saving strategy for the person who refuses to speak may appear impolite for the person who expects a response. This means that, in the long run, conflict-avoiding silence may give rise to uncertainty and distrust, which means that silence may also be perceived as impolite. With regard to such situations, non-Zande occasionally state that "with a Zande, you never know where you are."

It is important to note that impoliteness or bad behavior do not necessarily result from the ill will of a person, but the person may have been incited by *pa kpere* 'matter of misfortune' to misbehave towards a person of higher status. In such cases the evildoer may use that condition as an explanation, but he cannot be sure that this will spare him/her from punishment (Example (10)).

(10) *ka si ngia kperé du na-ri-ro, mi du re, mo ye*
SUB INAN1 COP.SUBJ misfortune exist II-eat-2SG2 1SG1 exist here 2SG1 come
ka ta-re
SUB beat-1SG2
'If it is misfortune which is eating you, I am here, you may come to beat me.'

It is important to note that inappropriateness of behavior is a matter of degree and a given behavior is normally considered a taboo breach when it is socially highly inappropriate, such as insulting one's father (Pasch, 2019, p. 221).

3. Taboos

Since Frazer's (1902) article on the term taboo, it has for a long time been defined as "consecrated, inviolable, forbidden, unclean or cursed".[20] It refers to forbidden behavior because such behavior is considered dangerous to the author of an action, to other persons or to an entire group. Taboo breaches entail either civil or religious penalties. The latter, inflicted by the offended spirits, generally take the form of a disease. According to Radcliffe-Brown (1939, p. 5) the word means simply 'to forbid' or 'forbidden' and it can be applied to any kind of prohibition. Douglas (1979, p. 72f) gives a similar short definition of the term, "ban or prohibition", adding that the way the word is used in English and other European languages does not have much to do with religion, but refers to "a rule (…) which cannot be explained"; she states that "taboo systems uphold cultural systems, which are patterns of values and norms." This means that breaking certain taboos is an inappropriate behavior showing disrespect for social hierarchies and power relations (see Metz-Göckel et al., 2015, p. 10), which may lead to some kind of trouble for the offender irrespective of whether it was intentional or not. This may be physical punishment, when a powerful person is affected, or physical problems may arise when moral values have been disrespected (Allan & Burridge, 2006, pp. 1, 6).

The functions of taboos are not always very clear, but for some there are rational explanations: verbal taboos, for example, help to prevent distress and offence, and incest taboos may prevent the detrimental outcomes of inbreeding. In many cases, however, people do not know why given taboos were created, but they respect them nevertheless (Allan & Burridge 2006, Chapter 10).

For the Zande, next to witchcraft, taboo breaches are the major sources of failures, mishaps or diseases. Evans-Pritchard (1976, p. 228) gives *gira* as the equivalent of 'taboo' and he defines it as refraining from some action which, according

20. Frazer (1902) also notes: "The word 'taboo' is common to the different dialects of Polynesia (…) it would thus originally mean 'marked thoroughly'. Its ordinary sense is 'sacred'".

to a mystical belief, will cause these undesired effects. He shows, through a number of examples, that non-compliance with taboos is the explanation for such effects which have not been provoked by sorcery. If, for example, a child dies, and it becomes known that the parents had sexual intercourse before the child was weaned, or if someone develops leprosy after having had an incestual relationship, then quite clearly the taboo breach and not witchcraft is the cause of the disease and eventual death (Evans-Pritchard, 1976, p. 27). According to Lagae and Vanden Plas (1925, 56) *gira* (*i*) is a verb meaning 'to renounce eating certain foods', indicating that it concerns only food taboos.[21] Bad words are nowhere characterized as taboo. Similar to what can be observed in many other societies (Pasch, 2019), the equivalent of the term *taboo* is not a frequent term in conversations and people refer rather directly to the misdeed itself.

Some taboos refer to inappropriate behavior which threatens moral norms and values and hence must be complied with by all people in the same way, while other taboos refer to inappropriate behavior that threatens the given social hierarchies; these require different ways of behaving from people of different social status. As mentioned above, disobedience to the parents by children is considered bad manners and leads to scolding or beating as a punishment. When teenagers or older children fight with their parents, things become more serious. If a son who is circumcised beats his father, he creates a situation which cannot easily be repaired, because this is not only bad behavior, but it means grossly violating rules of respect towards elders, in particular his own father, i.e., he has broken a taboo. The latter may not hit back in revenge but rather may utter a curse that this son will also be beaten by his own son someday. Non-respect of most other taboos may lead to sanctions which occur at some unknown moment in the future. They are not provoked by persons but consist of bad things which attack the evildoer's body like a disease: carrying a fetus in a wrong position, growing grossly obese, or the penis developing the shape of a sweet potato.

A mild taboo, the neglect of body hygiene, which may lead to scabies, may become the topic of parodic performances. While it would not be good behavior to imitate a person who is affected by that disease, it is not unusual that during the end-of-mourning ceremony, when people come together to drink and to dance, someone spontaneously sings the *kpúrínya* song (Example (11)).[22]

21. They use the spelling *giḷa* (*i*), which reflects the pronunciation in DRC.

22. *Kpurinya* refers to the irritations of the skin and *ma* to the effects of these irritations that make the affected person scratch himself.

(11) *kpúrínya*, *kpúrínya*, *kpúrínya*
mí a-manga wai bɛ kaza má-kpurinya
1SG1 III-do how because.of sickness scabies
mí a-pí waɽí bɛ kaza má-kpurinya
1SG1 III-stretch.out where because.of sickness scabies
mí a-rá wàɽí bɛ kaza má-kpurinya
1SG1 III-sleep where because.of sickness scabies
'What will I do with this sickness of scabies? [I do not know what to do …]
Where will I stretch out with this sickness of scabies? [I do not know where to …]
Where will I sleep with this sickness of scabies?' [I do not know where to sleep …]

The function of this song, which verbally constitutes the lament of a person badly affected by scabies, is to make the mourning people return to laughter. The idea is highly amusing that someone is suffering as badly as described in the song simply because s/he was too lazy to wash him-/herself properly on a daily basis when coming home from work and instead went to bed dirty.

3.1 Food taboos

The only taboos people talk about without being queried are genuine food taboos, i.e., taboos concerning the consumption of food, irrespective of the situation. These food taboos concern refraining from eating the totem animals of one's clan, animals into which their members will turn after death. Each clan has its totem animal, *sino*, the meat of which is taboo for all members, irrespective of his/her sex or social position, hence they are not allowed to eat it. This means that food taboos are highly conditioned taboos, since the animals concerned may be eaten by members of other clans. Some aristocratic clans, for example, have the leopard as their totem animal, or another animal which is not frequently eaten, which they consider agreeable since this means that there is hardly any food restriction for them, while the totem animals of some commoner clans are hard to comply with since they are regular food for most people.

The fact that the animals involved are not taboo as such explains why people can talk about them so freely. Everybody knows his/her own totem animal and those of the other clans. If someone wants to participate in a meal and does not recognize that the meat served is from his/her totem animal, s/he normally gets a warning from somebody who is aware of the danger (Example (12)). With regard to children, this means that they are taught to respect their food taboo in an explicit way.

(12) *ka mu li-nga-he ya sino-ro du*
SUB 2SG1 eat-NEG-INAN2 NEG taboo-2SG2 be
'Don't eat it, it is your taboo (totem animal).'

If somebody eats the meat of his/her totem animal without knowing it, that person will become aware of it only when something bad happens, which is considered the sanction for breaking that taboo. Death is a possible though not very frequent consequence (Evans-Pritchard, 1976, p. 27)). If a child is born in the wrong position this indicates that the mother has eaten food which was taboo for her.

3.2 Taboos in initiation camps

Different types of food taboos apply in the initiation camps for boys, which are still organized in rural areas today, although these are not the only taboos. The initiates' sojourn there is very much determined by a number of other taboos which teach self-control, body hygiene and sexuality. As long as the boys are in the initiation camp, for example, no female person may go there and see the boys. The boys for their part must not leave the camp and see the women in the village. The taboos prevailing here are particularly strong and disrespecting them may lead to bodily defects or deformations of various kinds.

Food in the boys' initiation camps consists mainly of fufu made of cassava flour. All other starchy foods, like bananas and tubers, are taboo and their consumption would lead to serious effects on the body.[23] A particularly strong taboo is on the consumption of sweet potatoes, for fear that the freshly circumcised penis, swollen after the operation, might remain swollen and maintain its deformed shape, which resembles that of a sweet potato. The only meat they are allowed to eat is that of *mbíyo*, a wild goat which is black all over, hence it does not have a pleasant appearance. When the boys go hunting for a *mbíyo* they may also hunt other animals, but these will be sent to the village. If the boys eat other kinds of meat, the circumcision wound will not heal, but will keep bleeding. This fear is expressed in an initiation song (Dusa & Pasch, in press) in which a boy in the first days after circumcision considers himself a raw sweet potato of which one end is cut off so that the raw moist and reddish inner part becomes visible (Example (13)).

(13) *madada*[24] *bʌ-iwɔ-ɽɔ iwa abangbe o*
belt father-raw-2SG2 raw sweet.potato
'Your papa-raw is a raw sweet potato, oo.'
[your freshly circumcised initiate is a raw sweet potato]

23. Evans-Pritchard (1976, p. 110) speaks more vaguely about a "tabooed state for two or three days" and that the neophytes abstain from sexual intercourse and various foods.

After circumcision, the boys are not allowed to take a bath for fear that they might grow big like elephants (Kpikumbano, 1996, p. 27), i.e., develop uncontrollable corpulence.

3.3 Taboos concerning the oracle

Evans-Pritchard (1976, pp. 129–156) is our only major source of information about different taboos concerning the consultation of the poison oracle (*benge*). When asking the oracle, the operator sits opposite the chicken if he has respected the taboos, but if he has failed to do that he will sit at a distance of several meters; other men who did not keep taboos have to remain at an even greater distance.

In fact, *benge* is a poison produced from a wild forest creeper, but in Zande eyes it only becomes the *benge* for oracle consultations if prepared respecting given taboos and employed correctly according to the "traditional" procedures. If the poison proves impotent in preliminary tests, this is normally attributed to a taboo breach. Evans-Pritchard says that in the days when he carried out his research, *benge* was often imported from the Congo and in many cases it was allegedly ruined, because it had passed through the hands of somebody who had neglected the relevant taboos.

If someone wants to consult the poison oracle he must not have sex with a woman during the preceding night. In the times of the Zande empire, a prince unwilling to renounce intercourse might sleep with a boy before consulting the oracle.[25] Sex with a young boy could not affect the oracle, and hence was not taboo (Evans-Pritchard, 1970, p. 1430), as is expressed in the following proverb (Example (14)).

(14) *kumba gude na-gbere-sa nga benge te*
man boy II-bad-CAUS NEG oracle NEG
'A boy does not spoil the poison oracle.'

Only males may take part in the sessions–adults and those boys who are old enough to observe taboos of mourning after the death of a relative. Younger boys might not be able to observe the food taboos and hence are kept away. Nevertheless, the preferred operators of the oracle are teenage boys of between 12 and 16 years of age. They are old enough to comply with food taboos and due to their

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24. With his lamentations the initiate virtually addresses his *madada*. *Madada* is the name of a belt to which *àgáka* fibers are attached in such a way that it looks like a skirt. It covers the lower body to the knees without rubbing the wound and causing pain.

25. The life of the so-called boy-wives serving as concubines to young warriors who were not yet allowed to marry is described by Evans-Pritchard (1963, 1970).

young age they are able to refrain from sexual intercourse. Because of their youth it is believed that they are neither able nor motivated to cheat, since the adult problems presented to the oracle do not concern them.

The rubbing-board (*iwa*) oracle likewise loses its prophesying power when a taboo is broken by the operator, and turns into merely a carved piece of wood.

3.4 Taboos concerning sexuality

Unlike food taboos, those concerning sex and sexuality are gender specific. Nobody must see an adult person of the other sex naked. But while girls must not see boys when they are bathing, boys for their part need not stay away from the place where girls wash, and they may observe them.

In the days of the Zande Empire a man caught in adultery was sometimes killed or mutilated, but normally compensation in spears was accepted (Evans-Pritchard, 1933). Sex with a member of the family other than the spouse, with the mother-in-law in particular, is a very serious infringement of the taboo.

Such public taboos and the consequences of their breaches are conveyed by proverbs (Examples (15), (16)) and in stories of Ture, the Trickster (Example (17)), which are still known in rural areas but which are no longer remembered by the Zande living in urban centers.[26]

(15) *i a-za nga boro ti da kurugbo ba-ni te*
3PL PERF-dissuade NEG person on wife corpse father-ANAPH NEG
'One does not dissuade a man from approaching the widow of his father.'

(16) *u na-kpi nga ari-yo mangi-ru nye koyo te.*
ANIM.SG1 PROG-die NEG sky-there feather-ANIM.SG2 stay there NEG
'If it (a bird) dies in the sky its feathers will not stay there.'

The messages of such proverbs are indirect and they may not be understood by a young person or by somebody unacquainted with the culture. Example (15) indicates that talking about a taboo breach is in itself taboo, hence a potential taboo breaker cannot be impeded from transgressing taboo rules. Example (15) verbally describes a situation, not explicitly related to sexuality, which teaches that an action, however far away and secretly it was committed, will not remain secret, but that it leaves traces which will be found some time by someone at some place and shame will fall on the taboo breaker. Sanctions of illegitimate sexual intercourse consist of shaming before the community, i.e., a loss of face or pub-

26. They still know, however, about the stories and regret that they are no longer remembered. This explains why when Helma Pasch was in Bangassou, Bangui and Kisangani with copies of several of the stories, her Zande language consultants were extremely keen to get hold of some.

lic shame, *ze* (Example (16)),[27] and in the times of the empire, the husband concerned might in addition have beaten his wife and mutilated the rival.

Since talking about sexual behavior is taboo, in some stories illegitimate intercourse only becomes known because the private parts of the adulterers themselves start talking about it in front of the family or friends, as can be seen in Example (17). This is the end of a story where Ture had gone with his mother-in-law and not with his wife to collect termites, but instead of doing their work they had sex. On their way home they came past some villagers and lied to them about the termites not swarming at the place where they wanted to collect them. They even accepted an invitation to a meal of termites as consolation for their alleged bad luck. While they were eating with the other people, the truth about their intercourse and their lies came out.

(17) *ho i a-tona ni ka ri ra barangba Ture ki ya, "ako Ture,*
when 3PL III-begin ANAPH SUB eat-ANIM.PL2 front.part T. SEQ say T.
ya mo na-ri a-ge a-ri, wa mo ni-ta-ra na kina
say 2SG1 II-eat PL-termite III-eat like 2SG1 X-SIMUL-sleep PREP just
na-gbio-ro a-ge ni-bati?" Barangba na-gbio-ko ki
mother-in.law-2SG2 PL-termite X-escape front.part mother-in.law-3M SEQ
karaga-ha ki ya we, "ya mo zire?" Si ki iriwo ti a-boro
reply-INAN2 SEQ say QUOT say 2SG1 lie INAN1 SEQ frighten at PL-person
kporo gbe ze[28] *ki zi Ture na na-gbio-ko bakere gbe. Ture ki*
village very shame SEQ seize T. PREP mother-in.law-3M big very T. SEQ
zuba oto be ze.
leave speed because.of shame
'When they started eating them Ture's private parts said, "Oh dear! Ture are you now eating termites while when you were sleeping with your mother-in-law the termites escaped?" His mother-in-law's private parts replied, "Do you say it is a lie?" The people of the village were shocked. Ture and his mother-in-law were struck very hard by shame. Ture ran off in shame.'

(Evans-Pritchard, 1965)

The fact that the people found out that Ture and his mother-in-law had had sex put shame on both of them. This shame was increased by their apparent lies and their audacity in accepting the friendly invitation to a meal of termites which they had no moral right to accept. Shame, which falls on adulterers when illegitimate sexual relations are discovered, is the utmost loss of face and no possible explana-

27. Formerly, in Zande society, shame resulted only from sexual misbehavior (Pasch, 2017, p. 186). Other misdeeds might cause embarrassment but not shame. In Sudan, *ze* is also felt nowadays for other types of serious misbehavior.

28. *Ze* which can be seen in the eyes is translated as 'shame' or 'shyness'.

tion can ameliorate the situation. Running away from the people who know about the shameful action is the only way to save face to some degree. The fact that only Ture ran away indicates that men could make use of this solution more easily than women, who have to bear the despising reactions of others.

4. Conclusions

Both rules of politeness and taboos have the function of regulating social behavior and stabilizing the given hierarchical structures. Politeness rules primarily concern verbal and non-verbal communication, and they are applied to establish a friendly situation, or to save the face of the interactant when trying to achieve a specific objective. These rules tell people what to do in given situations even if one does not feel like doing so, and how to do it in order to avoid or reduce friction in communicative situations. Many politeness rules are status-sensitive and must be observed only by people of low social status, particularly women and children. Compliance is obvious to the interactants, while non-compliance will lead to loss of face of the interactant and possibly also of the speaker.

Taboos are prohibitions to do desirable things, and therewith they serve to maintain moral and cultural values. Non-compliance may remain unnoticed by other people, but sanctions may come nevertheless and make the taboo breach public. In short, politeness rules teach people to show good and appropriate behavior, and their application is necessary if one wants to be regarded as an acceptable member of the society. Taboos teach people, particularly men, to exercise self-control, practice sacrifice and to renounce desirable things like certain delicious foods, or – in specific conditions – sex.

Disrespect for the rules of politeness and of the taboos discussed in this paper may be considered the two poles of a continuum of appropriate behavior. The strictness of rules and the degree of formality of politeness strategies correlate with the social distance between the speaker and the interactant. The greater the distance the more formal strategies are required to fulfil the norms of upward politeness and to show that one is able to behave according to one's status. In the absence of social distance there is no need for formal politeness. Nevertheless, people on the same social level show solidarity and help each other to survive in case of need; however, this is not really regarded as polite, but rather as friendly and solidary. If persons in power practice downward politeness and treat inferiors in a fair and supportive way, this is again considered as friendly rather than polite.

Unlike politeness rules, which tell people what to do in given situations, taboos demand that people desist from doing things which they would enjoy doing. Politeness rules make behavior complicated or cumbersome, but help peo-

ple to get along with superiors. Compliance with taboos makes people learn to endure sacrifices, but it also makes sure that they survive in good health and with well-formed bodies.

It becomes obvious that the taboos are stronger than politeness rules, and the impact of a taboo breach is more serious than that of impolite behavior. This is confirmed by the following proverb (Example (18)).

(18) *sino* *súsì* *ìrìsa*
taboo pass.IMP politeness
'The taboo is stronger than politeness.'

Abbreviations

ANAPH	anaphora
ANIM.SG1	animate singular, Series 1[29]
ANIM.SG2	animate singular, Series 2
ANIM.PL2	animate plural, Series 2
CAUS	causative
COP	copula
COP.SUBJ	subjunctive form of the copula
DEF	definite marker
DEM	demonstrative
EXCL	exclamation
IMP	imperfective verb stem
INAN1	inanimate pronouns of Series 1
INAN2	inanimate pronouns of Series 2
IRR	irrealis
MANNER	particle introducing a description of manner
NEG	negation marker
QUOT	quotative
PL	plural prefix
PLUR	pluractional
POSS	possessive
PREP	preposition
PRES	present
PROG	progressive
RED	reduplication
REV	reverential

29. Zande has two series of pronouns. Those of Series 1, which are found in the position of the subject and in alienable possessive constructions, indicate a higher degree of control than those of Series 2, which are found in object position and in inalienable possessive constructions (Pasch & Mbolifouye, 2011, pp. 4–9).

SEQ	sequence
SIMUL	simultaneity
SUB	subordinator
1SG2	1st singular, Series 2
2SG1	2nd singular, Series 1
2SG2	2nd singular, Series 1
1PL1	1st plural, Series 1
2PL1	2nd plural, Series 1
3M	3rd singular masculine
3PL	3rd plural
II	progressive prefix
III	perfective prefix
X	past marker

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