

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC IMPORT OF SOME ASPECTS OF ẸDO (BENIN) *OTUE* 'GREETINGS' CODES

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Abstract

Greetings (*Otuẹ*) are general tools for exchanging pleasantries among the Benin people within and outside any community they found themselves. But it differs from culture to culture. While many cultures share the same semantic greeting system, the Ẹdo (Benin) people tend to exhibit a complex morning greeting system called *Ukhu* meaning “heritage”. Thus, this research provides an in-depth representation, classification and analysis of some greeting codes used in Ẹdo (Benin) language. The purpose of this research work is to analyse various realizations, types and usage of greetings in accordance to a context, and individuals. To achieve the aim of this study, the researcher used the tenet of the speech act theory and ethnography of communication to analyse fifty-four (54) greeting codes obtained from the observation of discourses, the interview of native speakers and users and also sourcing online. The study revealed that greetings in Ẹdo language have several derivations pertinent to the context, gender, age group and individuals using it. Greetings in Ẹdo language is gender, age, clan, occasion and contextually sensitive. The morning greetings *Ukhu* “heritage” is particularly ascribed to family lineage. It exposes the ancestral home of the users. The researcher recommends that language enthusiasts and linguists should do proper documentation on the greeting forms across the indigenous languages in the country.

Keywords: Greetings; *Ukhu* (Morning salutation); ethnography of speaking; speech acts.

Introduction

Greeting is a means of communication used by individuals to deliberately and consciously make their presence known and felt by other(s), to show, give or get attention, and recommend a type of social status quo or relationship that exists among themselves and others. Harvey (1982), opines that greeting is a social phenomenon that exists in all realized human cultures, though they may differ from culture to culture and they can be expressed both audibly and Para linguistically in the case of waving of hands, eye movement, smiles, flashing of car head-lamp, and so on. Greetings can also be a combination of both.

Ibrahim (1976, p.12) claimed that greeting is “a universal feature of human interaction that is made up of a set of linguistic and or non-linguistic devices used for the initial management of encounters.” The Ẹdo (Benin) greeting is made up of rules of conduct, and is an inescapable part of everyday conversation. According to Goffman (1956), a rule of conduct may be defined as a guide for action, recommended not because it is pleasant, cheap, or effective, but because it is suitable or just. It regularizes patterns of reciprocal behaviour among group members. It facilitates predictability and stability in interpersonal relationships and, at the same time, minimizes negative feelings or general misunderstanding”.

Traditionally, most African cultures are inclined to greeting as people; whether, we know them or not. However, this trend is gradually changing. In these contemporary times, people are less committed to greeting people due to western cultures, which do not place much value on greetings as in African nations.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to carry out an ethnographic analysis of some greeting codes among the Benin people of Edo State, Nigeria. Thus, the research work analyses various realizations, types and usage of greetings in accordance with different context, and individuals.

The objectives include to;

- a) reveal the different types of greetings in Edo Benin particularly, the ‘morning salutations’ *Ukhu*;
- b) analyse some of the derivational greetings in Edo, in accordance with age, context, and individuals, using speech acts or speaking model.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive research design methodology because the aim of this research is to study the meaning attributed to the contextual or situational usage of greetings with the consideration of the persons using it. The descriptive survey methodology is considered the best; this is because, it assesses the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. This socio-demographic ratios/profile includes sex, age, gender, occupation, language usage, location/locale, and mother tongue in identifying, analysing and determining the competence of the native speaker in his or her language. The instrument used for this course of research work is interview, recording and documenting of daily usage of greetings among the Edo populace. The questions that these respondents will be asked are typed to ensure coherence and cohesion in the conclusion of the survey.

The data (54 greeting codes), gathered for analysis were collected through interview of some speakers of Use dialect, living in the Use community of Ovia South East Local government area of Edo State, while the morning greetings *Ukhu* “heritage” were randomly collected among the Benin people in Oredo, Egor, Ikpoba Okha and Ovia South East Local government areas, in the Edo State, Nigeria. The data collected were properly organized and grouped into several realizations of greetings found in the Edo language community. The responses (data) gotten from the respondents were also critically analysed and grouped into several greeting types found in the language.

Theoretical Orientation

Ethnography of communication is also called, the SPEAKING model or ethnography of speaking. It is a sociolinguistic model which was developed by Dell Hymes in 1962. This socio-linguistic model was first coined as “ethnography of speaking” in Dell Hymes’ papers. This was later redefined in Dell Hymes’ 1964 paper titled “Introduction: Toward Ethnographies of Communication to accommodate for the non-vocal and non-verbal characteristics of communication”.

This model is an instrument used to promote the identification, recognition and labeling of elements of communication. According to Hymes (1964, p.57), to speak a language correctly, one needs to learn its vocabulary and grammar, and also the context in which words are used.

In essence, the learning of the components of the SPEAKING model is essential for linguistic competence.

To enable the use of his representation, Hymes constructed the mnemonic, S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G which represents “setting or scene, participants, ends, acts sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, & genre”. This components or division of the module can be applied or used in several types of discourse such as “message form; message content; setting; scene; speaker/sender; addressor; hearer/receiver/audience; addressee; purposes (outcomes); purposes (goals); key; channels; forms of speech; norms of interaction; norms of interpretation; and genres”.

This researcher opts for these theoretical frameworks for this course of study as it aims to identify several contextual typological greetings found in Edo language, examine its usage and analyse each of these greetings in accordance to the speakers intuition and listeners’ assimilation, understanding and effect. That is, the speech act theory will talk about how a greeting medium is used in what context? By who? and the meaning depicted from this utterance by the hearer/ receiver/ audience and also to aid the understanding of the ability and connections within a given speech context. It provides insight on cultural values and type of dialogue as involving context and speech participants.

Reviews on Language

Goldstein (2008, p. 292) defined language as “a system of communication, using sounds or symbols that enable us to express our thoughts, feelings ideas and experiences.” Goldstein defines language as a type of communication. In which oral sounds or symbols are used to express feelings, thoughts, ideas and expressions. This definition, like some other language definitions is unable to define the entirety of the phenomenon, “Language”. This is to mean that language covers a whole lot more than our thoughts, feelings, ideas and experiences.

Osisanwo (2003, p.1) states that “language is human vocal noise or arbitrary graphic representation of this noise, used systematically and conventionally for the purpose of communication”. Osisanwo affirms that language is a communicational tool that is used solely by humans. He also described language to be a systematically and conventionally used tool for communication by people with similar communicational tool (language). By this he meant that language is firstly arranged, and these arrangements, that is, patterning must be known to the speech community that uses it. This agreement must be conventionally agreed upon and used.

Some Linguists have criticized this definition due to the fact that Osisanwo perceived language as, “vocal noise”. They questioned why a well-structured, verbally articulated conventional communicational tool is described as a noise? This they proved by describing a noise as any sound, which is unpleasant and therefore not wanted. So, since a language is used to communicate, then it is needed and can't be categorized as noise.

Also, Finnegan (2004) believes that a language is a vehicle of thought, a system of expression that mediates the transfer of thought from one person to another. In his description, Finnegan portrays language as vehicle (medium), an instrument which is used in the transference of thought (thoughts as to what ever intentions are in our minds). Also, a “system”, is basically a combination or collection of organized thoughts, which may include vocal signs, etc. One very important aspect of Finnegan’s definition of language is the notion of language being an arbitrator between the communicator and the communicated. It is the basic channel through which our thoughts are expressed.

The Society and Culture

In the words of Ginsberg (2007), “the society is a collection of individuals united by certain relations or mode of behaviours which mark them off from others who differ from them in behaviour.” The society therefore can be defined as a group of people who share a common culture, occupy a particular territorial area, and feel themselves to constitute a united and distinct entity.

Scholars are of the belief that society and culture are similar concepts, but their scope is different. A society is an interdependent community, while culture is an attribute of a community. Culture is a product of social learning rather than biological hereditary. This means that culture is non-genetic, as it cannot be inherited by offspring but can be transmitted through social interaction. Therefore, a culture is said to be acquired by living in a particular place, and identifying with this particular group of persons; which is the society. Different societies have different cultures. Culture therefore represents the beliefs of a group of people, while the society represents the group who share those beliefs. Neither culture nor society can exist without the other.

Conclusively, society and culture are two elements that complement each other. One will agree that the society expresses itself through its culture.

Greetings

Greeting is an act of communication through which human makes their presence known to one another in order to show attention, and to show a type of relationship or social status between individuals’ community in contact with each other. Greetings, according to Harvey (1982) can be defined as,

...a communication means used by individuals to consciously and deliberately make their presence felt by other(s), show attention, and suggest a type of relationship or social status between themselves and others. Greetings exist in all known human cultures, though they may differ from culture to culture and they can be expressed both audibly and physically, and most often involve a combination of the two. Greeting is usually verbalized but could be non-verbalized as in the case of waving of hands, eye movement, smiles, flashing of car head-lamp, etc.

Ibrahim et al., (1976, p. 12) view it thus: “Greeting is a universal feature of human interaction, and it is defined as the set of linguistic and /or non-linguistic devices used for the initial management of encounters”. Goffman (1956) describes greeting as “an obligation on how to conduct oneself in a particular way towards others.” Laver (1981, p. 304) observes, “routines of greeting and parting,

far from being relatively meaningless and mechanical social behaviour'... are extremely important strategies for the negotiation and control of social identity and social relationships between participants in a conversation".

Duranti (1993, p. 31), on the other hand believes that "...to speakers belonging to the same community, the greeting ritual is often performed as a part of their cultural competence". He also explains that the form of greeting may reveal information about how the speaker perceives the respondent. It is attested to in more recent studies that the greeting culture is language and culture specific. In the words of Olufunmi (1998, p. 8), "An English man takes greetings with little concern; he greets whenever he feels like doing so, and may even decline when greeted." She is of the belief that an English man is the type that is not as warm as the Yorubas. This could be the reason why their greetings are particular and copious in Igbo and Yoruba than in English language.

Jibreen (2010) asserts that, "forms of greetings vary extensively and that we have different forms of greetings for each and every type or status of people." Based on the work of Jibreen (2010), greetings help us to learn more about the culture, personal and historical background of the person who utters it; whether the person is a commoner or a royalty. The forms of greetings can also be largely influenced by gender. In trying to follow the societal expectations, boys and girls find themselves doing things differently, and thus, greetings being culture and socially infused.

Abioye (2011, p.71-78) in the *Cross-Cultural Commission Journal* researched on "A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Yoruba Discourse Patterns in selected Child Welfare Clinics in Southwestern Nigeria." His paper is the report of a study that examined discourse". This researcher engages in listening and recording the conversations between the individuals present in the scene. He evaluates and describes the vital aspects of the recorded discourse chips.

The research demonstrates that "communication is basic to a constructive and effective health care system; while both teams were inclined to work together in order to accomplish their main goal. The significance of all these is singled out while the researcher points out that communication whether speakers' mother tongue, English, or even the "father tongue," it is essential and, in this case, effective, entertaining and educative. The research infers that in order to survive short-staffing, literacy and tuition limitations, resorting to indigenous Yoruba discourse patterns and discourse modality is an achievable alternative in the quest for the goals of the Primary Health Care (PHC)."

Also, Ekanjume-Ilongo (2013), in the *California Linguistics Notes*, wrote on "A Sociolinguistic Approach of Greetings in Akóóse." In the research, she studies the everyday discourse of the Bakossi people of the South West Province of Cameroon through the act of greeting. She assesses the several varieties of greetings found within this community, the essence of these greetings and the facets that led to the choice of one greeting over the other.

The research also tries to highlight the roles of greetings among the Bakossi people. The investigation shows that,

...greeting is a natural sociolinguistic habit used among the Bakossi people to solidify interpersonal relationship. Since this involves sourcing for information about the welfare of the person being greeted, his/her family relations and friends.

The investigation equally reveals that age factor, context and time, are crucial to the greeting norms. The context of situation infers the choice of greetings in Akóóse. And also, who greets initially, with age being the prominent factor.

Wang (2014) explains that the “purpose of greeting is to express concern, show respect and politeness amongst people. Language cannot easily be separated from the social and cultural influences or the intention of the interlocutors since any forms of interaction is always influenced by the social settings in which the greeting takes place, as well as those who participate in it”.

Otun and Nwosu (2015) worked on the “sociolinguistic analysis of greetings in Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian English”, and concluded that greetings are essential in Igbo, Yoruba, and Nigerian English. According to them, this is because; greetings help in introducing and enhancing communication and improving interaction among the individuals within the society. These researchers also avow that, although greetings are essential, but it is yet to gain adequate interest and attention of linguists in comparative analysis of the greeting methodology of languages.

The work researched the social linguistics variables of these three languages by deploying the interactional social linguistics theory. This research work therefore explores comparatively the interpersonal/casual, felicitation, occupational, occasional, arrival and departure, festival and condoling greetings in these three languages. The researchers observed that occasion, age, time, occupation, context and also the number of people being greeted determine the function, nature and choice of greetings among these languages.

The researchers highlight some similarities in the greeting system of Igbo and Yoruba and claim that greetings in Nigerian English are relatively short, non-affectionate, distance and informal. They concluded that greeting is a social linguistic phenomenon employed in these languages to ingrain interpersonal relationships and seek/wish on good terms.

In the conception of the Èdo (Benin) worldview, greeting is more than a mere formality and embedded within it are a variety of historical, cultural, socio-economic and political information. Our analysis here will portray the underlying ethnographic configuration of the Èdo greeting system as had variously been espoused by historical scholars.

Analysis of Some Selected *Otuẹ* Greeting Codes in Èdo Language

In this part of the research, the data were classified in accordance to the different context in which these greetings are used and also explicitly analyze based on context, content, participants’ meanings and their effects. Below are several contextual classifications of greeting codes in Èdo language and their analysis.

General Greetings Employed in Èdo Language

There exists a form of greeting or acknowledgements in the Èdo society that is the most basic of all greetings. These greetings are typically associated with events, general enquiry as to the health or wellbeing of individuals in the society. These greetings are also not constrained by socio-cultural factors like age, gender or occupation as outlined in the table below:

Table 1: Basic Greetings

S/N	GREETING CODES (OTUE)	MEANING
1	<i>Ób'ókhián</i>	Welcome
2	<i>Ób'ówa</i>	Greetings to you at home
3	<i>Kóyò</i>	Hello
4	<i>Vbèè ó yehé?</i>	How are you?
5	<i>Ób'ówie</i>	Good morning
6	<i>Ób'ávàn</i>	Good afternoon
7	<i>Ób'ótà</i>	Good evening
8	<i>Òkhiénòwie</i>	See you tomorrow
9	<i>Ò ye'èsé</i>	It is fine, Okay.
10	<i>Ū rú èsè</i>	Thank you

Èdo people like every other tribe across the globe have some distinct and cultural beliefs that stand them out of other cultures. The Èdo name for greeting is *Otuẹ*. The morning greeting is called *Ukhu*, 'clan' or family greetings. *Lamogun* is used by the royal family of the Oba of Benin. Greeting codes have parameters which are usually put into consideration. Since greetings are highly cultural codes among the Èdo (Benin) people. The individual and context play a great role in determining what greeting codes to employ and to whom and to what end.

It is an innate principle that the younger ones must always greet the elderly ones first in a context. But if the younger ones fall sick and become too weary, the elders then initiate greetings by seeking after their health status, which warrant them to greet first. Using the tenets of ethnography of speaking by Dell, (1964), the following is the analysis of the data as seen in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 1

Speaker 1: *Ób'ávàn, Iye. Ób'ówa*

Meaning: Good afternoon, mother. Greetings to you at home.

Speaker 2: *Koyo, Ób'ókhián... Do*

Meaning: Hello! Welcome... Well-done.

Analysis

S- SCENE = Home

P- PARTICIPANTS - Mother and Child

E - END - To announce the child's presence and acknowledgement of the child's presence.

A - ACT SEQUENCE - A child returning from work meets his/her mother in the house to announce her arrival and to greet.

K - KEY - The mood and tone set are an informal way of announcing arrival and greetings in Èdo language

I - INSTRUMENT - The speakers are close relatives who are conversing face to face with no need of taking notes of anything as it's not a meeting or formal setting.

N - NORM - It is culturally an innate norm for someone who is returning from a place to greet first when he or she arrives. This was adhered to.

G- GENRE - This is an informal informative speech of welcoming one and announcing one's arrival.

Excerpt 2

Speaker 1: Abeg you get biro for dia?

Meaning: Please do you have a pen there?

Speaker 2: I'm using it.

Speaker 1: Borrow me na, abeg, doo... do na.

Meaning: Could you lend me, please... Please.

Speaker 2 hesitates and gives the biro to speaker 1

Speaker 1: *Ù ruṣe*

Meaning: Thank you.

Analysis

S- SCENE = School setting

P- PARTICIPANTS - Class mates

E - END - To appeal to borrow a pen.

A - ACT SEQUENCE - In the quest to quickly document something, a class mate borrows a pen from a friend.

K - KEY - The mood and tone set are an informal way of requesting something from someone or pleading one's indulgence.

I - INSTRUMENT - The speakers are class mates who are conversing face to face and there is need to borrow pen for taking notes.

N - NORM - It is culturally an innate norm for someone who wants a favour from another person to be able to appeal to the person's conscious in a very subtle and humble manner. This norm was adhered to in the discourse.

G- GENRE - This is an informal way of requesting a favour.

From the speech pattern, in the data (1), *doo* whose meaning is contextual is a greeting code which can be used by anyone in the society. This could either mean 'please' or 'well done' based on the context in which it is used. It is a greeting code that can be used by anyone in the society. Also, the meaning of some greeting codes in Èdo are not only contextually driven, but can best be appreciated when used by certain age group in a given context. From the above discourse format (a) above *koyò* which means 'hello' can be inarguably used by anyone but the context determines who should best use it. In the discourse (a), the mother used *Koyò* as it is considered culturally disrespectful for a young person to greet an elder with a 'hello' irrespective of whether the person is a stranger, a family or a friend. The norm is that young individual can mostly and commonly used this greeting code, but not with their superiors or amongst their elders in Èdo culture.

(*Otuṣe Iwinna*) Occupational Based Greeting Codes Employed in Èdo Language

These are greetings based on the occupational or professional orientation of an individual in the society. It is typically associated with the acknowledgements of an effort or the hard work/handwork being carried out by members of the society. These types of greeting codes are used to encourage and motivate such people. Some of these greeting codes are illustrated in the table below:

Table 2: Professional-based Greeting

S/N	GREETING CODES (<i>OTUE IWNN</i>)	MEANING
12	<i>Ob'evbaru</i>	May the engagement favour you or Well-done
13	<i>Ob'iwinna</i>	May work favour you
14	<i>Ob'eki</i>	May the trade favours you
15	<i>Ob'ugbo</i>	May farming favours you.
16	<i>Ob'ugie</i>	May the festival or ceremony favour you

In most African languages, representation is essential as it is said to differentiate one from others. Apart from representation, greeting brings about uniformity and recognition. In Edo (Benin) community, some occupations have their own greetings. This is because they believe all workers of a skill, trade or occupation have the right to appreciation as a way of encouragement. From the information above, in data (2) *Ob'ugbo* which means 'may farm favour you' are greetings specific to an occupation. Let us consider these excerpts 3 and 4 below:

Excerpt 3

Speaker A: *Obugbo*

Speaker B: *isé*

S- SCENE = Farm land.

P- PARTICIPANTS - farmers and passersby

E - END - To encourage farmers.

A - ACT SEQUENCE - This sort of greeting comes into play as a farmer is at work and his fellow farmer or passersby deemed it fit to encourage him.

K - KEY - The mood and tone set are for re-enforcement

I - INSTRUMENT - the instrument used here is language.

N - NORM - all norms were adhered to as this code was solely used to appreciate farmers.

G- GENRE - This is a semi-formal way of appreciating a hardworking farmer

Another of this is found in data (12) *Ob'evbaru* which means 'may your engagement favour you'. This is said to be specific to an occupation.

Excerpt 4

Speaker A: *Ob'evbaru*

Speaker B: *Uru ese*

S- SCENE = Market place.

P- PARTICIPANTS - Buyers and sellers

E - END - To encourage traders.

A - ACT SEQUENCE - This sort of greeting comes into play as a trader is at work and his or her fellow trader, sellers or passersby deemed it fit to encourage him.

K - KEY - The mood and tone set are for appraisal.

I - INSTRUMENT - the instrument used here is language.

N - NORM - all norms were adhered to as this code is solely used to appreciate traders.

G- GENRE - This is a semi-formal way of appreciating a hardworking farmer

Greeting Codes Related to Clans and Family Employed in Edo Language

These are the greetings deeply embedded in the core of the socio-cultural and historical base of the Edo people. It is the primary means of acknowledgements employed by the people to identify the family lineage of the individual who greets. And it is constrained by such factors as age and status. These can be seen from the illustrations provided in the table below:

Table 3: Clan/ family-based Greetings

Ukhu

S/N	CLAN/FAMILY	GREETING CODES
17	<i>Ogiso</i> family (The first royal period from Ogiso era)	<i>Delaíso (Laiso)</i>
18	<i>Ẹwẹka</i> family (Second royal family during the period from Eweka1)	<i>Laumogun</i>
19	<i>Ẹlẹma</i> family	<i>Lagba</i>
20	<i>Ogiefa</i> family	<i>Laegiewan</i>
21	<i>Ogiamie</i> family	<i>Lairre</i>
22	<i>Ẹro of Urubi</i> family	<i>Laumogun</i>
23	<i>Iyase</i> family	<i>Lavbieze</i>
24	<i>Ọlọton</i> family	<i>Laemehi</i>
25	<i>Oliha</i> family	<i>Laogele</i>
26	<i>Edohen</i> of Benin	<i>Latese</i>
27	<i>Ezomo</i>	<i>Laegiesan</i>
28	<i>Osa</i> of Benin	<i>Delaiki (or Laiki)</i>
29	<i>Osuan</i> of Benin	<i>Labo</i>
30	<i>Ogiefa</i> of Benin	<i>Larendo (Laidu)</i>
31	<i>Isiemwenro</i>	<i>Latose</i>
32	<i>Ine N'Igun</i> of Benin	<i>Delani (or Lani)</i>
33	<i>Erua</i> family	<i>Lagieerua</i>
34	<i>Ogiamen</i> of Benin	<i>Laire</i>

In Edo community they have been passive and active passage of cultural beliefs, ethics and norm to younger generation. In this century, age and time, no family can actually live without imprints of other families. There is a strong connectivity between different families, as a result of intercultural relationship, marginalized language, trade and intercultural involvement. Yet, the morning family greetings of a clan can give on transient information of who they are and where they are from. This is due to the way each family or clan use their morning salutations across the culture.

The following are ways to identify an individuals' clan based on the greeting code employed. In data (34) *Lagie Erua* means 'Hail *Erua*' can also mean 'ride on the people from *Erua*'. This is better explained in the speech form below.

Excerpt 5

SPEAKER ONE: *Lagie Erua*

Meaning: Hail *Erua*

SPEAKER TWO: *Lagie Erua*

Meaning: Hello! I hail a descendant of *Erua*

S- SCENE = *Erua* Community.

P- PARTICIPANTS – Men and women

E - END - The communicator intends to show off his belief, culture and heritage.

A - ACT SEQUENCE - This sort of greeting comes into play when a man is hailed for being from *Erua* and then he took it upon himself to own his identity by hailing himself.

K - KEY - The mood and tone set are for self-appraisal.

I - INSTRUMENT - the instrument used here is the ability to express one's self using the right word.

N - NORM - all norms were adhered to as this greeting pattern is only used by men and women.

G- GENRE - This is an informal way of appraising oneself for belonging to a particular clan or family.

Also (18) the *Eweka* family uses *Lamogun* to hail themselves. This word is spelt out as *La ha omogun* which was a way the people from the royal home normally greet during the reign of *Oba Eweka* 1. This greeting cannot be used among commoners in the community; this code was strictly used by the royal family and even till date. In the same vein, data (17) *Delaiso (Laiso)* which is a greeting code used by *Ogiso* clan till date. Just like during the *Eweka* 1's reign, this greeting code was employed by the royal family during the *Ogiso* era. All of these codes were used by the royal families even till this day.

Gender Based Greeting Codes Employed among the Edo (Benin) People

It is no news that discourses and discourse patterning is highly sensitive to gender use. This is where euphemism comes into play. Most Nigerian languages are gender sensitive, leaving native speakers, mostly ladies to being watchful of what they say and how well to present themselves in the public in order not to be misinterpreted or represented wrongly.

Also, in data (11) *Lamogun* means 'may it please the prince or Oba.' It can also mean 'ride on the people (man) from Omogun'. This is better explained in the Excerpt below.

Excerpt 6

KING: *Vbè o yehé?*

Meaning: How are you?

Woman: *Oba gha tọọ kpee...laho omogun*

Meaning: May the King lives forever. If it pleases the king....

S- SCENE = *Erua* Community; the palace of the king

P- PARTICIPANTS - King, Woman, Council of elders and villagers.

E - END - To seek king's indulgence for a request.

A - ACT SEQUENCE - This sort of greeting comes into play when a woman is made to talk to the king in the presence of the council of elders.

K - KEY - The mood and tone set are of appeal

I - INSTRUMENT - The speakers are the king and a woman having a face-to-face conversation and the instruments here include the King's fly whisk, crown and beads.

N - NORM - all norms were adhered to as the woman understands the place of authority, humility and respect when talking to the king.

G- GENRE – This is a formal way of requesting something from the king

Table 4: Greeting Codes after Meals and their Meanings

S/N	GREETING CODES (OTUE)	MEANING
35	<i>Kada</i> (for men)	You have created riches; may you live long to enjoy them.
36	<i>Bukpe</i> ==(for men)	You have created riches; may you live long to enjoy them.
37	<i>Erre ghi gbue</i> ==(for women)	May you not fall into the enemies' den, may your enemies not kill you
	Responses after meal	The meaning
38	<i>A re miegbe</i>	May you be nourished by what you eat
39	<i>I hoen Koyo U ru ese</i>	I've heard you, thank you. Or hello, thank you.
40	<i>I hoen oten mwe, Osa ru ese ra, A kpon mwe Oghodua</i>	we thank God, or I've heard you, my sister and brother.

In the Ẹdo (Benin) community, the greeting code employed after meals are different from the other forms of greetings. This is because, after meal greetings are gender sensitive. Girls and women, greet *Erre ghi gbue* meaning “May you not fall into the enemies den’, or may your enemies not kill you”. While boys/men greet...*Kada, or bukpe* from ‘*I ka I da*’ meaning ‘I took and I drank’ the girls and women greet *Erre ghi gbue* meaning ‘May your enemies not take your life or may you not fall into the enemies’ den’.

Conclusion

Greeting codes that are particular to clan or family help to identify the individual that use them. Language as a communication entity or tool is a means of recognition and identity. This is applicable to the family greeting codes. In Ẹdo culture, when an individual uses the family greeting codes designated for a certain group of family or clan, the user is immediately recognized by the greetings of their clan. In this paper therefore, the researchers, emphasises the essence of appropriate use of these greeting codes among native or indigenous of the Ẹdo (Benin) languages speakers. This is to ensure proper communicative effect with the exclusion of misconceptions and miss identification of the individual person using any of these codes of greetings. It is germane to know that once a woman is married, she seizes to greet the family greeting code of her biological father. She is then, presented with her husband’s family greeting codes which she is expected to teach her children as soon as she becomes a mother. Note that family greeting codes are patriarch in nature. That is to say, only men have family greeting codes *Ukhu in Ẹdo (Benin)*.

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