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Politeness in Hittite state correspondence: Address and self-presentation

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Abstract: In this paper deferential and strategic or face-based politeness are distinguished (Jucker 2010). The distinction seems to be crucial for a proper understanding of the use of address and self-presentation terms and the address formula in Hittite state correspondence. Namely, the corpus of 80 letters written between c. 1450 and 1190 B.C. shows that the appropriate use of politeness largely reflects the writer's awareness of his place in society, as well as his desire to behave in conformity with culturally expected forms of behavior. Examples of deferential politeness are thus influenced by the relative and absolute social status of communication participants as well as general and socially expected concern for the addressee's face. Examples of real strategic politeness may be observed in symmetric relations where the writer is trying to minimize a potentially face-threatening act and in some letters to the Hittite king.

Keywords: Hittite, address, self-presentation, deferential, strategic politeness

1 Introduction

The starting point of this research is the supposition that the purpose of language use lies in social interaction and the creation of communicative relations. Interpersonal communication is an interactive and dynamic process in which interlocutors strive for the optimal achievement of their communicative goals. They achieve these goals by using linguistic expressions and communicative strategies suited to the given situation. Their choice is determined and ratified by social conventions and individuals' pragmatic information (see Dik 1997). Interpersonal communication is always socially indexing, as it reflects broader social circumstances and relations of social power, degrees of social distance or solidarity, the absolute or relative social status of the interactants and their level of education, gender, age, etc. (see Brown and Levinson 1987; Levinson

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1994: 91–96; Fillmore 1997: 111–125; Kasper 1997).¹ One important component of an individual's social image is his *face*. Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) define face as the public self-image that every adult member of society wants to claim for himself, which consists of two related aspects: *negative face*, that is, the basic claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition and *positive face*, that is, the positive consistent self-image or “personality” claimed by interactants, a crucial aspect of which is the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of.

This paper will discuss politeness as a social practice and a key means by which humans work out and maintain interpersonal relationships (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 1–2). In line with Jucker (2010), two types of politeness will be distinguished here. *Strategic* or face-based *politeness* aims at conflict avoidance and reflects the speaker's desire to save, maintain and enhance the face of the addressee (in the sense described by Brown and Levinson 1987). *Discernment politeness* concerns the speaker's desire to conform to social conventions and maintain social relationships and can be observed in the use of appropriate and conventionalized linguistic forms. The distinction between strategic and discernment politeness may be crucial in societies where politeness and appropriateness often coincide in praxis. The presupposition of this study is that this distinction is also crucial for a description of referential terms. Namely, the use of such terms is deeply rooted in the social hierarchy and in individual social roles, but may also reflect the speaker's attitude (Nevala 2009). Reference terms therefore may or may not be strategically polite, depending on the social norms of a given culture, the context of the communication and the co-text of the utterance (see Watts 2005: xxxviii; Christie 2007; Mills 2011: 46–48).

This paper presents the Hittites, their corpus and the corpus of the research, followed by the purpose of the research. The main part is devoted to address and self-presentation terms in Hittite state correspondence as well as to the use of address formula. Their use is described in the framework of Jucker's 2010 research on politeness.

2 The Hittites

The first Indo-European state was located in central Anatolia between the 16th century B.C. and the first or second decade of the 12th century B.C. At the height

¹ The social power of communication participants is defined on the basis of their relative positions in the social hierarchy, their ages, their gender, etc. Social distance or solidarity is defined on the basis of intimate relationships, shared experiences and opportunities, similar amounts of capital, etc.

of its political and military might, the Hittites were on equal footing with ancient Egypt, as the truce between the Hittite king Ḫattušili III and pharaoh Ramses II dated to 1259 B.C. shows.

The Hittite corpus consists of approximately 30,000 fragments;² clay tablets preserved in their entirety are rare. Once these fragments are joined and added to already known texts, the corpus will contain around 3,000 texts of various kinds. Most of the preserved tablets come from the archives in the Hittite capital Ḫattuša (today Boğazkale), and some come from the provincial centers at Maṣathöyük, Kuşaklı and Ortaköy and from sites outside the borders of the Hittite state, for example Ugarit and Tell el-Amarna in Egypt (see Klinger 2007: 27–28).

The Hittite texts were written in cuneiform script, variations of which were in use throughout Asia Minor from the 3rd millennium to the 4th century B.C. (Edzard 1976–1980: 565). According to van den Hout (2009), the Hittites initially used cuneiform to write Akkadian,³ a Semitic language (and *lingua franca* of the ancient Orient); systematic scribal activities in Hittite began at the start of the 15th century B.C. and ended with the fall of the Hittite state in the first or second decade of the 12th century B.C.

Texts in Hittite include written foreign language material within Hittite sentences (a large number of words, grammatical morphemes and derivative suffixes of Akkadian and Sumerian origin)⁴ or even longer passages (such as incantations or ritual formulas) in Hurrian, Luwian, Hattic and Palaic.

The oldest documents in an Indo-European language provide evidence of hierarchic organization within the Hittite state. The state gods function as the highest authority; the king (appointed by the gods) appears as a high priest, the supreme judge and a chief military commander. Beneath the king are the vassals, who have sworn an oath and are bound by treaties, as well as functionaries in the palace and temples, officers at the state borders and others. A similarly strict hierarchy appears in the framework of individual social classes

2 Košak, personal communication 29/11/2015.

3 The oldest records of the Hittite state in Akkadian date to the second half of the 17th century B.C.

4 In line with conventions in Hittitology, in the transliterations below Sumerograms (that is, originally Sumerian language material) are written with upper case non-italic letters (ŠU ‘hand’), Akkadograms (that is, originally Akkadian language material) are written with upper case italic letters (*QATU* ‘hand’), and Hittite, Luwian, Hurrian, etc. material is written with lower case italic letters (*keššar* ‘hand’). When Sumerograms are defined as semantic classifiers of a following (and rarely also a preceding) word, they are written in superscript (^{L0} ‘man’), constituent parts of complex signs are marked with a dot or word space (DUMU.MUNUS.MEŠ (child.woman.PL) ‘daughters’).

(free, non-free and semi-free), occupational groups (the army, priests, scribes) and social groups (the royal family, see von Schuler 1957–1971; Beckman 1995).

Texts were preserved in the context of state administration and pertain to the oversight and management of the political, religious and economic life of the Hittite state. They were written by subjects of the King, that is, official scribes or officials with some scribal knowledge. These persons belonged to the dominant and upper classes of Hittite society and (presumably) were a minority within the Hittite population (Bryce 2002: 57); it is therefore only possible to study *their* social and linguistic norms within a relatively formal discourse.

3 Hittite state correspondence and the corpus of the research

Hittite state correspondence contains “the official correspondence carried on in the course of administrating the business of the king” (Hoffner 2009: 1). It pertains to the transport of grain or prisoners, legal matters, military intervention, oracular inquiries, etc. The only preserved “private” correspondence outside of the royal family is found in postscripts of official letters which officials exchanged among themselves (Weeden 2014: 49). Scribes would send greetings to their families and inquire after their health, promise help, quarrel about missing goods, personnel or slander, attempt to collect debts, etc.⁵ The main letters and postscripts are often written by different persons or addressed to different addressees, which indicates that the authors had to consider a broader audience than just the addressee. This implies that the writers consciously strived to follow the social and language norms of society when not dissuaded from doing so by other factors.

The form of these letters is highly conventionalized. They open with an address formula, which is often followed by greeting and well-wishing formulas and then by the body of the letter. There are no closing formulas which would serve as a kind of a farewell. Usually a horizontal line divides the parts. When a letter is followed by a postscript, the latter is set apart from the main letter by two horizontal lines (see Hoffner 2009: 56).

The following criteria affected the composition of the corpus used in the research: 1. the participants of the communication are known; 2. their absolute (king: scribe) or relative (superordinate: subordinate) social status is known;

⁵ In the rest of this paper, the letter ‘a’ marks the main letter, ‘b’ and ‘c’ the postscript(s).

3. the time and broader historical context of the text is roughly known; 4. the texts are relatively well preserved. Efforts were also made to observe a single person (especially officials) in different communication circumstances, but the information offered by the Hittite corpus was mostly too limited to grasp the interactional history or dynamics of a particular situation.

State correspondence from the oldest period of the Hittite state, language and script has not been preserved (van den Hout 2009: 76). The corpus of the research thus consists of texts in Middle and New Hittite language⁶ written in the Middle, New and Late New scripts,⁷ dated between c. 1450–1190 B.C. and found at the Hittite capital and various other sites. The bulk of the texts in the corpus derive from the provincial center Tapikka (today Maşathöyük) and were written in the span of a single generation (van den Hout 2007); they are dated to the Middle Script and the Middle Hittite language. This “imbalance” in the corpus is the result of the criteria for its composition. Although some prosographic studies of Hittite scribes and officials have been made (see Alp 1991; Beal 1992; Beckman 1995; Klinger 1995; Houwink ten Cate 1998; Marizza 2007; 2009; van den Hout 2007), the letters of Maşathöyük offer the most reliable and probably the most extensive published corpus for such a study.

The corpus includes 80 letters, 32 of which were sent by superiors and 24 by subordinates; in 24 letters the social relationship between the communication participants was symmetric (that is, roughly equal). 27 letters contain correspondence between the king and officials, 5 contain correspondence of the royal family and 48 contain correspondence between officials.⁸

4 The purpose of the research

To date, no systematic study of politeness in Hittite has been conducted. Most references to politeness phenomena rely on a lay understanding of politeness

⁶ For Old (1650–1450 B.C.), Middle (1450–1350 B.C.) and New Hittite language (1350–1190 B.C.) see Hoffner and Melchert 2008: xvii.

⁷ For Old (1650–1500 B.C.), Middle (1500–1350 B.C.), New (1350–1180 B.C.) and Late New Script (1240–1180 B.C.) see van den Hout (2008: 215).

⁸ Correspondence of superiors to subordinates: Bo 2810, KUB 23.85, KBo 18.2, Msk. 73.1097, HKM 2a, 3a, 6, 10a, 13, 14, 16, 17a, 19a, 21a, 22a, 26, 27a, 30a, 31a, 32, 36a, 53a, 54, 55², 56b, 60a, 62a, 65a, 68, 73a. Correspondence of subordinates to superiors: KBo 9.82, 18.3, 18.54a, b, 18.95, Or. 90/800a, b, Güterbock 1979a, b, KuT 49, 50, HKM 17b, 27c, 29b, 33b, 36b, 46, 48, 51, 52b, 59, 60b, 62b, 81a. Correspondence of equals: HKM 2b, 3b, 10b, 17c, 19b, 21b, 22b, 27b, 28b, 30b, 31b, 52a, 53b, 56a, 58a, b, 63, 65b, 66, 71a², 71b, 73b, 74, 81b, ABoT 65. The abbreviations ABoT (= Ankara Arkeoloji Müzesinde Bulunan Boğazköy Tabletleri), Bo (= Bogazköy Tablet), HKM (= Hethitische Keilschrifttafeln aus Maşat), KBo (= Keilschrifttexte aus Boghaz-

and do not actually define the term. Treatments are also largely limited to Hittite letters, particularly to formulas and address terms. As the continuation of the paper will show, the Hittites followed the same strategies for addressing others and for self-presentation, and for this reason these terms need to be studied together. The aim of this research is therefore to elaborate on address and self-presentation terms in Hittite state correspondence and on the use of the address formula, which contains both types of terms. Another shortcoming of most interpretations is that they fail to take information in the body of the letters into account, and the paper also aims to remedy this situation.

5 The address formula

The address formula has only two possible realizations: the formula *thus x say to y* is used when addressing subordinates (1), and the formula *say to x thus y* is used in letters to superiors (2). When the social status of the communication participants is roughly one of equality, the sender usually precedes the addressee (3) (see Hagenbuchner 1989a: 40–47; Hoffner 2009: 57). Alp (1991: 5) noted that deviations from the standard pattern in correspondence with symmetric social relations (4) might be influenced by norms of politeness; Beal (1992: 464) has linked these deviations to requests for favors.

- (1) *UMMA* ^DUTU-ŠI-MA ANA ^mKaššū QIBI-MA
 thus ^{god}sun-stem⁹-COP to ^{man}Kaššū say-COP
 ‘Thus His Majesty: Say to Kaššū ...’¹⁰

- (2) [AN]A BELI GAL MEŠEDI BELI-YA Q[IBI-MA U]MMA GAL
 [t]o lord big guard lord-1SG.POSS s[ay-COP. T]hus big
 DUMU.MEŠ É.GAL ARAD-KA-MA
 son.pl house.big servant-2SG.POSS-COP
 ‘To the lord, the Chief of the Guards, my lord: thus Chief of the Palace Servants, your servant ...’¹¹

köy), KUB (= Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköy), KuT (= Kuşakli), Msk. (= Meskene), Or. (= Ortaköy) refer to their cuneiform publication or inventory number.

⁹ The form ^DUTU-ŠI can be further analysed into ^DUTU-Š-I ^{god}sun-stem-1SG-POSS. Since this is a petrified form in Hittite, I refer to it as a stem form.

¹⁰ HKM 6 1–2.

¹¹ KBo 18.95 1–2.

- (3) *UMMA* ^m*Kikarša* *ANA* ^m*Taḫazzi-DINGIR-LIM*¹²
 thus ^{man}*Kikarša* to ^{man}*Taḫazzilli*
 ŠEŠ.DÛG.GA-YA QIBI-MA
 brother.dear.gen.-1SG.POSS say-COP
 ‘Thus Kikarša: Say to Taḫazzili, my dear brother ...’¹³
- (4) *ANA* ^m*Ḫimmu-DINGIR-LIM* ŠEŠ.DÛG.GA-YA QIBI-MA *UMMA*
 to ^{man}*Ḫimmuili* brother.dear.gen.-1SG.POSS say-COP thus
^{m.GIŠ}*GIDRU-DINGIR-LIM* ŠEŠ-KA-MA
^{man}*Ḫattušili* brother-2SG.POSS-COP
 ‘Say to Ḫimmuili, my dear brother: Thus Ḫattušili, your brother ...’¹⁴

In the corpus of the study eight examples are attested where the addressee precedes the sender in correspondence between equals (scribes/officials). Seven of these examples are found in postscripts. This unusual order is not used only in requests for favors, but more generally, when the writer is potentially threatening the negative face of the addressee. Namely, it is used when the writer is reassuring the addressee about the well-being of his family,¹⁵ confirming his help in legal matters,¹⁶ asking for some goods,¹⁷ complaining about the lack of greetings from the addressee¹⁸ or trying to influence the addressee’s actions/opinions in some other way.¹⁹ In two of these examples the address term is also unusual, as the adjective *dear* is not used with the appellative *brother*²⁰ or only a name²¹ is used (see below). In seven examples an unusual self-presentation term is used. Namely, self-presentation with a name and the appellative *your brother* is used only when a deviation from the standard pattern occurs in the address formula, otherwise only a name is used. In seven letters an unusual form of the address formula is followed by greeting and/or well-wishing formulas, which should be interpreted as a deferentially polite and conventionalized feature of Hittite letters sent to superiors or equals (see Hoffner 2009: 63, 116, 245, 261; cf. Hagenbuchner 1989a: 84).

12 ^m*Taḫazzi-DINGIR-LIM*, ^m*Ḫimmu-DINGIR-LIM*, ^{m.GIŠ}*GIDRU-DINGIR-LIM*, ^{m.DU}*BELI* are rebus writings and will not be further analysed here.

13 HKM 58 1–2.

14 HKM 10b 1–2.

15 HKM 2b, 3b.

16 HKM 10b.

17 HKM 56a.

18 HKM 56a, 58b.

19 HKM 17c, 30b, 73b.

20 HKM 30b.

21 HKM 17b.

In the Mašat corpus this atypical form of the formula is used in letters from five different writers addressed to three different addressees. With the exception of two letters, which Šuriḫili addressed to Uzzū,²² this formula is not used consistently when addressing the same person. If the few letters from Ḫattušili to Ḫimmuili²³ and from Marešre to Uzzū²⁴ allow for any conclusions, it seems that the use of this formula is connected to formal rather than personal requests.

In all examples the writer, regardless of his own subordinate or superordinate status in the interaction (cf. Nevala 2009: 253–254), seems to be emphasizing deference toward, (order of the formula), and solidarity with, the addressee (self-presentation) when performing a potentially face-threatening act. The use of the atypical address formula in symmetric relations therefore fits the concept of strategical politeness as described by Jucker (2010); it is influenced by the writer's positive attitude toward the addressee, as well as by the absolute ranking of the imposition (see Brown and Levinson 1987).

6 Address forms

In the address formula superiors were usually addressed with a title, the appellatives *lord* (BELU, EN) or *lady* (GAŠAN, BELTU) and the 1st person possessive pronoun. This form of address was consistently used when officials addressed the Hittite king and queen. The king was not addressed by the title *king* (LUGAL), but by the title *His Majesty*, lit. *My Sun-god* (^PUTU-ŠI). In other situations, superiors could be addressed with just a title, with a title and appellatives such as *lord* (Hagenbuchner 1989a: 46) or *superior* (lit. *the first*, MAḪRŪ) and with the 1st person possessive pronoun (5). The use of personal names instead of titles²⁵ or together with them²⁶ is sporadically attested, but never for the royal couple.

Occasionally, the familial terms *dear father* (ABI DÛG.GA) or *dear mother* (AMA.DÛG.GA) and the 1st person possessive pronoun are used to address superiors or older colleagues (Alp 1991: 303). According to Hoffner (2009: 59), the choice of the appellative *father* as opposed to *lord*, when not marking actual familial relations, is conditioned by close personal contact, such as the relation

²² HKM 2b, HKM 3b.

²³ HKM 10b, 27b, 28b, 52a.

²⁴ HKM 22b, 31b, 33b, 53b.

²⁵ HKM 17b.

²⁶ HKM 29b, HKM 52b.

between a teacher and a pupil. According to this author the familial terms are used more often in the less formal body of the letters, while the opening lines contain appellatives such as *my lord* (see also Hagenbuchner 1989a: 15; Alp 1991: 98). On the basis of the corpus, it can be noted that familial terms are outfitted with names or appellatives of the type *my lord* or *my superior* in more conventionalized and formal opening lines, see (5), but are without them in the body of letters.

On other occasions, titles by themselves,²⁷ appellatives by themselves,²⁸ or combinations thereof,²⁹ may be used in the body of the letters. The use of 2nd person personal pronouns is consistently avoided when addressing the royal couple, and an appellative such as *His Majesty*, *my lord* is used instead; this seems to also be the norm when addressing other superiors (6).

In roughly symmetric relations a name, the appellatives *dear brother* (ŠEŠ.DÛG.GA) or *dear sister* (NIN.DÛG.GA) and the 1st person possessive pronoun are used, see (3) and (4). High-ranking officials may only use titles (see (2) and Hagenbuchner 1989a: 45–46; Alp 1991: 4; Hoffner 2009: 58). Hoffner (2009: 59) believes that the adjective *dear* (DÛG.GA) could reflect a real familial relationship, but this view is not supported by the more extensive corpus used here (see Hagenbuchner 1989b; Alp 1991; Hoffner 2009). From the approximately 35 letters of state correspondence with equal interactants and preserved opening lines, only five lack the adjective *dear*;³⁰ thus the use of the adjective *dear* in these circumstances seems to be the norm.

In the body of the letters, the appellative *my dear brother* and 2nd person personal pronouns may be used. The former is typical of assertions of help or concern for the addressee or his family³¹ and also appears (but not consistently) in requests of a personal nature.³² Since the adjective *dear* is not used with appellatives that do not refer to familial relations, its use may be influenced by a wish to emphasize familiarity or in-group identification or, in the case of potentially face-threatening acts, by a wish to emphasize a positive attitude towards the addressee.

A subordinate was usually addressed by name. This occurs consistently in letters from the Hittite king to officials (1), whereas the queen is addressed by her title and the appellative *my lady* (see also Hagenbuchner 1989b: 2). The

²⁷ Güterbock 1979a.

²⁸ HKM 52b.

²⁹ KBo 18.95.

³⁰ HKM 30b, 70, KBo 18.35, 18.38, 18.96.

³¹ HKM 2b, 3b.

³² HKM 3b, 31b, 53b, 56a, 71b; the appellative does not appear in HKM 22b, 30b, 81b.

king also uses the address *my dear mother* in real familial relationships. In royal correspondence the order of sender and addressee reflects the fact that the king outranks the queen and therefore appears first in the opening line (Hoffner 2009: 327). The king nonetheless shows deference to the queen, as he otherwise only uses the appellative *my lady* for goddesses (7). Rarely, the appellatives *my dear son* (DUMU.DÛG.GA-YA)³³ and, in extremely rare cases, *my son* (DUMU = YA)³⁴ may be used.³⁵ In the body of the letters, 2nd person personal pronouns may also be used for addressing subordinates.

Generally, superiors (including the Hittite king) are addressed with a title and/or appellative and the verb is in the 2nd person singular imperative form (6). In symmetric relations the simple use of the 2nd person singular imperative form is common in requests, wishes, assertions, etc. and the appellative *my dear brother* may also be added³⁶ to downgrade potentially face-threatening acts to a certain degree. These forms of address and their possible combinations are presented in the Table 1.

- (5) A[NA BEL]I MAḪRI-YA ABI DÛG.G[A-Y]A [QIBI-MA] UMMA
 to lord superior-my father dea[r-m] [say-COP] thus
 ᵐḪašamīli DUMU-KA-MA
 manḪašamīli son-2.SG.POSS.-COP
 ‘Say to lord, my superior, my dear father: Thus speaks Tarḫunmiya, Ḫaša-
 mīli, your son ...’³⁷

33 HKM 56b.

34 HKM 65. In Bo 2810 the king may be stressing the subordinate status of the addressee to secure the delivery of grain, which was delayed by the addressee.

35 The only attested instance of the appellative *my dear daughter* (DUMU.MUNUS.DÛG.GA=YA) in the letters published by Hagenbuchner (1989b), Alp (1991) and Hoffner (2009) is HKM 82, where this *daughter* is being addressed along with someone whom the writer calls *my dear brother*. In the state correspondence published by these authors the only female writer or addressee is the Hittite queen. Some evidence that other females, such as priestesses, could correspond independently exists (KuT 49) and one female name of a scribe (out of more than 200) is known (see Hoffner 2009: 7). In the corpus females other than queen are always addressed together with men.

36 Use without the appellative is attested 23 times and use with it is attested 10 times in the corpus studied.

37 HKM 36b Vo 37–38.

- (6) *BELU-mu aššul ḫatrešk-e namma-ššan ANA*
 lord-me greeting write.DUR-2.SG.IMP further-on to
 Ê-YA IGI.ḪI.A-wa ḫarak-Ø
 house-1.SG.POSS eye.COLL-stem.NOM.COLL keep.2.SG.IMP
 ‘Lord, keep writing me greetings and keep eyes on my house.’³⁸
- (7) *UMMA DUTU-ŠI-MA [ANA] MUNUS.LUGAL GAŠAN-YA*
 thus god.sun-stem-COP to woman.king lady-my
 AMA.DÛG.GA-YA QIBI-MA
 mother.dear-my say-COP
 ‘Thus His Majesty, say to the queen, my lady, my dear mother.’³⁹

Lastly, the strategically polite and rare form of address should also be mentioned. It was used by state officials when communicating with the Hittite

Table 1: Address forms in Hittite state correspondence.

Address terms	Relative social status (used for)
title	Sup, E
+ <i>my lord/lady</i> (+ <i>my dear mother</i>)	Sup, Sub
name	Sup, E, Sub
+ <i>my lord</i> (and) <i>my superior</i>	Sup
+ <i>my dear father/mother</i>	Sup
+ <i>my (dear) brother/sister</i>	E
+ <i>my (dear) son/daughter</i>	Sub
title (+ name)	Sup
+ <i>my lord/lady/superior</i>	Sup
+ <i>my dear father/mother</i>	Sup
+ <i>my (dear) brother/sister</i>	E
+ <i>my (dear) son/daughter</i>	Sub
<i>my lord</i>	Sup
<i>lord, lady</i>	
+ title	Sup
+ (name) + <i>my superior/my dear father/mother</i>	Sup
+ <i>my lord/lady</i>	Sup

³⁸ HKM 27 23–24.

³⁹ KBo 18.2 1–2.

king.⁴⁰ It is a form of indirect address in which the addressee is named with a title and the 1st person possessive pronoun; the verb is in the 3rd person singular imperative form (8). As the following example of a greeting letter shows, this form of address is used when the sender is securing his relationship with His Majesty.

- (8) [nu-mu ^D]UTU-ŠI EN-YA [EGIR-pa h]atra-u
 [CONN-me ^{g^{od}}]sun-stem lord-1SG.POSS [back-stem.ALL w]rite-3SG.IMP
 ‘May My Majesty, My lord write back to me.’⁴¹

The choice of address terms in Hittite state correspondence was thus affected by absolute social status (*My Majesty*), relative social status (marking in-group identity with *my brother* in symmetric or out-group identity with *my lord* in asymmetric relations), degree of social distance (marking a lesser degree of social distance with *father* or names and greater distance with *lord* or titles) and solidarity (the king addresses the queen with *my lady* and subordinates with names). The use of titles stressed authority and social power. This is also true for the indirect form of address, whereas personal names had an ambiguous function (they indicated the out-group identity of a subordinate or in-group identity of an equal).

7 Self-presentation forms

Superiors present themselves with a title and/or with a name. If the superior in question is the king or queen, only a title is used (1).⁴² In symmetric relations, a name is usually used, and this self-presentation is occasionally expanded with the appellative *brother* and the 2nd person possessive pronoun (4). In the correspondence of high ranking officials, titles could be used by themselves (2). Subordinates present themselves with a name to which the appellatives *servant* (ARAD) or *maid* (GÉME) and the 2nd person possessive pronoun are added. This self-presentation is used consistently by officials when addressing the king (9); the Hittite queen replaces her name with her title, but still uses

⁴⁰ This was already noted by Hagenbuchner (1989a: 147). The author does not mention that this form of address appears in state correspondence only when addressing superiors; for addressing approximately equal communication participants it is used only in international correspondence, see for example KUB 21.38.

⁴¹ KBo 18.3 9'-10'.

⁴² Self-presentation of the Hittite king was already described by Hagenbuchner (1989a: 64).

Table 2: Self-presentation forms in Hittite state correspondence.

Self-presentation terms	Relative social status (used by)
title	Sup, E, Sub
+ <i>your servant/maid</i>	Sub
name	E
+ <i>your brother/sister</i>	E
+ <i>your son</i>	Sub
+ <i>your servant/maid</i>	Sub
title + name	Sup
+ <i>your maid</i>	Sub

the appellative *your maid*, thus acknowledging the higher social status of the king (10). Self-presentation with the title *your son* (DUMU=KA) is occasionally attested. Its use is not limited to terms of address of the type *my dear father*, and the superior can also be addressed with *my lord* (5).⁴³

In the body of the letters, 1st person personal pronouns are used for self-presentation; a notable exception are letters of the Hittite king, who often speaks of himself in the 3rd person and presents himself with a title (11). These forms of self-presentation and their possible combinations are presented in Table 2.

(9) ANA ^DUTU-ŠI BELI-YA QIBI-MA UMMA ^{m.D}U-BELI
 to ^{god}sun-stem lord-my say-COP thus ^{male}Adad-beli
 ARAD-KA-MA
 servant-your.COP
 ‘Say to His Majesty, my lord. Thus Adad-beli, your servant ...’⁴⁴

(10) ANA ^DUTU-ŠI BELI-YA QIBI-MA UMMA MUNUS.LUGAL GÊME-[KA]
 to ^{god}sun-stem lord-my say-COP thus woman.king maid.[-your]
 ‘Say to His Majesty, my lord. Thus the queen, your maid ...’⁴⁵

⁴³ The respectful term *your daughter* (DUMU.MUNUS = KA) is not attested in the Hittite letters published by Hagenbuchner (1989b), Alp (1991) and Hoffner (2009).

⁴⁴ HKM 46 1–2.

⁴⁵ Or. 90/800 Ro 1–2.

- (11) *māḥḥan-ta kāš tuppianza anda uemiyazzi nu MAḤAR*
 when-you this tablet in find.3.SG.IND CONN in front of
^DUTU-ŠI *liliwaḥḥuwanzi ūnni*
^{god}sun-stem hasten.INF drive.2.SG.IMP
 ‘As soon as this tablet reaches you, drive quickly in the presence of My Majesty’.⁴⁶

The system of self-presentation in Hittite state correspondence mirrors, in a slightly less complex fashion, the system of address terms and is influenced by the same factors. The fact that self-presentation with the adjective *dear*, as in *your dear brother*, is not attested may have been influenced by the authors’ wish not to impinge on addressees (in sense of Brown and Levinson 1987). Concern for the addressee’s positive self-image is observable in the fact that the Hittites did not stress higher status, power and distance with self-presentation terms such as *your lord*, *your father*,⁴⁷ but captured these characteristics with titles that were neutral towards the addressee and that expressed absolute social status. Concern for the addressee’s face thus seems to be a norm of deferential behavior in Hittite society. The unique impersonal self-presentation of the Hittite king is clearly motivated by his authority or role as an authorized speaker.

8 Conclusions

In Hittite state correspondence, the system of address and self-presentation terms and the address formula clearly reflect the writer’s awareness of his place in society, as well as his desire to behave in conformity with culturally expected forms of behavior, and should be understood as ritualized performances for enacting social reality. From this point of view, the Hittites were a deferential society where relative and absolute social status played a crucial role in choosing appropriate linguistic expressions. Concern for the addressee’s face is nevertheless reflected in the fact that the Hittites used exaltation of the other and self-humbling to strengthen the negative face of the addressee and neutral names and titles to maintain his positive face. Examples of real strategic politeness may be observed in symmetric relations where the writer is performing a

⁴⁶ HKM 14 3–7.

⁴⁷ This use is not attested in the letters published by Hagenbuchner (1989), Alp (1991) and Hoffner (2009).

potentially face-threatening act and in some examples from letters to the Hittite king. The politeness approach utilized by Jucker (2010) thus explains the address and self-presentation terms as well as the use of the address formula in Hittite state correspondence quite perfectly, as real strategic and discernment politeness phenomena may be distinguished.

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Bionote

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