

**FACE-SAVING ACTS AS POLITENESS GOAL AND THEIR PRAGMATIC
IMPORTS IN CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *HALF OF A YELLOW SUN***

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Abstract

One of the hindrances to the study of politeness as a real world goal is the lack of proper understanding that words/utterances (linguistic choices) cannot be considered polite or impolite independently of a speaker's attitude/behaviour (non-linguistic choices), within varying contexts, in interpersonal communicative events. This study on Face-Saving Acts as Politeness Goal in Chimamanda Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun is hinged on Brown and Levinson's 1978 and 1987 Politeness Principle while adopting FSA as analytical tool. Using descriptive research design, the study presents nine (9) excerpts, which are utterances of selected characters, in a face-to-face conversation, randomly and purposively selected from the primary text, and analyzed along stratified Preventive/Corrective face-saving politeness strategies of Solidarity, Personal Information and Common Ground as well as their pragmatic implications. Findings are that interlocutors, while applying some face-saving strategies, threaten the face of their co-conversationalists. Also, the study recorded a preponderance use of preventive face-saving acts (which are acts used to prevent face-threatening from occurring) and less of corrective face-saving acts (which are acts used to mitigate/redress threatened face) in various contexts. The study recommends that face-saving strategies be applied on time to reduce the adverse effect of FTAs on interlocutors which invariably affect future interpersonal relations.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Politeness, Politeness Principle and Corrective/Preventive Face-Saving Strategies

Introduction

Finegan (2012) in Akinwotu (2016) observes that language (words/utterances) is “a powerful tool of enlightenment with extra ordinary potential to delight us, language can also inflict injury and cause harm” (xxi) to the face of co-conversationalists. And depending on what interlocutors may want to achieve as well as the contexts, language codes can be carefully chosen to either bring people closer or create distance during communicative events. The 'internal' meaning of linguistic structure cannot make for a holistic interpretation of an utterance without examining the 'situational' meaning given rise to by context. Thus, it is perceptible that meaning can be conveyed not only by the formal properties of words, phrases and sentences but also by the way they are used, by the relationship between the language users and by the context in which they are used.

Politeness or impoliteness can be determined by the addressee's evaluation of a speaker's behavior (Mills, 2003; Watts, 2003; Ikoro and Obasi, 2022) and not necessarily by the utterances alone. Fraser (1990, p. 233) claims that neither is politeness seen as an intrinsic characteristics of certain linguistic forms nor verbal choices: “Sentences are not *Ipso facto* polite, nor are languages more or less polite. It is only speakers who are polite.” Thus, in communicative events, interlocutors constantly negotiate meanings of their utterances and construct identities by recognizing the face(s) of their co-interactants which can be threatened, lost or recovered (saved).

Face (self-esteem), a universal property possessed by every person, is frequently put at risk in our daily interactions with people. Face is a vulnerable personal attitude which can be maintained, enhanced or lost, each of which must be constantly attended to at every social interaction. This results in either face-saving or face-threatening acts. FTAs, on the one hand, are utterances that pose a threat to someone's self-esteem. FSAs, on the other hand, represent utterances that attempt to mitigate the possible threat to someone's self-esteem. The FSAs are of two types: Positive and Negative. The positive Face-Saving Acts reflect the desire of a person to be treated as a friend and confidant while the negative Face-Saving Acts emphasize someone's desire to enjoy freedom from imposition and freedom of action (Brown and Levinson 1987 p. 61). Thus, interlocutors are more interested in protecting their own face and that of others cooperatively from aggressions (Dawnes (2008).

The responsibility of protecting one's face and those of others leads to a pair of related rules: 'the rule of self-respect – wherein participants must stand guard over their own face, and the rule of considerateness – wherein they must go to certain length to respect the face of others' (Dawnes 2008, p.292).

Goffman (1967, p. 3, 5, 12) coins the expression 'to lose face' and 'to save face', and further states that 'to study 'face-saving' is to study traffic rules/politeness strategies of social interactions.' Politeness strategies, which entail showing awareness of another person's 'face', grease the wheels of conversation, thereby enabling interlocutors (participants in a speech event) to enjoy cordial relations. Because it has been observed that 'every instance of communicated language exhibits politeness' (Grundy 2008, p. 192) and that 'every engagement in conversation opens up the possibility of losing face', Brown and Levinson (1987), providing insight to politeness strategies, say that there are verbal and non-verbal behavior that enable interlocutor to maintain 'face' in a conversation.

Conceptual Issues

Pragmatics

Any study on language from the point of view of the user presuppose a pragmatic approach to language study. Pragmatics has been explicated as the analysis of meaning that considers not only the observable aspects of a language event, but also the unobservable. Wales (2011) corroborates the above in his view that speakers of an utterance frequently mean more than they literary utter through their speeches. Therefore, pragmatics studies how more is communicated than is said.

Politeness

Politeness is a strategic behaviour with which individuals try to avoid interpersonal conflict or achieve different interactive goals such as the establishment or modification of social relationship (Thomas 1995). Being polite involves a reduction in aggressive acts so as to enable communication flow between interlocutors uninterruptedly and smoothly. Brown and Levinson (1987) face-saving approach rests on two tenets: the assumption that individuals follow the Cooperative Principles (Grice 1975) and that when they violate any of the maxims thereof, the only reason for such behaviour is their intention to be polite. Secondly, the assumption that individuals are characterized by two features of rationality and *face*, which is 'the public self-image that every member of a society wants to claim for himself' (Brown and Levinson 1987, p.61). Politeness is of two types: Positive politeness, which requires that one is aware that one's co-conversationalist(s) want their responses, acts and opinions to be approved of during interaction. Through speakers' desire to intensify and sustain the interests of interlocutors by using first person indexical forms as in-group identity marker to show general solidarity, assertion of knowledge of hearer's want/exaggerated interest (making statements that show

concern), offering of promise (that shows commitment (performatives) optimistic utterances and disposition, by seeking agreement, including speaker hearer in an on-going discourse, overt approval of interlocutors' activities and which enhances his positive face and motivates their interest, positive face-saving strategy are enacted. Praise and acknowledgment of others' accomplishment – feeling of gratitude can be used to reinforce positive behaviour and help another to develop a positive self-concept. A face-saving act that emphasizes a person's positive face will show solidarity and draw attention to a common goal (Obasi and Ikoro, 2022). These are employed to ensure confidence. Negative politeness is achieved when one tries to minimize the level at which they threaten co-conversationalists while giving instruction by hedging or by becoming conventionally indirect, by indirectly discovering and commenting on another's weak point/failure event using off-record strategy.

Ikoro (2022) opines that other ways through which interlocutors can achieve face-saving goals are through the use of modal tags (facilitative/affective) to request for information which the speaker is uncertain and to show concern for an addressee; use of hedging/indirectness (off-record) to express uncertainty/ambiguity and to reduce imposition and make an interlocutor feel accepted and free to make contribution in an on-going discourse activity; use of shared dialect (code-switching), pet/nick names and back channel cues to encourage cooperativeness in communication; use of honorific(deference terms) as a mark of respect/recognition, etc.

Politeness Principle

Politeness involves taking into account the feelings of others. It is the use of language to attend to face needs; to maintain smooth interaction and good relationship. Politeness Principle is a pragmatic concept which, according to Leech (1983, p.40) involves 'verbal and non-verbal behavior which help in maintaining harmonious relations.' Politeness principles bind cordial relationships between participants firmly and, according to Adegbija (2011, p.52), politeness principle is “the oil that lubricates the channel of communication. Politeness is basically of two kinds – positive and negative. Positive face is 'the want of every member of a society that his wants be desirable to at least some others' while Negative face is 'the want of every competent member of a society that his actions be unimpeded' (Brown and Levinson 1987, p. 62).

Corrective/Preventive Face-Saving Strategy

According to Goffman (1999), face-saving, as one of politeness goals involves the use of preventive facework such as use of hedging, honorifics, nickname, emotive expressions, back channel cues/seeking agreement, inclusive markers, optimistic disposition/utterances, sarcasm, exaggerated expressions as compliment, etc, to decrease the likelihood of a FTA from occurring or the use of corrective/redressive facework such as use of code-switching/shared dialect, joke/play technique, apology, off-record, explanation, giving hint, concession, offer/promise, excuse, indirect imperative, etc, after a threat to face has occurred. Thus, it can be construed to mean face redress/repair mechanism, in the case of an already threatened face, or face maintenance, in the case of face not harmed but stands at a risk of being embarrassed or humiliated. The above Goffman's classification of facework into preventive and corrective shall guide the analysis of the excerpts presented in this study, in no particular order.

Aim/Objectives of the Study

The general aim of this study is to examine the various manifestations of corrective/preventive Face-Saving Acts in the speech acts of selected interlocutors, as exemplified in the situational variables of solidarity, common-ground and personal information strategies, and their pragmatic imports on co-conversationalists, in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, but the specific objectives are to:

- (i) investigate various manifestations of solidarity strategy as FSAs in the utterances of selected interlocutors and their pragmatic imports on co-conversationalists in *Half of*

a Yellow Sun;

- (ii) explore the deployment of common-ground strategy as FSAs in the utterances of selected interlocutors and their pragmatic imports on co-conversationalists in *Half of a Yellow Sun*; and
- (iii) explicate the use of personal information/self-disclosure strategy as FSAs in the utterances of selected characters and their pragmatic imports on co-conversationalists in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Research Methodology

This study on Face-Saving Acts as Politeness Goal in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* is hinged on Brown and Levinson's 1978 and 1987 Politeness Principle while adopting FSA as analytical tool. Using descriptive and qualitative research design, the study presents nine (9) excerpts out of a population size of fifteen (15) excerpts, which are utterances of selected characters, in a face-to-face conversation, held between or among characters in the novel; their monologues and commentaries which serve as the narrative voices that bear contextual indices are systematically, randomly and purposively selected from the primary text as part of the data and analyzed along stratified Preventive/Corrective face-saving politeness strategies of Solidarity, Personal Information and Common Ground as well as their pragmatic implications.. Documentary and content research methods are used to present the excerpts for analysis. However, line numbers are used to denote samples of dialogues. Thus, alphabets, A–I and '1' and '2' are ordinals used to refer to line numbers in that progression. These are for ease of reference and better interpretation.

Theoretical Framework

Brown and Leech's (1978, 1987) Model of Politeness

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) politeness focuses on the linguistic strategies speakers follow in order to save or maintain face, and they define politeness as redressive action taken to counter-balance the disruptive effect of face-threatening acts. This came as advanced researches on face theory. This model is premised on the notion of face, 'the public-self-image that every member wants to claim for himself' (Brown and Levinson, 1978, p.66). The concept of face is emotionally invested, as such, every individual seeks not to lose his/her face during interaction, but to maintain or enhance it. They claim that face, either positive (an individual's desire to be appreciated in social interaction; reduces hearer's face threat, and used by audience fairly known to each other) or negative (an individual's desire for freedom of action and freedom from imposition, as such imposition from a speaker to a hearer makes him/her uncomfortable), can be gained or lost in human interaction. Given that any of these faces could be threatened during a social interaction, and that five strategies, aimed at mitigating or redressing this threat, are divided into on-record (direct), off-record (indirect) and non-performance groups, have been identified by Brown and Levinson namely: Do the face threatening act (FTA) on record without redressive action, Do the face threatening act (FTA) with redressive action (Positive politeness), Do the FTA with redressive action (Negative politeness), Do the FTA off-record; and Don't do the FTA.

FSAs in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

FSAs are utterances employed by tactful interlocutors who have consideration for others face. FSAs typify politeness phenomena because they are speech acts that mitigate or prevent potential threat to the addressee's self-esteem. They are utterances packaged to favour one's positive or negative face. Here, there is consideration made to the factors of Distance, Power and Ratio of imposition which enable the choice of appropriate linguistic redress. For the purpose of this study, we shall examine Face-Saving Acts along the stratified Corrective and Preventive Politeness Strategies of Solidarity, Personal Information and Common Ground.

Data Presentation/Analysis Strategies of Solidarity

1. Use of Nickname/First Name

Excerpt A

- Odenigbo: 'Sit down, *my good man*.' A1 (p. 24)
 'Odenigbo. Call me Odenigbo. Odenigbo will always be my name. Sir is arbitrary. You could be the sir tomorrow.' A2 (p.26)
 'Come. *Nkem*.' A3 (p.67)
 Olanna: 'There is no rush, *Ari*.' A4 (p.57)
 'I'll show you how to cook rice properly, Ugwu...' A5 (p.17)
 Father of the Girls: '*Nwanne m*' A6
 Jomo: '*Dianyi*...' A7 (p.119)
 Chief Ozobia: 'Thank you, *Ola m*' A8 (p.267)
 Mrs Ozobia: 'Oh, *nne*, I didn't know you were up' A9 (p.268)
 Okeoma: '*Nwoke m*...' A10 (p.33)

Analysis

Excerpt A above is a practical manifestation of a positive face-saving act which is solidarity-oriented. In A1, Odenigbo addresses his new houseboy, Ugwu, as 'My good man', a nickname he uses to make Ugwu comfortable. It serves as a pet name; an in-group identity marker, just to minimize social distance between interlocutors. In A2, Odenigbo, giving consideration to Ugwu's (his new houseboy) positive face need, instructs him to address him by his first name and not 'sir'. Odenigbo gives Ugwu sense of belonging by minimizing their status difference and expressing solidarity. The imperative, 'Call me Odenigbo', reveals Odenigbo's exaggerated interest in Ugwu. Holmes (2008) supports this in her view that when the boss suggests that a subordinate should use first name (FN), it is a positive politeness move (p.281).

Also, in A3, Odenigbo addresses his girlfriend as '*Nkem*', which when translated means 'My own' to reveal his deepest feelings for her and to show affinity between them. Still in A4, Olanna uses the pet name, '*Ari*' to draw her kid cousin closer to herself, establishing a strong affinity between them. Again in A5, Olanna makes Ugwu, her boyfriend's houseboy, feel relaxed by commending his efforts at taking care of Odenigbo and calls him by name, 'Ugwu'. Addressing by name is a way of minimizing social distance.

The utterance of Chief Ozoba, Olanna's father, in A8, is a pre-closing sequence in discourse situation which signifies the end of discussion which a co-conversationalist does not want to stretch further. This utterance is made as he receives backlashes from his own daughter for having extra-marital affairs with other women. By adding '*Ola m* – My Gold' is a pet name used so that Chief Ozobia does not sound rude to his daughter by cutting the conversation, in other to boost both Olanna's positive and negative face needs. Furthermore, Mrs. Ozobia, Olanna's mum, in A9, also calls her the pet name, '*nne*' to reveal how affectionately close they are.

'Nwoke m' as used by Okeoma, a friend of Odenigbo, in A10, as the duo interacts in Odenigbo's house, and 'Dianyi' used by Jomo, Ugwu's fellow domestic servant, in A7, and '*Nwanne m*' in A6 as used by the Father of the Girls whom Olanna meets at the airport lounge with her aged mother as they await the return of his brother from overseas, show affinity, closeness and the fact that they are almost the same age. All of the above are instances of the use of Pet/Nick name, a solidarity strategy to enact positive politeness strategy aim at boosting interlocutors' positive face want.

1. Use of Exaggerated Interest/Compliment/Avoidance of Disagreement

Excerpt B

- Odenigbo: 'Remarkable blend.' B1 (p.25)
 Olanna: 'Oh, yes' B2 (p.25)
 Odenigbo: 'That's quite all right, my good man... Ugwu helps me around the house.
 Very clever boy' B3 (p.37,)
 'I can't wait for them to meet you' B4 (p.66)
 Chief Okonji: 'This is the best avocado I have tested in a long time' B5 (p.45)
 'Excellent' B6 (p.45)
 'Whoever said you lost out by having twin daughters is a liar' B7 (p.47)
 'I love you, believe me. I really love you' B8 (p.48)
 'That sounds wonderful' B9 (p.47)
 Mohammed: 'The best surprise!' B10 (p.61)
 Olanna: 'You're looking so well.' B11 (p.61)
 Mohammed's mother: 'You look so lovely, my dear' B12 (p.62)
 'Don't let the sun spoil that skin of yours' B13 (p.62)
 Richard: 'It's a lovely necklace' B14 (p.78)
 'I've been utterly fascinated by the bronze since I first read about them. The details are
 stunning. It's quite incredible that these people had perfected the complicated art
 of lost-wax casting during the time of the Viking raids. There is such marvelous
 complexity in the bronze, just marvelous.' B15 (p.141)
 Dr. Patel: 'Very nice to see you finally' B16 (p.68)
 Miss Adebayo: 'Yes. He did not tell us that you were illogically pretty' B17 (p.67)
 Okeoma: 'I thought Odenigbo's girlfriend was a human being; he didn't say you were a
 water mermaid' B18 (p.68)

Analysis

Overt approval of interlocutors' activity (action) enhances their positive face and motivates their interest. When you praise, applaud and pray for somebody for doing well, you help maintain his positive face and encourage him to do more. Odenigbo, commends the effort of Ugwu, his new houseboy, at making a list for shopping food stuff in the market, upon his instruction in B1. He openly appreciates what Ugwu does for him as he speaks to his friends and colleagues in order to boost Ugwu's positive face in B3. Odenigbo (Olanna's lover) uses back channel in B2 as cooperative moves to avoid any form of disagreement between them. Even when Ugwu, his new houseboy, fall below expectation in his cooking skill, speaks optimistically in B3, and continues to encourage and boost Ugwu's positive face.

Excerpts B4 and B10 reveal the excitement of Odenigbo and Mohammed, haven the opportunity to introduce Olanna to his friends and colleagues who visited him, and meeting her after a very long time respectively. These reveal that both men accept and cherish their relationship with Olanna, thereby boosting her positive face need. Olanna reciprocates to Mohammed in B11 when she compliments his looks and avoids any form of disagreement In Excerpts B12 and B13, Mohammed's mother is not left out as she praises and appreciates Olanna's appearance just to show acceptance and solidarity.

Chief Okonji, the Finance Minister and a family friend of the Ozobias, speaks warmly to his host's family as he visits them. He commends and appreciate every of their kind gesture in utterances B5 – B9. He overtly expresses his love for Olanna in B8 and boosts the positive face of Chief Ozobia in B7 by making him feel adequate in himself as lacking nothing not having a son but daughters. He promotes and maintains Chief Ozobia's positive face as well as his public self-image, thus refusing to disagree with him on his positive thoughts and expression of confidence on his daughter, Kainene, against the general belief of the Igbos that male children are

compulsory in every household for the continuation of the family lineage.

Richard, as he meets Kainene, his new lover, sing praises of her necklace just to attend to her positive face want in B14. In B15, Richard upon getting introduced by Olanna to her boyfriend's colleagues, for the first time, uses approbation strategy, speaks nicely and warmly about Igbo-Ukwu bronze art, applauds the markers just to attend to Okeoma's (a co-interactant) face want of his people's art being appreciated by a foreigner, an exaggerated interest aimed at fostering a mutual relationship between them. In B16 – B19, Okeoma, Dr. Patel and Miss Adebayo, Odenigbo's colleagues, speak nicely, shower praises to Olanna on their first meeting, whom they feel is so beautiful, to boost her positive face.

3 Use of Inclusive Terms/Integration Strategy

Excerpt C

Odenigbo: 'You are my houseboy' C1 (p.20)
 'Sit down, my good man' C2 (p.22)
 'What have you cooked for us, my good man?' C3 (p.)
 'This is our world, although the people who drew this map put their own land on top of ours... Africa...this is where we are.' C4 (p.20)
 'Nkem, please, let's deal with this together. We will do whatever you want. Please, let's do it together' C5 (p.281).

Mama Odenigbo: 'She is not your madam, my child' C6 (p.260)

Olanna: 'We should go to Enugu this afternoon to see that everything is fine' C 7 (p.303)

Analysis

The inclusive terms (the impersonal pronouns) underlined in the above excerpt pragmatically performs two functions. First, they serve as instrument of solidarity, because all the select characters above use them to seek association with their hearers. Implicitly, they say they are the same kind with them. Second, they are mitigating devices, because with them the speakers establish a sense of collective responsibility which enables them to eliminate the feeling of being and sounding authoritatively to their hearers.

The pronouns, 'my', 'our', 'ours', 'let's', 'us' and 'we', are inclusion markers used the above-mentioned characters in the excerpt above, in various contexts. Odenigbo in C1 – C4, uses them to give his new houseboy, Ugwu, a sense of belonging and identification. Ugwu travels home with Mr. Richard, Kainene's friend, to witness a festival but comes home to meet his master's mother. In C6, '*My child*' as used by Mama Odenigbo on Ugwu is a positive politeness strategy aimed at closing up every gap in their relationship. She even goes as far as showing concern for Ugwu's tired bones in her next utterance since he is just coming back from his trip to his village, 'You can go and rest, *Inugo*', offers him a gift of palm wine.

In C3, Odenigbo uses 'us' to include Olanna as part of the recipients of Ugwu's preparation as well an integral part of him, being his girlfriend. 'We' as used in utterances C4, C5 and C7 by Odenigbo and Olanna is to show acceptance and spirit of accommodation/inclusion of one's co-conversationalist as part of an activity. Odenigbo uses 'let's' in C5 to involve Olanna and pledges his allegiance to her authority and control – a promise to mend things, which boosts her positive face. This happens when the news gets to Odenigbo that Amala, his mother's house girl whom he impregnates, has been delivered of a baby girl in Enugu, Odenigbo uses same to persuade Olanna to seek only decisions that promote peace, love, care and mutual respect for each other, moving forward in their affair as they both are distracted by his mother's all thought out plan of planting Amala in his life. In other words, Odenigbo makes Olanna to feel that they are fighting

the same course; a common enemy, which is his mother and her devilish plan that landed them where they are currently in their relationship. He brainwashing her through the use of the inclusive terms above to indicate that Olanna is supposed to be in the same shoe with him thus, seeks her cooperation so that they can forge ahead to enjoy their love life again uninterruptedly. In C7, Olanna uses the inclusive marker, 'we', to show that she is committed to whatever that will keep Odenigbo happy, to show acceptance, solidarity, empathy and accommodation of Odenigbo, despite her misgivings against his betrayal.

4. Use of Performative Utterances (Making Offers)

Excerpt D

Odenigbo: 'I will enroll you in the staff primary school...I will give you books, excellent books...I shall have to be bringing more food home now that you are here...' D1 (p.23 - 26)

Chief Ozobia: 'I'll have the steward put some in a bag for you' D2 (p.48)

Chief Okonji: 'I can arrange for them to buy from your father at five or six times the price...I can appoint you to a board, any board you want, and I will furnish a flat for you wherever you want' D3 (p.48)

Olanna: 'I'll show you how to cook rice properly, Ugwu, without using so much oil... which is better than a bad tasting, of course...' D4 (p.46)

Kainene: 'I'll ask Ikejide to cook your special rice' D5 (p.176)

Ugwu: 'I will make fruit salad for you tomorrow, mah.' D6 (p.199)

Analysis

Use of performative utterances that are in present tense and have the first person pronoun subjects to offer promises is one major way of saving face after a face loss/threat. Odenigbo, in D1, makes offer to Ugwu, his new houseboy, after threatening his face, as he socializes with him on their first contact in his house. Through these promises, he empathizes with Ugwu, shows exaggerated interest in his wellbeing and commitment to better his lot in life.

Also, in D2, Chief Ozobia offers to give more avocado pear to his guest, Chief Okonji, as he appreciates the taste of it, just to look after and attend to his co-conversationalist's need/desire. In D3, Chief Okonji shows his eagerness and readiness to exceed Olanna's expectations by making promises, which puts his own face at risk. He offers a friendly face to woo Olanna to win her friendship, loyalty and solidarity; reassuring her of his commitment to the relationship, should she accept his advances.

Still, in D4, Olanna offers a promise to Ugwu to save his positive face. She indirectly accuses Ugwu of cooking rice with so much oil. 'Which is better than a bad tasting, of course' is also Olanna's utterance which she expects same to spur Ugwu on to take positive steps towards knowing how to cook well. While Kainene makes an offer to Major Madu in D5, upon his safe return back to the east. This conversation takes place in Kainene's house in Port Harcourt, two weeks after the rumour that many soldiers of Igbo extract are dead, including Udodi, their friend, an offer that shows her intimacy with Madu and her exaggerated interest in his comfort.

In D6, Ugwu's utterances above to his madam, Olanna, as she becomes incapacitated due to her being traumatized by the scene of the Igbo massacre in faraway Kano State, show exaggerated interest in her to make her comfortable, although psychologically down.

5. Use of Optimistic Utterances/Advice

Excerpt E

Mohammed: 'I would have married you anyhow, and she knew it. Her preferences did not matter' E1 (p.64)

Richard: 'I'd rather talk to you. If you don't mind, that is' E2 (p.77)

'I'm ploughing on. I'm very interested in Igbo-Ukwu art, and I want to make that a central part of the book' E3 (p.141).

Ugwu's Mum: 'I am well. The medicine that doctor gave me is very powerful...I' E4 (p.116)

Civil Defender: 'Turn back, sah. We will drive the vandals back soon' E5 (p.222)

Aunty Ifeka: 'You must never behave as if your life belongs to a man. Do you hear me? Your life belongs to you and you alone, *soso gi*. You will go back on Saturday. Do you not have your own flat and your own job? Does that mean that somebody died?' E6 (p.277).

Father Damian: 'Don't see it as forgiving him. See it as allowing yourself to be happy. What will you do with the misery you have chosen? Will you eat misery?' E 7 (p.281)

Analysis

The use of optimistic utterances as positive politeness strategy is to make one's co-interactant comfortable in the peak of a difficult task/situation, and to justify one's stance on a matter. Mohammed would not give a bulge to his mother's disapproval of his relationship with Olanna as he comment optimistically in E1 while Richard hedges in his utterance in E2, to show his preference/choice/flare for Kainene instead of Olanna, her sister, contrary to popular opinion. In E3, Richard in response to Olanna, upon enquiry into how his book project is getting on, sounds very optimistic to dispel every doubt in the heart of his co-interactant, Olanna.

However, Ugwu's mother too, in E4, sounds very optimistic while commending the drugs Dr sPatel gave her. Also, Richard leaves for Nsukka to move his things to Port Harcourt, he meets checkpoints manned by the civil defenders; men and women in khaki shirts with expressionless, disciplined demeanors, standing by and blocking the road. The above utterance of the Civil Defender in E5 threatens Richard's negative face although he politely greets them and explains himself out to them so that they can agree to allow him to pass by but they remain adamant, hedges their orders by giving deference, sounding quite optimistic. They use the above utterance to intensify interest in their hearer, Richard, who is already hopeless. They employ integration strategy to avoid face threatening messages and instructions, and still accomplish the goals. Here, we see the men both seeking to accomplish their goals while also seeking to accomplish the goal of Richard by sounding optimistic; attending to his face wants as they reassure him.

Aunty Ifeka, in E6, advises Olanna not to succumb to pessimistic tendencies after Odenigbo's infidelity. The rhetorical questions that follow are to boost Olanna's positive face. While Father Damian's advice to Olanna in E7, after Odenigbo's infidelity, contradicts Olanna's views, they are but very germane to lurch her out of her depressed state into becoming in-charge of her own life and happiness.

6. Use of Hedging

Excerpt F

Odenigbo: 'I suppose you will be the oldest in class, starting in standard three at your age...I suppose they'll teach you to use more vowels in school' F 1 (p.25)

'Mama, I think we agreed that you would go to Uke' F2 (p.239)

Olanna: 'Perhaps, it would be a better idea to speak to her gently instead of raising your voice' F3 (p.240)

Mrs Ozobia: 'Maybe we should wait for Kainene to visit so she can talk to your father instead, *nne*' F4 (p.266)

Kainene: 'You'll leave early won't you, Richard?' F5 (p.487)

Analysis

Hedges are communicative strategies which enable writers to soften the force of their utterances to make them more acceptable in interpersonal relationships. It is a rhetorical strategy that attenuates either the full semantic import/value of an expression, or the full force of a speech act (Fraser, 2010b). Hedging is a mild way of expressing oneself or an indirect speech act to express negative politeness.

Odenigbo uses indirectness, in F1, to make Ugwu relax when he tries guessing his age, and after he writes the list for shopping food stuff in the market. He does not want to outrightly embarrass him by making emphatic statement about his age, and accentuating his incompetence in the use of English vowels, thus, he reduces the extent of using a potentially threatening utterance by simply mitigating same through hedging.

Few days after, Odenigbo decides to leave Abba with his family, his mother inclusive, for Umuahia because of the news of Abba's imminent evacuation. Others are ready to leave but Odenigbo's mother refuses to be whisked away like that. Odenigbo hedges his utterance in F2, to show support for his mother's negative face want.

Olanna, on the other hand, uses off-record strategy in F3, to indirectly comment on Odenigbo's rude approach and commanding demeanor on his own mother. She does not outrightly condemn him but suggests it might yield a better result trying not to raise his voice at his mother.

Also, Mrs. Ozobia, Olanna's mother, applies off-record strategy in F4, which queries Olanna's capability to handle the situation appropriately and very well as Olanna offers to speak to her father over his escapades with women. This pragmatically echoes her doubt, thus, threatening Olanna's positive face although she reduces the effect of the face-threatening act through the use of the pet name '*nne*'. 'Maybe' shows she hedges her statement in order not to hurt Olanna by heightening her preference for kainene instead of Olanna, herself, who willingly offers to help.

In F5, Kainene speaks to Richard, her lover, using facilitative tag which invites an addressee to comment on the request being made, as she hurries to leave for the bush market at Ninth Mile. Richard is yet to wake up properly as she taps him and says, 'You'll leave early...' She uses indirect imperative – an off-record strategy not to sound bossy. Then she gives reason why he has to obey, 'Those Big Men may be in the office for just thirty minutes today' (p.487).

7. Use of Shared Dialect

Excerpt G

Olanna:	' <i>Kedu ... Rapuba</i> '	G1	(p.35)		
	'Mama, come, let's sit down. <i>Bia nodu ana</i> '	G2	(p.123)		
Odenigbo;	' <i>Kedu afa gi</i> '	G3	(p.15)		
Richard:	' <i>A na-emekwa?</i> How is life in the North?'	G4	(p.170)		
	' <i>A bum onye Biafra</i> '	G5	(p.223)		

Analysis

Olanna and Ugwu, her lover's new houseboy, meet for the first time in Odenigbo's house. In G1, Olanna tries making Ugwu to be comfortable by speaking their mother tongue (*Kedu*) as they exchange pleasantries. Olanna makes him to relax more by adding '*Rapuba...*' when Ugwu tries pouring the cold coke into her glass. From the context, she goes as far as touching his hands before the comment above. In G1 and G2, Olanna tries boosting Ugwu and Mama's (Odenigbo's mother) positive face by establishing a cordial relationship as touching in conversation shows love, closeness, affinity and narrowed social distance. She reduces formality in language use by code-switching; she tries treating them as friends. She recognizes Ugwu's good deeds and applauds him for same. This helps Ugwu to maintain his positive face and encourages him to do more.

Moreover, Odenigbo introduces Igbo dialect when conversing with interlocutors who are not of his class (Ugwu's Aunt and Ugwu), in G3, since he takes into consideration the recipients' ability to understand, that is, his or her 'interpretative competence'. This, in the end, facilitates understanding.

Also, in G4, Richard speaks Igbo to Major Madu in his above comment as they meet at Kainene's father's party in a bid to seek approval and solidarity with him as an in-group member by virtue of their association with Kainene. Richard also uses shared dialect strategy in G5 to seek common ground between him and the civil defence men on duty.

Common Ground Strategy

Excerpt H

- Odenigbo: 'There are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass. You must read books and learn both answers. They will teach you that a white man called Mongo park discovered River Niger. That is rubbish. Our people fished in the Niger long before...' H1 (p.23)
- Arize: 'If only Mohammed was an Igbo man, I would eat my hair if you did not marry him. I have never seen a more handsome man' H2 (p.58)
- Aunt Ifeka: 'Your full name is Arinzendikwunne, isn't it? You come from your mother's people...Men from Abba are not ugly. My people come from there after all' H3 (p.58)
- 'Odenigbo has done what all men do and has inserted his penis in the first hole he could find when you were away.' H4 (p.59)
- Mohammed: 'Her preference did not matter...Your parents felt the same way as she did. Why are we talking about this now?' H5 (p.63)
- Richard: 'Hello, I'm no relation of Sir Winston's, I'm afraid, or I might have turned out a little cleverer' H6 (p.77)
- Susan: 'She is Chief Ozobia's daughter, is she? Whatever happened to her? Quite extraordinary; her mother is stunning, absolutely stunning. Chief Ozobia owns half of Lagos but there is something terribly nouveau riche about him. He doesn't have much of a formal education, you see, and neither has his wife. I suppose that's what makes him so obvious' H7 (p.78)
- Major Madu: 'Aren't our forefathers said to be related? Only that your people stole our land and we cast you out' H8 (p.41)

Analysis

Common ground strategy refers to perceived shared information among interlocutors engaged in a communicative event. The select characters in the above excerpt share some information they perceive their hearers are aware of. From the foregoing, it is observed that the above utterances above seek to establish commonality between speakers and hearers at different contexts, and to strengthen further the bond amongst them. They go further to carry out the message of interpersonal relationship in a less threatening manner being that they only restate information they both share, thereby mitigating/saving/restoring any face loss.

In H1, Odenigbo stresses a common knowledge of the need to critically read books to pass exams and to know the need to answer questions smartly as he indoctrinates Ugwu, his new houseboy, without threatening his face. In H2, Arize (Olanna's kid cousin) emphasizes a known fact to Olanna – Mohammed's good appearance – which information both appreciates without sounding imposing. In H3, Aunt Ifeka, Olanna's uncle's wife, reiterates her stance on her conviction about her people and their general belief on reincarnation. Then in H4, she consoles

Olanna, her husband's niece, as she is broken over her boyfriend's infidelity when she travelled to London for 3 weeks. She uses joke strategy to state the obvious/enshrined culture of patriarchy in the south eastern part of Nigeria where the Igbos believe that a man can be polygamous, and protected by tradition, to engage in extra-marital affair, '*ito iko/ime aghirigha*' while chastity is expected and demanded as of right from the women folk. She indirectly echoes the fact that men's betrayal is a normal phenomenon in any relationship, and that this general knowledge should guide Olanna into accepting her fate.

Excerpt H5 is a reassurance of the shared background knowledge both Mohammed and Olanna have concerning their relationship and his mother's preference for an Hausa wife for him. As Olanna accuses him of not introducing her properly to his mother as that infidel who wanted to taint his blood lineage, being Igbo, after their break-up, Mohammed releases this known fact they both share while also reminding her of her own parents' feelings as well. He uses this strategy to save his face that Olanna threatens with that accusation.

Still, in H6, Richard's reference to Sir Winston as being a very clever man is a general knowledge he shares with Kainene who bags her Masters from a London university and should be familiar with the referent's background story. While Susan, in H7, states the obvious truth about the Ozobias, Kainene's parents, to her girlfriend, is no new information as both are familiar with the family's name in Lagos. Again, in H8, Major Madu reminds Kainene of their relatedness through their roots, and makes fun of her people, who are also his, in order to achieve solidarity and conviction of his hearer(s).

Personal Information/Self-Assertion/Disclosure Strategy

Excerpt I

The Old Woman: 'He is the first in our village to go overseas, and our people have prepared a dance for him. The dance troupe will meet us in Ikeduru' I1 (p.42)

Aunty Ifeka: 'When your uncle first married me, I worried because I thought those women outside would come and displace me from my home. I now know that nothing he does will make my life change. My life will change only if I want it to change' I2 (p.276)

Edna: 'You think he's spending his day crying like you are? When that bastard left me in Montgomery, I tried to kill myself and you know what he was doing? He had gone off and way playing in a band in Loyusiana!' I3 (p.)

Jomo: 'My brother get problem before because the first wife is not pregnant and the second wife is not pregnant. There is one leaf that the *dibia* give him and he begin to chew. Now he has pregnant the wives' I4 (p.97)

Analysis

Self-disclosure is an act of sharing information with others that they would not normally know or discover. Self-assertion/disclosure is a self-directed strategy to protect, maintain and boosts one's identity. In I1 above, the old woman tries preserving and maintaining her public self-image and her in-group identity. She presents herself in positive light, a fulfilled mother of the first man to travel abroad, who won the white people's scholarship. From the context, she brags of her son not being like other fellow women's sons, thus boosts her public self-image and that of her family. She applauds herself as a role model, having produced the first man to travel abroad from their village and how a dance troupe is waiting for them at Ikeduru. Olanna reaches out and holds the old woman's hand to reduce the mind-crippling tension, to set her mind at rest. This is what is referred to as 'haptics', which is 'touching in communication' as part of non-verbal communication cues. This informs us of an intimate space between Olanna and the old woman; where touching is possible. She holds her hands until the plane stopped, to show her willingness to relieve the woman of anxiety.

After Odenigbo breaks Olanna's heart by sleeping with his mother's house girl when she, Olanna, traveled to London for 3 weeks, Olanna runs to Kano, to her uncle's house, where his wife, Aunt Ifeka, admonishes her. She uses personal information strategy in I2 to divulge some personal information about herself to Olanna. This is with a view to present herself as honest. She pragmatically convinces Olanna that she has been through what she is experiencing without mincing words. This strategy helps Aunt Ifeka to mount pressure on Olanna to accept whatever advice she gives her. She showcases how loose and indisciplined men can be and encourages Olanna to put such infidel act behind her and push on with her life. She equally indicts her own husband of frolicking with other women outside when they first married, and her own fears, thus she encourages her with her own experience through disclosure strategy in order to restore Olanna's confidence. She continues to open up on her own ordeal, 'He is very careful now, since he realized that I am no longer afraid. I have told him that if he brings disgrace to me in any way, I will cut off that snake between his legs' (p.277). The above utterances show she has come to accept life the way it is unfolding; that her husband still flirts but more careful to avoid bringing disgrace to her.

Also, Edna, Olanna's friend and neighbor, has a conversation in Olanna's Flat as Olanna orders Odenigbo to leave her house for having impregnated his mother's house girl. Olanna is deeply troubled and desires to be pitied and consoled as she is the one directly involved and in great shock but Edna sharply rebukes her, 'Get ahold of yourself' (p.283). In I3, Edna uses personal information strategy to share her own experience of heart break with Olanna, her new friend, to make Olanna feel secured and sure she, Edna, has been through the same betrayal, if not worst, and still she survived. She builds up Olanna's confidence again, and uses rhetorical questions to persuade Olanna to slip out of despondency, the route she has chosen for herself. She continues to speak kindly and encouragingly to Olanna, puts her hair irritably and says, 'Look at you. You're the kindest person I know. Look how beautiful you are. Why do you need so much outside of yourself? Why isn't that you are enough? You're so damned weak!' (p.283) She pours admiration and encomium on Olanna but at the same time cast aspersion upon her to make her wake up to realities and live as a wounded lioness she is.

In I4, Jomo, Odenigbo's gardener, uses personal information strategy to encourage Richard who is in dire need of a herbal remedy to achieve erection in order to sexually satisfy his girlfriend, Kainene. These comments are made as Richard asks him to help him get herbs and vegetables to enhance his libido. They reassure Richard and build his self-confidence as a man, seeing that some other person who had similar sexual disorder has come out of it.

Conclusion

The data presented and analyzed reveal that interlocutors, while applying some face-saving strategies, threaten the face of their co-conversationalists. Also, the study recorded a preponderance use of preventive face-saving acts (which are acts used to prevent face-threatening from occurring). These were seen in Excerpts A – G where Solidarity strategies of use of Nickname/First name, exaggerated interest/compliment/avoidance of disagreement, inclusive terms/integration, performative utterance in making offers, optimistic utterance/advice, hedging, and shared dialect were used to enact positive and negative preventive Face-Saving Acts. Also, corrective face-saving acts (which are acts used to mitigate/redress threatened face) were employed by interlocutors in various contexts of interaction, as revealed in Common-ground (Excerpt H) and Personal information (Excerpt I) strategies. In conclusion, the study submits that most of the corrective face-Saving Acts perform mitigating/redressive roles, and recommends that face-saving strategies be applied on time to reduce the adverse effect of FTAs on interlocutors which invariably affect future interpersonal relations.

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