

**Politeness and face management in selected editorials on the abduction of
Chibok girls in Borno State**

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Abstract

The crucial elements for social interaction are the establishment and maintenance of social relationships. To some extent, everyone is concerned with how others perceive them. This is why people interact socially, striving to maintain the identity they create for others to see. This paper attempt to examine the pragmatics use of language in purposively selected editorials on the abduction of the Chibok girls in Borno State, using the categories of politeness and Face Management, viz: face want, Politeness Principles and Face Threatening Acts. The study reveals that clashes are bound to occur when the underlying social constraints governing the production and interpretation of utterances are not observed. The paper concludes that for social interaction to function smoothly, maintenance of each person's face through the application of Politeness Principles is a fundamental phenomenon.

Keywords: Politeness, Chibok girls, Editorials, Face Management

Introduction

In recent years, politeness has become an increasingly important subfield of pragmatics. It is a term that describes human communicative behavior with the practical application of good manners and courtesy. Politeness is a culturally defined phenomenon and therefore, what is considered polite in one culture can sometimes be quite rude or simply eccentric in another cultural context. While the goal of politeness is to make all parties relaxed and comfortable with one another, this culturally defined standard, at times, may be manipulated to inflict verbal injury on a designated party.

Politeness theory is a sociolinguistic theory in the pragmatic tradition that was developed by Brown and Levinson who extended Goffman's dramaturgical approach using Durkheim's work on social rituals. Goffman (1967)¹ however

¹ Goffman, E. (1967). Interaction rituals: Essay in face-to-face behavior. New York: Anchor Books.



examined how people manage their public identities which he called 'Face'. When in the presence of others, one's face is always on display and while others will form impressions, others respond to these impressions (self-presentation and impression management respectively). Face then becomes a situated social identity that is not owned, but rather resides in the flow of human interaction. To have one's face invalidated by others means to lose face and to have it sanctioned is to have face. Face must therefore be maintained, even though it is subjected to constant threats. The process by which people maintain face is called 'Facework'. Because people are mutually concerned with maintaining each other's face, facework becomes a necessary social ritual that provides the co-operative mechanism for interaction order as opposed to interaction chaos.

Theoretical framework

Politeness Principles

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) and Leech (1983)² proposed the concept of 'politeness' which is an underlying social constraint governing the production and interpretation of utterances³. Brown and Levinson (1978) identified 'face' in the theory of politeness as an individual's feeling of self-worth and self-image which can be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with one another. In the day-to-day interaction, 'face' is liable to imposition. Grundy (2000, p.156)⁴ suggests that "in most encounters, our face is put at risk". When an individual's face want is met, his face is saved while his face is threatened if there has been an imposition. Odebunmi (2002, p.181) asserts that "face threatening acts are illocutionary acts that are liable to damage or threaten his positive or negative face".⁵

However, Leech (1983, p.82)⁶ introduced the politeness principle as "minimize (all things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs", proposing the Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy maxims to serve as regulative value to the Cooperative Principles (CP) in communicative exercises. According to dictionary.com (2011), politeness is defined as "showing good manners towards others, being refined or cultured."⁷ However, in the field of linguistics, the concept of politeness is much more complex. According to Mills (2003, p.6),⁸ "politeness is the expression of speakers' intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts towards another." Being polite therefore consists of attempting to save face for another. While 'Face' is the public self-image that every adult tries to protect, Face want is the desire and interest of every individual. Brown and Levinson (1978) identified

² Leech, G. (1983). Principle of pragmatics. New York: Longman Group Ltd.

³ Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). Politeness: Some universals of language use. Cambridge University Press.

⁴ Grundy, P. (2000). Doing pragmatics. London: Arnold.

⁵ Odebunmi (2002, p.181)

⁶ Leech, G. (1983). Principle of pragmatics. New York: Longman Group Ltd

⁷ Dictionary. com (2011). Politeness- definition of politeness by the free dictionary. Retrieved

from www.thefreedictionary.com/politeness 2/9/2014

⁸ Mill, S. (2003). Gender and politeness. Cambridge University Press.

two types of face: the positive and the negative face.⁹ These two aspects of face are the basic wants in any social interaction, and so, during any social interaction, cooperation is needed amongst the participants to maintain each other's faces. The positive face refers to one's self-esteem, that is, the desire to be liked, admired, ratified and related with positively, noting that one would threaten positive face by ignoring someone. The negative face on the other hand is the want of every "competent adult member" that his actions be unimpeded by others, or the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, right to non-distraction i.e., the freedom of action and freedom from imposition. However, certain illocutionary acts are inherently liable to damage the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other. Leech (1983, p.81)¹⁰ introduced the Politeness Principle (hereafter PP) as "minimize (all things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs". PP focuses on how to produce and understand language based on politeness, formulating the Tact, Generosity, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy maxims to explain relationship between sense and force in daily conversation.

Face-threatening Acts (FTAs)

In virtually every social interaction, face-threatening acts are sometimes inevitable based on the terms of the conversation. A Face-Threatening Act, hereafter (FTA) is an act that inherently damages the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to the wants and desires of the other. These acts can be verbal or non-verbal (written), which can be conveyed in the characteristics of speech such as tone, inflection, etc. or in verbal forms of communication.

- A. Negative Face-Threatening Acts: Negative face is threatened when an individual does not avoid or intend to avoid the obstruction of their interlocutor's freedom of action. This can cause damage to either the speaker or hearer, and make one of the interlocutors submit their will to the other. Freedom of choice and action are impeded when negative face is threatened.
- B. Positive Face-Threatening Acts: Positive face is threatened when the speaker or hearer does not care about the interlocutor's feelings, wants or does not want what others want. When an individual is forced to be separated from others so that their wellbeing is treated as less important, positive face is threatened.

Super-Strategies for Performing Face-Threatening Acts

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the first decision to take is whether to perform the FTA or not. If the speaker decides to perform the FTA, there are four possibilities: three sets of 'on-record' super strategies (perform the FTA on-record without redressive action (bald-on-record), perform the FTA on-

⁹ Brown, P. & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals of language use*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰ Leech, G. (1983). *Principle of pragmatics*. New York: Longman Group Ltd.

record using positive politeness, perform FTA on-record using negative politeness) and one set of 'of-record' strategies (Thomas 1995, p.169)¹¹

Bald-on-Record (Performing an FTA without any redress): There are occasions when external factors constrain an individual to speak very directly (and in full conformity with the Gricean maxim) (Thomas 1995, p.70).¹² For instance, if there is an emergency of some sort, or where there is a major time constraint, or where there is some form of a channel limitation. Bald-on-record strategies usually do not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face. Using such strategy will shock or embarrass the addressee, and so, this strategy is most utilized in situations where the speaker has a close relationship with the audience, such as family or close friends. Also, the speaker can decide not to use redressive action if he has deliberately chosen to be maximally offensive.

Positive Politeness (Performing an FTA with redress): Positive politeness strategies are used to formulate messages in order to save the hearer's positive face when face-threatening acts are inevitable or desired. These strategies seek to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face. They are used to make the hearer feel good about himself, his interest or possession, and are most usually used in situations where the audience knows each other fairly well. In addition to hedging and attempts to avoid conflict, some strategies of positive politeness include statements of friendship, solidarity, compliments etc.

Negative Politeness: Negative politeness strategies are oriented towards the hearer's negative face and emphasize avoidance of imposition on the hearer. These strategies presume that the speaker will be imposing on the listener and there is a higher potential for awkwardness or embarrassment than in bald-on-record and positive politeness strategies.

Off-Record (Do not perform FTA): Brown and Levinson's final strategy "Do not perform an FTA" is self-explanatory. According to Thomas (1995, p.175),¹³ "there are times when something appears to be so face-threatening, you don't say it." Brown and Levinson do not discuss this strategy (there's no lot to say about saying nothing!). However, Bonikowska (1998)¹⁴ termed 'saying nothing as the 'opting out choice' (OOC). According to her, there are other occasions when an individual decides to say nothing, but still wishes to achieve the effect which the speech act would have achieved had it been uttered. Tanaka (1993, pp.50-51) termed these two strategies OOC-genuine and OOC-strategic:¹⁵ OOC-genuine: Speaker does not perform a speech act, and genuinely intends to let the matter remain closed. The speaker does not intend to achieve the perlocutionary effect.

¹¹ Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. New York: Longman.

¹² Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. New York: Longman.

¹³ Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. New York: Longman.

¹⁴ Bonikowska, M. P (1988). The choice of opting out. *Applied linguistics*. 9(2): 168-181.

¹⁵ Tanaka, A. (1993). *The pragmatics of uncertainty: Its realization and interpretation in English and Japanese*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Lancaster University.

OOC-strategic: Speaker does not perform a speech act, but expects the decoder to infer his/her wish to achieve the perlocutionary effect. Thomas (1995, p.175) stated that "there is a third situation where there is such a strong expectation that something will be said, that saying nothing is in itself a massive FTA."¹⁶

The saga of the Chibok girls' abduction in Borno State

The news of the abduction of over two hundred girls from Government Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State, on Monday, 14th of April, 2014, came just less than 24 hours after Nigerians were trying to recover from the bomb blast at the Nyanya Park, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Nearly one month after the abduction, with the whereabouts of the girls still unknown and still, no word from the Federal Government on what it was doing to secure the release of the girls, there were series of protests in Nigeria and across the world. These protests however drew national and international condemnation of the government's slow reaction to the unprecedented outrage committed against Nigerian womanhood. A bold and courageous move was taken by the former minister of education, Dr. Oby Ezekwesili at the opening ceremony of the Port Harcourt World Book Capitals, Abuja, where she spoke about the need for the government to intervene and rescue the abducted girls. A few attendees at the ceremony went ahead to post her remarks on the social media platform with harsh tag #BringBackOurGirls# and #BringBackOurDaughters#. This was thus the beginning of a campaign that has gone viral on all social media platforms across the world, with millions of posts on Facebook, twitter and Instagram across the world, including international celebrities all over the world joining voices to demand the release of the girls. It is on this note that this paper attempts the analysis of Politeness and Face management in selected editorials on the Abduction of Chibok Girls in Borno State.

For the purpose of analysis, four utterances have been purposively selected from four different newspapers (*Daily Trust, News watch, The Punch and The Nation papers*) on four different days, published between May and October, 2014. The choice was informed by the Boko Haram insurgency that occurred during this period. The selected utterances will be critically analysed under the categories of Politeness and Face, viz: Face want, Politeness Principles and Face Threatening Acts.

Data presentation and analysis

Sample 1

Excerpt from Daily Trust, Thursday, May 29, 2014. P.8

Police stood watch as the attack took place, former Minister of Education, Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili said. However, a rival group believed to be sponsored by the Federal Government emerged last week Monday, arguing that "instead of blaming the government, protesters should face the Boko Haram

¹⁶ Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics. New York: Longman.

insurgents". In response to this Dr. (Mrs). Ezekwesili faced the police officer Hussaina Dodo and said, "Tell your CP (Commissioner of Police) that I have a message for him."¹⁷

Face wants: According to Fetzer (2011, p.34), the analysis of context-dependent meaning is at the heart of pragmatics, and for this reason, context is one of its key objects of investigation.¹⁸ Going by this definition to arrive at the former Minister of Education's face want, President Goodluck Jonathan's administration has not really given Dr. Mrs. Ezekwesili any appreciable political recognition as she was given during Obasanjo's government. She started off in the Olusegun Obasanjo administration as the pioneer Head of the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligent Unit. She was later appointed the Minister of Mineral Resources in June 2005 and in June 2006. She was appointed the Federal Minister of Education, holding the post until she took her World Bank appointment in May 2007. Dr. (Mrs.) Ezekwesili who had been politically sidelined under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration capitalized on the #BringBackOurGirls# campaign, using that platform to activate her dormant political career and to prepare the ground for her participation in the next coming administration.

Politeness Principles: The response of the rival group sponsored by the Federal Government is an expression of disapproval of the campaign strategies of Dr. (Mrs.) Ezekwesili. Instead of the speaker to directly tell the leader of the campaign group to stop mounting pressure on the Federal Government, the speaker employs indirectness as a negative politeness strategy "protesters should face the Boko Haram insurgents", an uninformative generalization, flouting the quantity maxim and ultimately offending the agreement maxim "minimize the expression of disagreement between self and others", thereby downplaying the role of the campaign leader.

The pragmatic strategy of indirectness is largely employed here, a feature of conflictive illocutionary goal, which enables a speaker achieve his anti-social goal without appearing unpleasant (Thomas 1995, p.122).¹⁹ Consequently, the speaker employs mitigation (hedging) device i.e., a collective noun 'protesters' to avoid direct affront on its original target {Dr. (Mrs.) Ezekwesili}.

Face Threatening Acts: The rival group's expression superficially threatens and eventually damages Dr. (Mrs) Ezekwesili's negative and positive face at the same time. The illocutionary intent of the statement protesters should face Boko Haram" is an act that expresses the speaker's negative assessment of the hearer's positive face (the speaker does not care about the feelings and urgent wants of the hearer), thereby threatening the negative face (the obstruction of the interlocutor's freedom of motion i.e. the protesters being attacked by the rival group during their sit-out campaign at the Unity Fountain in Abuja) of the

¹⁷ Daily Trust, Thursday, May 29, 2014. P.8

¹⁸ Fetzer, A. (2011). Foundation of pragmatics. In B. Wolfram, & R. N. Neal (Eds.), Pragmatics

as a linguistic concept. (pp23-50) Germany: Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.

¹⁹ Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics. New York: Longman.

campaigners and consequently damaging the two parties' faces (both the rival group and the campaigners).

The outcome of the FTA performed by the rival group prompted a bald-on-record response from the campaign leader. With her face being damaged, she does not attempt to minimize the threat to the hearer's face. It could have been "Tell the Commissioner of Police that I have a message for him", but she specifically flouted the modesty and agreement maxim to proof that the CP is not competent enough and she has not by any means accepted him as the CP "Tell your CP". The campaign leader decided not to use redressive action because she deliberately chose to be maximally offensive.

Sample 2

Excerpt from Daily News Watch, Wednesday, July 16, 2014. P. 4.

Chibok girls' parents shun talk with Jonathan

Face want: According to Daily News Watch (2014, p.1), Chibok girls' parents shun talks with Jonathan. The meeting that was supposed to hold between the presidency and the parents of the abducted girls was cancelled sequel to the failure of the later turn up at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, thus keeping the president, the National Security Adviser and other top government officials waiting. The great question here is that, why will the desperate wailing parents willing to travel all the way from Chibok to Abuja to know the steps the Federal Government is taking concerning the release of the abducted girls, suddenly turned down the invitation of the president at the last minute? However, the answer to this question is not far-fetched. It is obvious that the BringBackOurGirls campaigners in Nigeria politicized the process with great interest in showmanship.²⁰

The campaign officer who purposely sponsored the trip of the parents of the abducted girls for political reasons made an arrangement for their return overnight while the presidency was waiting to receive them. This short drama was however targeted at painting President Jonathan black in the mind of the people towards the 2015 presidential election.

Politeness principles: Deference refers to the respect we show to other people by virtue of their high status, greater age, etc. (Thomas 1995, p. 150).²¹ Unless the speaker deliberately wishes to flout the behavioural norms of a given society and is prepared to accept the consequences of so doing, the speaker has no choice as to whether to use the deferent form or not usage is dictated by sociolinguistic norms (Thomas 1995. p.152).²² Because the use of deferent form for the president is obligatory for every Nigerian (It is a sociolinguistic norm with penalties attached to a non-observance of the norm), the campaign leader,

²⁰ Daily News Watch, Wednesday, July 16, 2014. P. 4. Chibok girls' parents shun talk with Jonathan

²¹ Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics. New York: Longman.

²² Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics. New York: Longman.

Mrs. Ezekwesili politely dared the president by manipulating the parents of the abducted girls to turn down the invitation of the president at the last minute. Here, Dr. Mrs. Ezekwesili however, violated the tact and generosity maxims which state that minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to others and minimize the expression of beliefs that imply benefit to self respectively (Ezekwesili kept the presidency waiting for selfish benefit).

Democracy allows freedom of speech, and Dr. (Mrs.) Ezekwesili could have unleashed a storm of protest (bald-on-record) at the Presidential Villa, but she adopted an indirect unfavourable disposition using the parents of the girls as her political weapon, thereby provoking an ironic implication through the absurdity created by showmanship (i.e., the play of politics rather than genuine concern with the plight of the children and that of their parents).

Face Threatening Act: It appears that the fight to get the Chibok girls back is not only a fight against a terrorist insurgency, but also against the political opposition. According to Thomas (1995, p.175),²³ there are times when something appears to be so face-threatening, you don't say it. Dr (Mrs.) Ezekwesili's act of tuning down the president's invitation is an "Opting Out Choice" strategy, an act that damaged the presidency's positive face. This, however, is the climax of the unhealthy rivalry between the two leading opposition parties in Nigeria. The OOC- strategy is employed to achieve some perlocutionary effect. Firstly, to the Federal Government to take a fast action and secondly, to disorganize the president, threatening his administration, thereby giving the opposition party an hedge over the incumbent government in the 2015 general elections (face damaging).

Sample 3

Excerpt from *The Punch*, Tuesday, May 27, 2014. P. 4.

*The national coordinator of CISA (Citizen Initiative for Security Awareness), Chidi Omeje who delivered the group's letter of solidarity to the CDS (Chief of Defense Staff), said the military deserved the encouragement of the citizenry fighting to enthrone peace in the North-East and other troubled parts of the country.*²⁴

Face want: The National Coordinator of Citizen for Security Awareness, Mr. Chidi Omeje was trying to rebrand the already damaged face of the Armed Forces using the positive politeness principle. His aim was to make Nigerians see reasons why military personnel deserve to be encouraged and commended saying many militaries had been killed while fighting to enthrone peace..." The speaker is also trying to maintain and enhance both the negative face (freedom to do their job professionally without being interrupted and distracted with immaterial comments from people) and positive face of the military (the desire

²³ Thomas, J. (1995). *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. New York: Longman.

²⁴ *The Punch*, Tuesday, May 27, 2014. P. 4.

to be ratified and sympathized with for the death of their late colleagues who died serving the nation).

Politeness principle: Chidi Omeje threatens his interlocutors' face (readers) by offering the modesty maxim (minimize the expression of praise of self), using a mitigating device i.e. hedges to soften his demand "the military deserved the encouragement of the citizenry". The speaker tried to minimize imposition using a negative politeness principle instead of directly demanding the people's support which would have been performing an FTA without any redress (Bald-on-record)

Face Threatening Act: The speaker (Chidi Omeje) employed indirectness as a negative politeness strategy "the military deserved the encouragement of the citizenry. However, this strategy (negative politeness) was oriented towards the interlocutors' (readers) negative face and to avoid direct imposition on the them.

Sample 4

Excerpts from *The Nation*, Monday, October 20, 2014. P. 57.

Unfortunately, people who are supposed to draw attention to our plight are not saying anything about the ugly situation..... We have our representatives in the House of Representatives. Even our representatives in the House of Assembly have never been mentioned this attack on the floor of Adamawa State House of Assembly..... As far as we are concerned, the government has left us at the mercy of Boko Haram. This is nonsense, if the government is not willing or is failing in its responsibility of protecting the citizenry; we should be allowed to carry arms so that we can defend ourself.²⁵

Face want: six months after the Chibok girls were abducted by the Boko Haram terrorist, doubts swept through the Chibok community over the ceasefire and imminent release of the school girls as announced by the government. The people had a feeling that federal government was hiding something from the public for political reasons:

"For me, I don't want to lay allegations, all I want to say is that what we Nigerians want from the federal government is the truth, nothing but the truth. It is high time that Nigeria government came out to tell the people the truth, no matter how bitter it is and then we know what to do"(The Nation 2014, p 4).

The speaker (on behalf of the Chibok community) want the federal government to give the freedom of taking laws into their hands (if truly there is no hidden deal between terrorists and the federal government) since it is obvious there is little or nothing they can do to rescue the abducted girls "we should be allowed to carry arms so that we can defend ourselves".

²⁵ The Nation, Monday, October 20, 2014. P. 57. Chibok girls: Anxiety over Federal Government, Boko Haram deal. Vol. 9, No. 3007.

Politeness principle: From the above statement, the opening remark is obviously face threatening and impolite to the federal government as it violates the approbation maxim (minimize the dispraise of others). However, the prevailing circumstances and the existing relationship (difference) between the interlocutor (the speaker and the federal government) have obviously subjugated rating of the FTA to the common denominators of power and social distance. This is done using the super-strategies for performing FTA to benign implication, that's indirectness; "unfortunately, people were supposed to draw attention to our plight and are not saying anything about ugly situation (who are the people?)" and hedging "if the government is not willing or his failing in his responsibility..., as far as we are concerned.... etc." (Politeness principle).

Face threatening act: Even though the situation of insecurity in the country demanded speaking with maximum efficiency, the speaker avoided using a bald-on-record strategy, but formulated his messages to save the Federal government's positive face using politeness strategies. These positive politeness strategies include the use of hedges (i.e. as far as I am concerned, if), using obviating structure like collective noun (i.e. "as far as we are concerned instead of as far as I am concerned" in order to minimize the threat to the hearer's (Federal Government) positive face.

Findings and Conclusion

In a functional society like Nigeria, it will be odd or absurd if domestic, social or official interactions goes on smoothly and peacefully without conflict once in a while. Hence, it is normal to have attacks between/among interlocutors in any given formal or informal setting from time to time, or human development would not have advanced to the present level. This paper has attempted to show the various strategies for performing Face-Threatening Acts as well as highlight politeness principles and face management as the bi-polar social functions of language. This was done using four selected utterances from *The Nation*, *The Punch*, *Daily Newswatch* and *Daily Trust Newspapers*. These samples collected from the lot published between May and October, 2014 were critically analyzed under three categories of politeness and face management, viz: Face Want, Politeness Principles and Face Threatening Acts. Our findings reveal that 'face' is a concern for one's projected image that is both immediate and spontaneous and is tied to the dynamics of social interaction.²⁶ According to Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998),²⁷ in conflicts, one's face is threatened, and thus the person tends to save or restore his or face. This set of communicative behaviors according to Negotiation Theory is called "facework". Correspondingly, the study of the eight-sample data has indicated that facework is the cluster of communication behaviours that are used to enact self-face and to upload, challenge/threaten or support the other person's face.

In the course of this study, it was discovered that in any communicative context, there is always an intention on the part of the encoder. At times, the encoder's face want may be so face threatening, and so, to avoid conflicts, the use of

²⁶ Daily Newswatch (2014). Chibok girls' parents shun talk with Jonathan. Vol.2, No.363.

²⁷ Ting-Toomey, S. & Kurogi, A. (1998). Facework competence in intercultural conflict

indirect speech acts and hedges are opted for. However, there are occasions when external factors constrain an individual to speak very directly (and in full conformity with the Gricean maxims) using a bald on record strategy because of a great urgency or desperation, little or no desire to maintain another's face. In situations like this, there can be exceptions to, and apparent deviations from the Politeness principle. These are identified as the social constraint governing the interpretation of utterances. For instance, President Goodluck's blunt response "None, there is none" (*Punch*, 2014, p.2) when he was asked if there was any confirmed information about the abducted school girls shows that even though an individual is concerned with maintaining each other's face, but not at the expense of losing his own positive face.

For the purpose of being polite, instances of assumptions were revealed. Many unstated facts in the illocutionary acts were left to the decoders to work out on their own. This non-challant attitude of not overtly stating some information when necessary or saying something to mean another thing (strategies for performing FTAs) is because the speakers were aware of the mutual intelligibility among the interlocutors since they were all operating in the same social context and it is necessary to maintain each other's face (facework).

From the foregoing, it is clear that language use in any given situational context is a very crucial aspect of human existence. Though, to many, language use appears petty and very casual, but this simple instrument of communication is capable of causing conflict in the society if good manner and courtesy are not applied in the course of interaction. To this end, there is no doubt that peaceful co-existence in any society is hinged on the maintenance of each person's face through the application of politeness principles.

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