

POLITENESS PHENOMENON IN ADICHIE'S *HALF OF A YELLOW SUN*

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Abstract

Adichie's remarkable creative, imaginative, and research abilities as well as brevity have coalesced into *Half of a Yellow Sun (HOAYS)* - an epic on moral responsibility with ethnic allegiance, and how these could be complicated by love. This paper examines the structures and codes of the novel with a view to depicting and highlighting what politeness can do and how interlocutors tactically employ language in promoting peace, growth and development through politeness principles. In so doing, the study utilises Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Principles and Giles' (1991) Communication Accommodation Theory to show how face-saving acts manifest in the use of apology, questions with modal verbs, honorifics and hesitations. From the analysis, it can be seen that the utterances of some of Adichie's characters are characterized by insults, peremptory commands, overbearing interrogations without any linguistic redress, undue punishment that erode societal peace.

Keywords/phrase: Politeness, Communication Accommodation Theory, Interlocutors, Face-Saving Acts, Face-Threatening Acts.

Introduction

Language defines man's humanity. And as a social animal, man lives a communal life as he is surrounded by people with whom he shares the environment. This makes interaction inevitable. This interaction itself is facilitated by language. As Finegan (2012, p.xxi) has argued, language is "a powerful tool of enlightenment with extraordinary potential to delight us" just as it "can also inflict injury and cause harm." This means that language has the potentialities of making us unhappy by inflicting an injury. And depending on the communicative goals of interlocutors, language codes can be strategically applied to either bring people closer (convergence) or create distance (divergence) during communicative events. 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).

participants display towards one another in terms of degree of politeness and or distance or closeness they want to express. The notion of 'face' relates to the feelings of being embarrassed, humiliated or 'losing face'. Goffman (1967, p. 306) defines face as "the positive value a person claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a personal contact." He further argues that "face is a person's sense of self-esteem (positive face) and desire to determine their own course of action (negative face). Face (self-esteem), a universal property possessed by every person, is frequently put at risk in our daily interactions with people" (1967, p.419). Grundy (2008, p.197) argues that "the language users' utterances may be oriented to the positive or negative face of the addressee depending on the ratio of imposition of what the user attempts to achieve, the social distance or power differential existing between them." By implication, language possesses intrinsic ability to either threaten or save face, as determined by the intent of the speaker. Language users often adopt certain strategies that assist in mitigating the

Face presentation entails the behaviours

degree of face-threats contained in a speech-act or deliberately decide not to mitigate their utterances in order to achieve certain desired effect on their hearer.

Another discernible linguistic behaviour that occurs between interlocutors is the tendency of speech similarity or dissimilarity, known as “speech accommodation”. Speech accommodation occurs when “speakers ‘converge’ or ‘diverge’ their speech towards or away from the speech of the person they are talking to” (Holmes 2008 p.242). Both are employed for the purpose of attaining certain desired objective(s). This paper sets out to analyse the politeness strategies (face-threatening and face-saving acts) and communication accommodation strategies (convergence and divergence) exhibited by some select characters in Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), which assist the author in foregrounding the cultural and social values of the Igbo people. It also brings to the fore, how individuals could tactically employ language in a way that fosters good interpersonal, relational growth and development. Interactions of some select characters in Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* serve as data for analysis. This is founded on the backdrop that Adichie as a language-conscious artist, considers the context of situation of the dialogues of her characters. Onukaogu and Onyerionwu rightly observe that Adichie sublimates the individuality of her characters by upholding a careful appropriateness in the language that she assigns to them. They further argue that the language of her characters generally reveal their level of exposure, educational backgrounds, levels of advancement in thought, classes and the subjects of discussion and that “Adichie constructs dialogues that not only enhance the realism of her prose but also underscore the humanity of her characters” (2010, p.310).

Conceptual Issues

Any study on language from the point of view of the user presupposes a pragmatic approach to language study. Pragmatics has been explicated as the analysis of meaning that considers the observable and unobservable aspects of a language event. Therefore, pragmatics studies how more is communicated than is said. As Udofot (1998,

p.127) agreeably maintains, “pragmatics recognizes three considerable factors in interpreting the meaning of stated and unstated utterances. These factors are the situation in which the utterance is produced, the shared previous knowledge or common cultural background of the speaker and the hearer and the linguistics context in which an utterance is produced.”

Brown and Levinson (1987, p.41), in their insight into politeness strategies, aver that “there are verbal and non-verbal behaviour that enable interlocutors to maintain ‘face’ in a conversation.” Giving force to the above proposition, Yule (1996) contends that the concept of ‘face’ is germane to linguistic politeness because it has to do with one’s public self-image represented emotionally or socially. People know that they possess this natural trait, therefore, they anticipate others to recognise it. If not recognised, it becomes a threat to ‘face’. Politeness strategies, which entail showing awareness of another person’s ‘face’, grease the wheels of conversation; thereby enabling interlocutors to enjoy cordial relations. Since “every instance of communicated language exhibits politeness” (Grundy 2008, p. 192) and “every engagement in conversation opens up the possibility of losing face” (Mey 2001, p. 75), it is also important that interlocutors are acquainted with the notion of politeness and its operation. Although politeness has been spotlighted to be a world-wide practice, polite behaviour is distinctively represented in every speech community. This explains why “what is seen as an exploitation of politeness strategy in one speech community could be seen as a violation in another community, hence, linguistic politeness is culturally determined” (Holmes 2008, p. 270).

Face Acts are verbal and non-verbal actions directed to someone’s self-image. Yule (1996) identifies two types of Face Acts: Face-Threatening Acts (henceforth referred to as FTAs) and Face-Saving Acts (henceforth referred to as FSAs). FTAs are utterances that pose a threat to someone’s self-esteem. Here, there is no conscious effort by the speaker to employ language in a way that it can palliate the chances of the addressee “losing face”. FSAs represent utterances that attempt to mitigate the possible threat to someone’s self-esteem. FSAs are subdivided into

positive and negative. “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).

However, it has been revealed that when interlocutors get involved in speech activity, there is the tendency of speech similarity or dissimilarity to occur. This process is couched under the term “speech accommodation”. Indeed, scholars like Giles, Coupland and Coupland (1991). Johnson-Weiner (1998) and Wardhaugh (2010) have contributed immensely in expanding this subject. According to Holmes (2008), “Speech accommodation takes place when speakers “converge” their speech towards the speech of the person they are talking to” (p.242). She further opines that for good interpersonal relations, speakers’ desires to please others or to put them at ease, triggers convergence. Speakers may consciously decide to use language forms different from the hearer’s in order to feel superior to them, this process is called “Speech divergence”.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) Politeness Principles and Giles’ (1991) Communication Accommodation Theory. Communication Accommodation Theory has two basic tenets: Face and Identity, thus, Politeness and Face are Communication Accommodation Theory goals. Both Goffman’s (1967) notion of face as positive self-(re-)presentation and Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness principles play important role in Communication Accommodation Theory, mostly in status-oriented exchanges. Both Brown and Levinson’s (1987) Politeness Principles and Giles’ Communication Accommodation Theory are germane to this study as they provide the necessary paraphernalia for analysing the politeness strategies evident in Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), individuals possess face, also known as self-esteem which could be threatened or saved in the course of an interaction. They argue that human beings have two kinds of face: positive and negative faces. The former is an individual’s desire to be appreciated and approved of while the latter

is an individual’s desire to have freedom from imposition and freedom of action, and thus, interpreted as Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) (p.61). Examples of Face Threatening Acts as identified by Cutting (2002, p.22) include “interruptions, infringement on the other’s territory, a choice to change topic being discussed when the interlocutor finds it disagreeable, keeping silence, a show of power differential/social status, etc.” Osisanwo (2003, p.48) explains that “a person’s positive face is the need to be accepted, even liked, by others. Negative face denotes not caring about the feelings of the conversation partner and therefore generally pleasing oneself.” Grundy (2008, p.61) believes that “interlocutors have the intellectual abilities to achieve certain goals. For instance, an interlocutor can try to claim a common point of view with other interlocutors simply to meet their face need – to reinforce their positive identity, by way of linguistic politeness.”

Howard Giles’ Speech Accommodation Theory is a theory in sociolinguistics that came to limelight since the 1970s but was later renamed Communication Accommodation Theory as its framework grew. It attempts to account for the reason behind the change in people’s speech patterns during social encounters and the social effect of such shifts. Communication Accommodation Theory explains some of the cognitive reasons for code-switching and other changes in speech as individuals seek to emphasise or minimise the social differences between themselves and their interlocutors. Giles (1991) opines that this accommodation can take two forms: convergence and divergence. Convergence is the speaker’s ability to alter their dialect or accent to conform to that of the hearer for solidarity and communication efficiency purposes, which, in turn, leads to increased intelligibility. Divergence on the other hand is a speech patterned to differ from that of the listeners so as to showcase social distance. Thus, it is a linguistic strategy whereby a member of a speech community accentuates the linguistic difference between his in-group and the respective out-group of his interlocutors in order to preserve his positive in-group identity, rather than accentuating in-group similarities as in convergence (Jekins, 2000,

p.177). Divergence are patterns of (intended) impolite unfriendliness that elicit negative response from recipients.

Methodology

This study adopts the descriptive research design as it examines and describes the politeness strategies laden in the utterances of select characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Out of about hundred (100) dialogues in the primary text, a representational and purposive sampling procedure was adopted in selecting thirteen (13) sample dialogues in line with the goals of the study. These excerpts are conversations (face-to-face and telephone) held between or among characters in the fictional world of the novel. However, line numbers shall be used to denote samples of dialogues. Thus, alphabets, A – M and ‘1’ and ‘2’ are ordinals used to refer to line numbers in that progression. Moreover, narration sections that provide contextual background to the communication events shall also form part of the data. These are for ease of reference and better interpretation.

Review of Literature:

Myriads of studies exist on Adichie’s works but our focus in this essay is on Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Hence, few scholarly works on it will be reviewed. Ozochikelu’s (2017) work on Stylistic and Contextual Analysis of *Arrow of God* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* is another study worthy of mention. The study uses Halliday’s Functional Linguistic Approach, examines the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of the language of the two novels comparatively and contextually investigates the linguistic and non-linguistic elements in the texts in relation to meaning. The study reveals that there abound stylistic and contextual features in both texts, which also reveal the writers’ ideas that a writer’s culture and linguistic backgrounds affect their style of writing.

Ozochikelu’s (2017) study is of much relevance to the present study because it is basically a research on the literary genre, but a linguistic inquiry into *Half of a Yellow Sun* (a book common to both studies). However, it is different from the present study because it adopts the Halliday’s functional linguistic approach in examining the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes as well as the contextual imports of the language

of the two select novels while the present study uses theoretical approaches of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) Politeness Principles and Giles Communication Accommodation Theory, to tackle the subject of politeness phenomenon in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Osunbade’s (2013) study of Implicatures of Domestic Discourse in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* centers on human discourse and its impact in the thematic development of the novels, using Gricean theoretical notion of Implicature. Findings are that Adichie portrays the tyrannical trauma of anarchical-cum draconian leadership experienced by Africans using a domestic setting to justify that humans constantly struggle with a number of domestic issues. The study also discovers that pragmatic inference contributes to what is implied in domestic discourse in Adichie’s novels, displaying two broad dimensions of figurative usage and non-figurative expressions. The study further discovers that implicatures in domestic discourse in both novels relate to the themes of subjugation, resistance against domestic violence, self-centeredness, love, corruption, tribalism and inhumanity.

Osunbade’s (2013) study is similar to the present study because it is a fictional discourse, studied from a linguistic perspective just like the present study but on varying topics, adopting varying theoretical planks to carry out a comparative study unlike the present study which uses one of Adichie’s novel. Ikediugwu (2013) studied Psychological Dimension in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The study, using Social Realism theory and adopting a qualitative approach, explores the psychological effects of the war on the characters in the novel under some specific episodes of the 1966 Pogrom, the love affair between Odenigbo and Amala, the loss of mama Oji’s children, the death of Odenigbo’s mother. It bares the suffering and hazards they went through and how these have affected their lives and human relationship. The study reveals that war affects people not just physically and socially but also psychologically. It further reveals that the war generally creates a tensed-up atmosphere which adversely affected human relationships in the novel, and therefore, concludes that ‘war is not good for any nation or group of people and

therefore, should be discouraged in its entirety' (p.187).

Ikediegwu's (2013) study is similar to the current study since it uses only one text, *Half of a Yellow Sun*. However, it differs from the present study since it uses social realism theory and does its analysis from a literary perspective. The study is on a different subject matter from the present study. However, both are fictional discourses using qualitative approach. From the foregoing, none of these scholars examined the politeness phenomenon in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Consequently, this paper seeks to build or add to the already existing body of knowledge in the researches done on Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

by focusing on the politeness strategies employed by this contemporary writer.

Synopsis of *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The novel, *HOAYS*, is an epic on moral responsibility with ethnic allegiance, and how these could be complicated by love. The novel deals on the love stories of Odenigbo, Olanna, Kainene, Richard and Ugwu, Odenigbo's houseboy who advanced the plot of the novel, as well as the attendant physical and psychological effects of the world war these major characters. What shall follow next is the analysis of excerpts under the headings of FTAS, FSAS, Use of Speech Convergence and Divergence.

FTAS in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Face-threatening acts are those utterances that flow unimpededly from the speaker, without mitigating devices, with the intent of defacing the addressee. It is also known as verbal bully. They are "bald on record" form meted out gratuitously with a conscious purport of humiliating imposing or hurting the addressee's feelings. They are triggered off by insults, embarrassing remarks, autocratic commands, and onerous demands, etc. (O'Grady, Archibald and Katamba, 2011).

Excerpt A

Mama: I hear you did not suck your mother's breast. A1
Olanna: What? A2
Mama: They say that you did not suck your mother's breast... Please go back and tell those who sent you that you did not find my son. Tell your fellow witches that you did not see him. A3
Olanna: (Silence) A4
Mama: (Shouting) Did you hear me? Tell them that nobody's medicine will work on my son. He will not marry an abnormal woman, unless you kill me first. Only over my dead body! A5
Olanna: Mama A6
Mama: Don't Mama me. I said, Do not Mama me. Just leave my son alone. Tell your fellow witches that you did not find him! (Shouting outside) Neighbours! There is a witch in my son's house! Neighbours! A7 (pp.123-124)

Analysis

The above excerpt is a conversation between Olanna, Odenigbo's lover and Mama, Odenigbo's mother who visits her son (Odenigbo) in the city with a lady for him. Olanna is meeting her for the first time. She therefore welcomes and introduces herself to Mama and reaches out to hug her but she is rebuffed. This face-to-face conversation takes place in Odenigbo's kitchen. From Mama and Olanna's interlocution, it is obvious that Mama is

deliberately hostile to Olanna in order to achieve her purpose of supplanting Olanna with Amala, a young girl she brings along wither from the village to be Odenigbo's wife. There is an aspect of cultural belief shared by Mama and Olanna about a child that does not feed from the mother's breast as one that suffers from deficiency, hence the 'abnormality' of Olanna which poses a threat to her face. Another aspect of Mama's view of Olanna as an 'abnormal woman' is revealed in her

interaction with Ugwu and Amala, where she bitterly complains that ‘too much schooling ruins a woman, everyone knows that. It gives a woman a big head and she will start to insult her husband. What kind of wife will that be? These girls that go to university follow men around until their bodies are useless. Nobody knows if she can have children...’ (HOAYS, p. 126) As a result of this, Mama is determined to send Olanna away even if it will cost her, her life, because she does not want her fellow women to call her the mother of an impotent son.

In Igbo cosmology, mother-in-laws consider women who cannot bear children as witches that have either eaten up all their babies, or loose women who have undergone series of abortions before marriage. Another contributing factor is the belief that education is the exclusive right of men; As such, any woman that undergoes

training in the university is seen as a fellow captain at home with the husband who can rain insults on the husband at wish. It is because of Olanna’s intimidating status of ‘a graduate’ and Mama’s fear of her (Olanna) occupying a better position in her son’s life that she insults and embarrasses her. Mama insults Olanna by calling her such names as abnormal woman, witch, and by also shouting and calling on neighbours to witness the embarrassing drama. These are evidently face threatening acts aimed at defacing Olanna. It typifies a bald on-record form of face-threatening act without any linguistic redress. Holmes (2008, p.280) asserts that when adults use please, ‘it often has the effect of making a directive sound less polite and more peremptory.’ However, mama’s use of please before issuing her commands does not encode politeness.

Excerpt B

Dr. Inyang: (Gently) how are you? How you dey? B1
Pregnant woman: (Recoiling then spat on the doctor’s face with a force)
Saboteur! It is you non-Igbo who are showing the enemy the way! Hapu m! It is you people that showed them the way to my home town! B2
Dr. Inyang: (*Surprised and silent*) B3
Kainene: (Slapping the pregnant woman twice on her check) we are all Biafrans! Anyincha bu Biafra! Do you understand me? We are all Biafrans! B4
(p. 389)

The above conversation involving Kainene, Dr. Inyang and a pregnant woman in the refugee’s camp is a face-to-face interaction. This instance is based on the ability to use both verbal and non-verbal acts to ‘deface’ someone. From the excerpt above, the doctor, in the course of discharging her humanitarian duties, is defaced by a pregnant woman who still bears grudges against non-Igbos that have taken over her hometown. Consequently, she sees every non-Igbo as a ‘saboteur’ who showed the enemy the route to her hometown. She becomes aggressive and spits on the doctor’s face calling her a saboteur. Her actions prompt Kainene to slap and scold her. The pregnant woman threatens the doctor’s face by spitting on her face without considering the social distance and power differential existing between

them. Kainene, on her side, merely exercises the power she has over the pregnant woman (as someone that provides her with food and shelter) to discipline her. Deliberate spitting on someone’s face is a disrespectful act that attracts reprimand in Igbo society. Kainene rebukes the pregnant woman immediately, irrespective of her condition, to portray the degree of unacceptability of her non-verbal behaviour. Reprimanding her is possible for Kainene without a retort of action from the pregnant woman because she provides her with food and shelter. This interplay highlights how well Igbos regard people that provide them with the necessities of life. This is what O’Grady, Archibald and Katamba have termed ‘...socially-defined situations where interlocutors have unequal power relations, such as in the armed

forces, face-threatening behaviour such as interrogation are the norm' (2011,p. 234).
imperious commands and over-bearing

Excerpt C

Nigerian officer: Why do you still have the Biafra number plate? Are you supporters of the defeated rebels?C1
Odenigbo: We will change it when we get to Nsukka. C2
Nigerian Officer: Nsukka? Ah, Nsukka university. You are the ones who planned the rebellion with Ojukwu, you book people. C3
Odenigbo: (silence) C4
Nigerian officer: (opening Odenigbo's car door quickly) Oya! Come out and carry some wood for us. Let us see how you can help a united Nigeria. C5
Odenigbo: What is this for? C6
Nigerian officer: You are asking me? I said you should come on come out! C7
Odenigbo: This is a joke 'o na-egwu egwu' C8
Nigerian officer: Come out C9
Nigerian Officer: (Slapping him violently) you are not grateful that we didn't kill all of you? Come on carry those wood planks quickly, two at a time. C10
(pp. 499 - 501)

This is a face-to-face conversation between a military man and Odenigbo, a civilian. As the war ends, Kainene is yet to come back. Odenigbo decides they leave for Nsukka while Olanna drops a note for her missing twin sister, Kainene. As Odenigbo drives that morning, they encounter the Nigerian soldiers who use interrogatives as tool of intimidation and harassment in C1. The above excerpt represents social situations where interlocutors share poorly balanced power relations. This explains why the Nigerian officer disdainfully interrogates Odenigbo and his family on his assumption that they are supporters of the defeated rebels. Meanwhile, Odenigbo, on discovering the threat this poses to his negative face (freedom from imposition), reacts by throwing a question at the officer, which leads to physical abuse (non-verbal threat to face). This is embarrassing to Odenigbo and his family because contextually speaking, the war has just ended, and they are not expecting such ill-treatment from anybody, especially after suffering from the war. The officer employs name-calling strategy as he calls Odenigbo a rebel – an accusation that

threatens Odenigbo and his family's positive and negative faces and that of their in-group identity. Odenigbo succumbs to the verbal abuse and promises to make amends in C2: 'We will change it when we get to Nsukka.' It is evident that the officer deploys interrogatives in his utterances in C1, C7 and C10 to register his protest against all supporters of Ojukwu and the Biafran state. These interrogatives have the pragmatic goal of indictment. Given the discourse situation, the officer's rhetorical questions are explicitly confrontational due partly to his expressive bitter feelings towards civil servants. By calling him 'book people, rebels and propagandists for Ojukwu' in C1 and C3, the officer chooses another less redressive formula in the form of nouns, which are more face threatening. In C5, C7 and C10, the officer uses commands as face threatening acts. The above commands are to further humiliate Odenigbo; to rob him of his face worth and dignity and are indicative of 'hostage situation'. The officer's pragmatic moves are to ridicule Odenigbo's academic acumen.

Excerpt D

Nigerian officer: Come out right now! (Pulls the man's glasses and flings them into the bush)
Ah, now you can't see? But you can see enough to write propaganda for Ojukwu? Is that not what all civil servants did? D1

The man: (rubbing his eyes) D2
Nigerian officer: Lie down (flogging the man across his back and buttocks) say thank you sah!
D3
The man: Thank you sir! D4
Nigerian Officer: Say it again! D5
The man: Thank you sir! D6

(pp. 501 – 502)

This is another face-to-face conversation that ensues between a Nigerian soldier and a civil servant immediately after the war. The soldier just finished dealing with Odenigbo, a lecturer who drove past the road before encountering this man. The officer stops the man's car, orders him to come out using direct command in D1. The smallish man obeys and comes out, standing by his car. The officer reaches out and pulls his glasses from his face and flings them into the bush, accusing him of writing propaganda for Ojukwu. He threatens the public self-image of the man and those of his in-group identity. 'Writing propaganda' means that 'book people' and their activities threaten the military boot. The man squints and rubs his eyes, non-verbal behaviour that is quite threatening to the negative face of the officer as a man that must be obeyed and feared. Thus, the officer continues with his direct imperative, 'Lie down' to which the man obeys, lays down on the coal tar. Then the physical abuse

and torture follow – the officer takes a long cane and begins to flog the man across his back and buttocks. These are non-verbal threats to humiliate, abuse and violate the man's human rights. The interplay between the 'man' and the 'Nigerian officer' is a demonstration of unequal power relations. The officer exploits his military might by unnecessarily punishing the innocent 'man' and expecting a 'thank you sir' in return. In Igbo culture, 'thank you sir' is said to someone who has done something beneficial to the other, not vice versa. For the Nigerian officer to punish the innocent man and expect 'thank you sir' in return is highly unacceptable and is seen as a deviation from the norm. This incident highlights a situation where individuals, because of the guns paraded by law enforcement agents, develop cold feet in fighting for their fundamental human rights when violated by the military for fear of losing their lives.

Excerpt E

Olanna's mum: Good for nothing! Stupid man! E1
Driver: Madam please, madam please E2
Olanna's mum: 'I fugo?' Does he think we employed him to steal us blind. Maxwell'
E3
Maxwell (The Cook): No, mah E4
Olanna's mum: so this is what you have been doing since you came here, useless man? You came here to steal from me? E5
Driver: Madam, Please E6
Olanna: Mum what is it? E7
Olanna's mum: It's this wild animal here. We employed him only last month and he already wants to steal everything in my house E8

(pp. 267-268).

In the above excerpt, the interaction between the madam of the house and her servant reflects their unequal balance of power. As the employer, the madam, has the exclusive right to insult the servant (employee) irrespective of the servant's appeal to her negative face. The power differential that

exists between a master and the servant is a widely acknowledged one in Igbo society. It is considered unacceptable for the servants to have a bitter exchange with the master, no matter how derogatory the master's utterances may be. In realising the above fact, the driver attached to

Olanna's mother appeals to his madam's negative face by pleading that she forgives him using apology strategy. The madam, basking in the power she wields, rains abuses on him regardless

of his plea. These are verbal and non-verbal acts of bullying orchestrated to deface the one with lesser power.

FSAs in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

FSAs are utterances employed by tactful interlocutors who have consideration for the face of others. 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. Yule (1996) opines that FSA oriented to a person's negative face is manifested in the use of questions with modal verbs, use of apology, use of hesitation and use of honorifics (titles) while FSAs oriented to a person's positive face tend to show solidarity. The following excerpts from HOAYS to buttress the above proposition.

Excerpt F

Richard: How are you? Are you all right? F1
Olanna: I'm very well. I can't decide which of these two to buy. Why don't I buy both and if you'll share them with me, we can decide which is better. Can you spare an hour? Or do you have to run back to your writing? F2
Richard: I would hate to impose really. F3
Olanna: Of course you wouldn't be imposing. Besides, you've never visited me ... (*hesitating*) in my flat. F4
(p. 284)

Analysis

This excerpt represents the exploitation of politeness strategies which can be oriented to a person's positive or negative face. The excerpt also reveals the interaction between Richard (Kainene's fiancé) and Olanna (Kainene's twin) in a supermarket. Both interlocutors recognize each other's negative face want (freedom from imposition) by considering the Ratio of imposition (R), and consequently backing their utterance up with appropriate redressive language. Such

mitigating devices include: 'can you spare an hour' (question with modal verb); 'or do you have to run back to your writing (giving options); 'besides, you've never visited me... (Hesitation) in my flat'; and Richard's explicit expression of 'I would hate to impose really'. In addition to the consideration of ratio of imposition, culturally speaking, Olanna understands the questionable way her society regards a woman that boldly asks a man out. This accounts for her indirectness and hesitations.

Excerpt G

Kainene: I hope you won't say 'forgive me'. There is nothing more trite. G1
Richard: Please don't ask me to leave. G2
Kainene: Leave? That would be too easy, wouldn't it? G3
Richard: I'm sorry Kainene. G4
Kainene: So you have been lusting after my sister. How unoriginal (*After answering a call*) that was Olanna. It would be forgivable if it was somebody else. Not my sister. G5
Richard: I am so sorry. Kainene, can we speak, please? G5
(pp. 313-314)

This excerpt shows the interplay that occurred between Richard and Kainene, immediately the former, remorsefully confesses to the latter, how he betrays her by having canal knowledge of her twin sister, Olanna. Richard recognizes Kainene's

(who is now morally superior to him) negative face need by apologizing to her as portrayed in the use of redressive languages 'I'm so sorry' and 'please'. This spotlights that apology is used to calm an offended person in Igbo culture.

Excerpt H

Olanna: Why don't we talk any more, Kainene? H1
Kainene: What a question. H2
Olanna: I just want to know why we don't talk any more. H3
Kainene: (*Silence*) H4
Olanna: (*Apologizing*) I shouldn't keep you H5
Kainene: Are you coming to daddy's dinner party next week? H6
Olanna: No H7
Kainene: I should have guessed, too opulent for your abstemious revolutionary and yourself. I take it? H8
Olanna: (*Still apologizing*) I shouldn't keep you H9
(pp. 132-133)

In the above telephone conversation, Olanna who was bothered with the distance that exists between her and Kainene, decides to approach the matter tactfully by asking her sister 'why don't we talk anymore?' (Use of question). When she learns that her sister feigned ignorance by avoiding the question and switching into another topic, she

apologizes by telling her, 'I shouldn't keep you'. Olanna considers Kainene's negative face of independence by tactfully informing her that there should be commensurate relations between their 'social' and 'natural' ties. This thought of Olanna is based on the belief that twins always share a lot in common, be it identical or not.

Excerpt I

Ikedi: Mr. Richard, sah! Madam say make you come. There's another coup
Kainene: Extraordinary. Extraordinary indeed, Madu is in Kaduna, Madu is in Kaduna.
Richard: It's all right, my darling. It's all right.
(p.172)

The above excerpt portrays the use of honorifics (language forms used in encoding the (high) social status of the addressee) such as the use of 'sah' and 'Mr' by Ikedi, Kainene's houseboy, in addressing his 'would be master', exposing their status differences. Other honorifics discernible in the

novel include, 'Professor' Ezeka (p.350), 'Father' Marcel (p.421). 'Dr.' Patel (p.31), 'Chief' Okonji (p.48) etc. The above reveals that titles are highly valued in Igbo society. They are seen as an embodiment of the high social status of the addressee.

Excerpt J

Odenigbo: Call me Odenigbo J1
Ugwu: (*Surprisingly*) Sah? J2
Odenigbo: My name is not sir. Call me Odenigbo J3
Ugwu: Yes sah. J4
Odenigbo: Odenigbo will always be my name, sir is arbitrary. You could be the sir tomorrow
J5
(p. 25)

Excerpt J above is a practical manifestation of a positive face-saving act which is solidarity-oriented. The interchange is between a master, Odenigbo, and Ugwu, his servant, who just arrives at his master's house, having been advised by his Aunt to always answer his master 'sah' because his master possesses a higher social status than him. Odenigbo, going by Ugwu's positive face need, reacts by telling him, 'Call me Odenigbo. My name is not sir'. Odenigbo gives Ugwu a sense of belonging by limiting their status difference and expressing solidarity. This, to Holmes (2008, p.281), is "a positive politeness move" where the boss allows the subordinate to address him/her by

his/her first name (FN). Despite his permission, Ugwu does not address his master by his first name, Odenigbo, all through the novel. He prefers to use 'sir' not just because of the 'crisp power behind the word', but because it is unacceptable in Igbo culture for the houseboy to address his master by his first name without using honorifics. Honorifics are highly valued by those with higher status and power in Igbo society, and failure to appropriately employ honorifics is termed impolite. This accounts for Ugwu's inability to heed to Odenigbo's instruction to address him by his first name.

Use of Speech Convergence and Divergence

Speech convergence is a speaker's attempt to make his speech overlap with that of his hearer. This may be geared towards raising the value of the addressee's speech, indicating interest in pleasing the addressee as well as showing solidarity. Divergence is a deliberate shift from the addressee's speech which may be intended to show superiority. The following excerpts are used to illustrate speech convergence and divergence.

Excerpt K

Richard:	And where are you from?	K1	
Nnaemeka:	I come from the southeastern region, a town called Obosi		K2
Richard:	Onitsha's little neighbor.	K3	
Nnaemeka:	You know the place sir?	K4	
Richard:	I work at Nsukka University...my fiancée is from Umunnachi...	K5	
Nnemeka:	Your fiancée sir?	K6	
Richard:	Yes, Her name is Kainene.	K7	
Nnaemeka:	You speak Igbo, sir	K8	
Richard:	'Nwanne di na mba'	K9	
Nnaemeka:	Eh! You speak! I na-asu Igbo! (Taking Richard's hands into his hands Nnaemeka began to reveal himself to him	K10	

(pp. 188-189)

Excerpt K is an interplay between Richard and Nnaemeka, a customs officer in Kano airport. It typifies speech convergence. Richard, who is of British pedigree, speaks the language of his addressee when he discovers that Nnaemeka hails from Obosi, a town close to his fiancée's hometown, Umunnachi. Richard tells Nnaemeka

'Nwanne di na mba' (one's brother could come from a different land). This speech act ignites mutual relations between them as Nnaemeka takes Richard's hand in his. Richard's convergence is a positive face-saving act, which is solidarity-oriented.

Excerpt L

Civil Defender:	Turn back, sah. That is our order ...
Richard:	But you must understand.
Civil Defender:	Are you sure you are not an agent of the Nigerian government? It is you

Richard: white people who allowed Gowon to kill innocent women and children.
Civil Defender: ‘Abu m onye Biafra’
(Laughs) Eh, a white man who is saying that he is a Biafran! Where did you learn to speak our language?
Richard: From my wife
(p. 223)

In the same vein, Excerpt L reveals what transpires between Richard and a civil defender when the later and his group were driving the ‘Vandals’ back. Richard’s persistence makes the defender to suspect him as an agent of the Nigerian Government. This suspicion is thrown into the air when Richard converges his speech by telling him

‘Abu m onye Biafra’. It informs the man that Richard is pursuing a similar cause with him as well and desires to identify with him. This excerpt reveals that Igbos regard any one that speaks their language and pursues the same cause with them as a brother irrespective of their colour, place and tribe.

Excerpt M

Olanna: (With a high English accent, she says to the nurse) It’s terribly urgent.
M1
Woman: Tufiakwa! We have been waiting since dawn! Is it because we don’t talk through our nose like white people? M2
(pp.321-322).

Contrary to excerpts K and L, Excerpt M portrays an incident which takes place in a hospital where Doctor Nwala, Olanna’s old colleague, works. Olanna diverges in her speech by using a high English accent, different from that of the nurse and other women who are also waiting to see the same doctor. She deliberately chooses to diverge her speech in order to showcase her superiority to the other women. The women consider it a threat to their face as one of them reveals by saying ‘Tufiakwa! Is it because we don’t talk through our nose like white people?’ This act reveals that Igbo society frowns at a situation where people prefer cutting corners to following the status quo because of who they know.

Conclusion

Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* is laden with the exploitations and violations of politeness strategies founded on the cultural grounds of the Igbo people. These exploitations of politeness phenomena are represented in the use of face-saving acts packaged in consideration of positive or negative face. These violations manifest in the deliberate deployment of language in such a manner that it poses a threat to someone’s self-esteem. The exploitations of negative FSAs as portrayed in the text include the use of questions with modal verbs, options, hesitations, apologies and honorifics. The positive FSAs include preference of first name to title and speech convergence. The violations of politeness strategies are evidenced in the use of FTAs such as insult, peremptory command, embarrassment, overbearing interrogation, assault, undue

punishment and speech divergence. Having identified Adichie ‘as an uncompromising humanist who believes strongly in the strength of human relationship for the actualization of a peaceful, stable and progressive society’ (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu 2010: P. 58); this study submits that this trait of hers permeates *Half of a Yellow Sun*. She has voiced through *Half of a Yellow Sun*, her subscription to the view that considerate speakers in interacting with others should employ tact. This study also shows that recognizing politeness strategies as well as having optimum knowledge of pragmatics will help speakers to apply appropriate and tactful codes in speech events, and consequently promote peace, growth and development. It is recommended that people learn the social values of society in order to encode the appropriate politeness strategy for mutual acceptability. From the findings, this study

totally agrees with Holmes (2008) that 243).
'converging towards the speech of another person
is usually considered a polite speech strategy' (p.

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