

Violations of Politeness Maxims in Language of Agitation in Select Nollywood Eco-Films in English

Rosecolette Ngozi Ewurum & Ebere Mercy Chukwu

Department of General Studies. Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri.

Department of Languages & Communication. Abia State Polytechnic, Aba

Abstract

The language of agitation in select Nollywood eco-films in English is characterised by the violations of politeness principles. The oppression of the citizens in the oil regions of the Niger Delta has led to aggression and revolt by agitators over the negative and crippling situation with a form of language usage which can be identified as the language of altercation. This form of language usage is marked by the violations of politeness maxims, especially politeness as a real world goal. This study highlights the diverse types of politeness maxims violated in the two select Nollywood ecological films, which serve as the source of data for analysis. Fifty samples of interactions in the texts provide data for examining the variables identified. This study adopts the Leech (1983) and Thomas' (1995) 'Politeness Principles' models of conversational analysis to account for the deliberate flouting of all co-operations by the interlocutors in the bid to have a frontal verbal attack. This study, therefore, notes that there is highly marked violations of politeness maxims without mitigating strategies in the language of agitation in select Nollywood eco-films in English because while the powerful interlocutors try to intimidate to mitigate power and protect face, the less powerful interlocutors – the agitators, revolt and dish out face-threatening acts gratuitously in order to indict and humiliate agents of resource control and environmental man-handling. The analysis illustrates the oppression–aggression–attack strategy as justification for language usage in ecological films in English.

Keywords: Agitation, Nollywood, Eco-films, Politeness, Principles.

Introduction

This study sets out to examine the violations of politeness principles in the language of agitation over resource control and environmental man-handling in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, as expressed in the form of literary communication, film, a subgenre of drama. Resource control has been a burning issue, especially in discourse on national development and unity in Nigeria. Closely linked to this are environmental issues which have also rocked part of the Nigerian society over two decades now. Resource control and environmental man-handling have sparked off conflicts in oil regions where both legal and illegal explorations without compensations to owners of the land have evoked youths' restiveness. In order to gain wider audience, this imbroglio, as depicted in films, is often articulated in English. Nollywood films which deal with ecological issues stand to provide adequate data on the language of altercation.

Language is at the heart of all things human (O'Grady, Archibald and Katamba, 2011, p.1). Man seeks to be heard and understood. Language, consequently, is employed in almost every activity of man that it becomes difficult to

even imagine what our world would be like without language. Language is not just part of us, language defines us. "So much of what keeps people and societies together depends crucially on language" (Downes, 2008, p. 252). Language being the most versatile medium of communication among mankind in totality has its most significant role in the regulation and control of society. Osuafor (2003, p.6) sees language as totally dependent on the society in which it is used because:

- (i) language evolves in response to the specific demands of the society in which it is used;
- (ii) its use is entirely context-dependent.

Utterances and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of the words and expressions. Osuafor (2004, p.4) observes that language does not operate in a vacuum, situation humanises and actualises it." What man actually does is to vary language usage according to context. Much of what we hear and read depend on the physical background, time and place in which speech event takes place. Situational context refers

to the situation in which an expression can be employed. This is the case with the agitators in the select eco-films. The needs of their environment condition and shape their linguistic choices and language use. In this age when the world is enmeshed in chaos, this study sets out to examine the pragmatic features in language of agitation using a model of pragmatics propounded by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1995) to show how violations of politeness maxims generate conflict. This model of pragmatic analysis on politeness maxims are employed to show how agreement, pollyana, sympathy, approbation and generosity maxims are violated as indices of conflict to intimidate, indict, condemn, insult and humiliate the agents of resource control and environmental man-handling.

Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian home video, a sub-genre of drama, provides a veritable means of exploring and conveying the *raison d'être* for the agitation over resource control and environmental man-handling in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. However, no study has been conducted in this genre to reflect the issues of conflict from a pragmatic perspective. This informs the need to study the language of agitation and resource control in eco-films applying the method of pragmatics from a pragmatic perspective. Again, Eco-literature is relatively new in English studies. The majority of studies in this area often examine issues of ecological challenges from the literary and stylistic perspectives, but this study adopts a broader perspective, as it examines the issues from pragmatic violations of politeness maxims. Emphasis is not just on pragmatic forms but also an investigation seeks to highlight the socio-cultural and political variables that affect the linguistic forms and choices in ecological discourse. This study examines forms of expression in eco-films that portray conflicts revolving around topical issues in Niger Delta crises. An understanding of the interplay of language and actions as depicted in these eco-films will invariably provide some solution to issues relating to resource control and other related issues in the Niger Delta.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- examine how characters' utterances violate politeness as real world goal,
- highlight the various maxims of politeness violated in ecological discourse,
- assess the violations as weapons of protest against oppression of the powerful,
- highlight agitators' manipulations of language resources as a weapon of offence and defence.

Research Methodology

This research is a study of violations of politeness principles in language of agitation as depicted in two sampled Nollywood eco-films in English selected through stratified random sampling technique. This study examines and describes the forms of language employed in violation of politeness principles in ecological agitation. Representational approach is adopted to select the two films on resource control and environmental man-handling that serve as the primary source of data.

- Aniekwe Emmanuel (2008) *The Liquid Black Gold* (Parts 1 and 2)
- Ugezu U. and Offor Charles (2010) *Crude War* (Parts 1 and 2)

DVD player and DVD plates are used for extracting the excerpts from the ecological films that serve as data for this study. The rewinding or playback device and pause/hold technique mode facilitate extracting accurate data needed for the analysis. The facilities and devices employed helped in recording the accurate characters' utterances which constitute data for analysis in this study. Samples of data from these films are used to describe the discourse strategies employed in the violation of politeness principles in ecological agitation. The two films used as samples of language of agitation/conflict present similar lexical, syntactic and semantic features. Printed materials in the library and internet are also used as the secondary source of data.

The method of data analysis adopted in this research is pragmatic i.e. Leech's (1983) and Thomas' (1995) model. This method of pragmatic investigation aims at a systematic identification and classification of politeness principles violated in language of agitation in ecological discourse. The pragmatic analyses are done in this order:

- (i) extracts of characters' utterances from two Nollywood eco-films in English are selected and transcribed;
- (ii) from the transcriptions, the linguistic structures that violate the politeness maxims are classified according to the type of maxims violated and;
- (iii) a descriptive analysis of the data based on the emerging patterns is done.

Theoretical Clarifications

This study is hinged on the theoretical frameworks propounded by Goffman (1967), Leech (1983) and Thomas (1995) on politeness principles. Politeness principles is another pragmatic concept which according to Leech (1983) is "verbal and non-verbal behaviour which help in maintaining harmonious relations". Brown and Levinson (2005) see Politeness Principle also "as verbal and non-verbal behaviour that make a person maintain face in a conversation". Politeness principles bind cordial relationships between participants firmly, and, according to Adegbija (2011, p. 52), politeness principle is "the oil that lubricates the channels of communication." Politeness involves taking account of the feelings of others. It is also socially prescribed. Wardhaugh (2000, p. 291) asserts that we must constantly adjust to others in our social relationships, and we must do that in ways each society deems appropriate to its existence and functioning. This implies that politeness is culturally determined. What constitutes positive politeness in one culture may be termed impolite in another.

There are two kinds of politeness – positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness is solidarity oriented. It emphasises shared attitudes and values. Positive politeness leads to moves targeted at to achieving solidarity through offers of friendship, use of compliments, and informal language use: "we treat others as friends and allies, do not impose on them, never threaten their face." When the boss suggests that a subordinate should use first name (FN) to her, this is a positive politeness move, expressing solidarity and minimising status difference (Holmes 2008, p. 281). Negative politeness involves expressing oneself appropriately in terms of social distance and respecting status difference. Using title + last name (TLN) to one's superiors, and to older

people that one does not know well, are further examples of the expression of negative politeness. Negative politeness leads to deference, apologising, indirectness and formality in language use. Being polite means getting the linguistic expression of social distance right as far as one's addressee is concerned. Thomas (1995) identifies five principles in politeness which are:

- (a) Politeness as a real world goal.
This depicts politeness as genuine desire to be pleasant.
- (b) Deference
Deference is the respect or honour that we give or show others by virtue of their age, social status, and economic status (Thomas, 1995, p. 150). Deference accounts for the honorifics we accord people like Prof, Chief, Sir, Oba, Dr, Emir, Chairman, Your majesty, etc.
- (c) Register
Register refers to the systematic variation in relation to social context (Lyons, 2011, p. 584).
- (d) Politeness as an illocutionary phenomenon
- (e) Politeness as a surface level phenomenon (Aremu & Alayande, 2011, p. 144).

Leech (1983) identifies seven politeness maxims:

- I. The Tact Maxim
The tact maxim states that a speaker should: 'minimise the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other'.
- II. The Generosity Maxim
'Minimise the expression of benefit to self; maximise the expression of cost to self'
- III. The Approbation Maxim
'Minimise the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other, maximise the expression of beliefs which express approval of other'
"Heaping praise on oneself, even where it is merited, is considered bad form. This maxim facilitates the deflection of praise onto others." (O'Grady, Archibald and Katamba, 2011, p.233).
- IV. The Modesty Maxim

- ‘Minimise the expression of praise of self; maximise the expression of dispraise of self’
- V. The Agreement Maxim
‘Minimise the expression of disagreement between self and other; maximise the expression of agreement between self and other.
- VI. Sympathy Maxim
‘Minimise antipathy between self and other; maximise sympathy between self and other.
- VII. The Pollyanna Principle
The Pollyanna principle states that people should look at the bright side instead of the gloomy side in commenting about others.
This maxim is also responsible for why no bad thing is said about the dead even if the dead one was a witch.

Face-threatening act is propounded by Goffman (1967) and Brown and Levinson (1987). Face is a property that all human beings possess that is broadly comparable to self-esteem. Brown and Levinson (1987) identified two kinds of face – positive and negative face. Positive face is a person’s wish to be well thought of. Its manifestation includes the desire to have others admire what we value, the desire to be understood by others, and the desire to be treated as a friend and confidant. Negative face is one’s wish not to

Data Presentation and analysis

Wardhaugh (2010, p.291) asserts that “we must not always be polite, for we may be quite impolite to others on occasion.” However, we could not be so if there were no rules of politeness to be broken. Impoliteness depends on the existence of standards, or norms of politeness. Different societies employ different strategies to achieve politeness. Samples of data that depict violations of the various maxims of politeness as x-rayed in ecological discourse are explicated below.

Violation of Agreement Maxims

Some of the sampled data illustrate interlocutors’ violation of agreement maxims

- A1, U1. King: What has come over you? Why have you turned the objects you are meant to protect into politics?
- A1, U2. Ebinkpade: Your majesty, my brothers and I fight only to stay alive. We do not fight to kill. We have been seriously exploited and **our noble struggle** has been turned against us by the same villains who amass the wealth of our people. As I talk to you, your majesty, six of our men are in prison. Close relations of ours are taken hostage. What do we do then? Sit down and fold our arms? No, your majesty. No! We will fight. This is a fight for survival. We will fight. This is a fight for survival. We will fight, we will fight to stay alive. We will fight.
- A1, U3. Chief Ebie: And fight, you will see Ebinkpade. I will do everything in my power to ensure that the fortune of this community is not thwarted by you and your greedy escapades. Yes, I will do everything.
- A1, U4. Ebinkpade: Alright Chief, I will wait for you then. I will play host to you and your partners in

be imposed on by others and to be allowed to go about one’s business unimpeded and with one’s rights to be free and self-determined action intact (Mey, 2010). Considerate people to a long extent take into account or consider addressee’s need to be well regarded and “their right not to be humiliated” (Grundy, 2008, p.118). The reverse is the case in ecological discourse as there is a deliberate attempt to be confrontational and make people considered to be agents of pain to their people lose face.

Because speech events regularly include both a speaker and a listener, it is not surprising that language is particularly sensitive, in the rules for speech use, to the relations between the two parties. The choice of an appropriate message form can be modified to express a wide range of attitudes of the language user to the listener. One can pass information that can define one’s attitude to the listener and the importance one accords to discourse participant. Politeness consists of this recognition of the listener and his or her rights in the situation (Spolsky, 2008, p. 19). There are situational constraints that influence speakers in their application of politeness principles. These constraints are being examined in the data analysis.

- crime. I will wait for you.
A1, U5. Chief Ebie: Your downfall is about to come.
A1, U6. Biokpo: Nothing Chief, you will learn more lessons if by three days our men are not released.
As for you Sekegbo, Sekegbo (*They swing into a fight and the king pushes them out of his palace.*)

Three interlocutors – the king, Ebinkpade and Chief Ebie are involved in this discourse. The altercation centres on the imbroglio in Zeide community. Ebinkpade, in a turn-taking strategy, deploys declarative and interrogative sentences to deliberately violate the agreement politeness maxim in explicating the agitators' reason for the struggle in (A1, U2). Corrupt practices are portrayed in different garbs ranging from greed, selfishness, self-aggrandizement, betrayal, neglect of public interest and exploitation of the already suffering masses. The interrogatives convey the speaker's emotion and attitude towards the situation. It renders discourse judgemental. In the confrontational meeting, he wants viewers to condemn the act from his perspective and see the *raison d'être* (our noble struggle) for their bitterness. Considering the king's power and relative social status, Ebinkpade's choice of interrogative directed at the king violates politeness as real-world goal. It is confrontational and depicts minus power deferential (- power deferential) as the speaker of lower power challenges the one with higher power and status to revolt. In his choice of negation marker 'no' in answer to the interrogative he posed to the king in "What do we do then? Sit down and fold our arms? No, your majesty. No!" resistance. 'No' in the context of ecological discourse is a protest marker designed to register the negotiators' bitterness and dissatisfaction over the ill-treatment they receive from the oil companies' representatives and the police who are agents of intimidation. The use of the negation marker 'no' in response to the king's question reveals the neglect of the relevance of relative status as a major characteristic of language of agitation. The linguistic choices reflect breaches of co-operative and politeness principle. No + the interjection reflect:

- protest
- defiance
- intolerance
- antagonism

- assertion
- 'No' + interjection marker '!' which is indicative of vehemence – a firm resolve to carry out destructive action violates the agreement maxim to foreground protest. The uptake is 'fight'. They have reached their elastic limit in endurance and they are now poised to disregard and challenge the powers that be and register their dissatisfaction over the activities of the agents of resource control and environmental man-handling, even at the expense of their lives. The use of interjection for agitation captures the attitude and feeling of anger of the leader of the agitators to foreground revolt. The interjections in the above excerpts convey the weight of the psychological context enforced by the repetition of the negation marker 'no' to emphasise their defiance and stance.

Furthermore, Ebinkpade's repetition of the simple declarative sentence "We will fight" five times in A1, U2 conveys serious threat that maximises disagreement in order to communicate his firm resolve for mutiny as the last alternative that nothing or nobody can stop. 'We' + 'will' conveys strong determination. The repetition of these simple sentences is situation-laden in conveying the altercative mode that characterizes disagreement in language of agitation. These simple emphatic sentences connote challenge to the authority and so flout politeness as illocutionary phenomenon.

Chief Ebie's utterance in A1, U3 is insult-laden as he threatens to frustrate Ebinkpade's moves in the struggle to get what is his people's right. One with background knowledge of the activities of the conflict entrepreneurs realises that Chief Ebie's cantankerous threats are meant to achieve his own selfish end. He violates the generosity maxim as well as the agreement maxim in threatening to fight and thwart Ebinkpade's goals. He employs verbal bullying in calling Ebinkpade 'greedy' in maximising disagreement between Ebinkpade and himself

Ebinkpade in turn in utterance (A1,4)

ridicules him back with matching verbal insult by telling him that he will play host to him and his “partners in crime”. Ebinkpade’s choice of derogatory tag for a chief is insulting and face threatening. For a young man to call a chief names and adopt intentional verbal insult and hinting strategy in calling him a rogue is a violation of politeness as illocutionary phenomenon. Repeating “I will wait for you” is challenging the authority of the elderly one and neglecting the

status difference. It is a threat as well. Ebinkpade’s choice of intentional insult serves as a weapon of offence, defense and assertion of their rights. His linguistic choices depict zero solidarity. The marked threats, counter threats and verbal insults employed in the above discourse are clear instances of violations of agreement maxims to indicate revolt and dissatisfaction over prevalent events in the oil region.

Another instance of violation of agreement maxim includes the discourse between the king and Tamuno, the leader of the agitators, in *Crude War*.

B1, U7 Tamuno: Now listen to me attentively.

B1, U8 King: (*Interrupts him*) Who is this? How dare you talk to me like that?

B1, U9 Tamuno: Does it look like I care who or what you are? The next time you interrupt me when I am talking, I am going to slide the bullet right through your son’s drug addicted body and I will cause him a permanent disability.

In the discourse embodied in utterances (B1, 7, 8 and 9), two interlocutors, Tamuno, the leader of the agitators in *Crude War I* and the King are involved. The altercation between the king and Tamuno depicts violation of agreement maxim as well as politeness as a real world goal to register revolt. The king questions Tamuno’s authority in speaking to him contemptuously and Tamuno challenges the king too. Tamuno’s lexical choice is a calculated attempt at being unpleasant to one of higher social status in order to show zero solidarity because of the king’s oppression of his subjects in confiscating their landed property. Tamuno adopts intentional insult to scorn the king’s higher status in line 1 of utterance (9) “Does it look like I care who or what you are?” He follows the aggressive attack with threat of killing the Prince whom they have already abducted even if it costs his life in order to revenge. In language of agitation, the risk of hurting the other is jettisoned. In this instance, there is also a marked reversal of authority. The one of the lower status browbeats the one with higher status to show neglect of status difference thereby violating politeness as real world goal as well.

Ebinkpade adopts a frontal attack in shouting the king down and banning the other’s right to conversational turn as he insists and orders for the king’s respect of his domination of conversational turn. ‘The next time you interrupt

me when I am talking, I am going to slide the bullet right through your son’s drug addicted body and I will cause him a permanent disability” (B1, U9). His ordering the king around is potentially face-damaging. The king’s face right is markedly threatened in this interaction. His preference for conflict to hurt back the king for exploiting the masses costs the king’s face the more. The choice of expressions by the two parties show a deliberate flouting of the agreement politeness principle effected by the use of interrogatives as violation of adjacency pair sequence’ to cause offence. In the normal adjacency pair sequence which is a kind of paired utterances’ sequency rules in interaction, question leads to answer, greeting leads to greeting and so on (Levinson, 2005, p.303), but the reverse is the case in language of agitation as interrogative begets interrogatives. The next pair part in the king’s interrogative is officially absent because the next pair part is a deviation. It is an interrogative characterised as a deliberate flouting of all cooperation because the interlocutor wants to cause offence and consequently is willing to sacrifice both politeness and cooperation to the higher objective. The violation of ‘adjacency pair sequence’ portends disagreement. By adopting verbal confrontation to minimise agreement and maximise disagreement between self and other, the interlocutors violate the agreement maxim to register revolt and make their oppressors lose their

face.

the bright side instead of the gloomy side in commenting about others. This accounts for why no bad thing should be spoken about the dead even if he or she were a witch. Samples of data reflecting violations of Pollyanna maxims include:

Violation of Pollyana Maxim

Some of the utterances in the data show instances of the violation of pollyana maxim. Pollyanna principle states that people often look at

- A1, U10 Timi: Please may I know who you are and your mission in this town?
A1, U11 Andrew: We are here to bury my father.
A1, U12 Timi: Please what is your name, sir?
A1, U13 Andrew: My name is Andrew Dagogo.
A1, U14 Timi: Dagogo! Is Chief Dagogo dead?
A1, U15 Andrew: Yes.
A1, U16 Timi: Well, I am sorry, you cannot bury him here.
A1, U17 Andrew: In this village? Young man, you must be joking. We are from this village. Well, we have done the wake keep and church service in Warri. We are here for the interment or are you going to deny us that rite?
A1, U18 Timi: He ran away during the war and with all his riches he never did anything to stop the war. Since he went to a strange land, then bury him there too. Are you aware that there has been war in Okorinkoko village? Go, bury him in the town, he betrayed us.

In the above discourse, two interlocutors, Timi, the leader of the agitators or militant, and Andrew, the son of Chief Dagogo, one of the most affluent men in Okorinkoko, are involved. The propositional content of an argument is over the denial of the burial rite of Chief Dagogo. Timi's lexical choices show a deliberate flouting of the Pollyana maxim as shown in Text (A1, U18). Timi is deliberately judgemental on the dead and accuses him of neglect and betrayal. He consequently looks at the gloomy side instead of the bright side in commenting about the dead. At the same time, the

optionality scale which is the amount of choice 's' (speaker) allows 'h' (hearer) in declining doing action is in low consideration. There is also disrespect of the socio-cultural norm that the dead must not be condemned in the public. Language influences not only our culture and our cultures shapes not only our world view or perception, but also language. Timi speaks evil about the late Chief Dagogo and shows no sympathy in denying him burial rite even in his own home town. He also flouts the pollyanna maxim as well as the sympathy maxim.

Other samples depicting deliberate flouting of the Pollyana Principle include:

- B1, U 19 Timi: It is Senegbo, he is dead. They killed him.
B1, U 20 Classmate 2: They killed my uncle last night. Okorinkoko, we are finished.
B1, U21 Classmate 1: See eh! They even captured my brother yesterday. Here is not safe for us. We have to leave.
B1, U 22 Emeka: Well, I am Emeka Chibueze, a reporter from EMTV and also an eye witness to the ugly event going on. My report states that the police have killed the innocent villages in masses and also rendered children fatherless.
B1, U 23 Rev. Fr.: Ladies and gentlemen, I have some pictures of the corpses I snapped by myself (*He brings out some pictures passing it round from one member to another*) Do they look like policemen? Definitely not! Well, Inspector Femi just said that everyday, he losses not less than four offices and men. But, I am telling you that we have lost eighty villagers in one week. This is terrible. Please, you have to do something very fast, these reports you are getting are really an under estimate of what is really going on in Okorinkoko Village. Nobody is safe again. Nobody is safe again.

The examples discussed violate the Pollyana Principles because they look at the gloomy side instead of the bright side of life. Excerpt (B1, U20) presupposes that the agitators have meaningless existence - "We are

finished”. The arbitrary killings by the police left the people forlorn. The insecurity of lives makes it impossible to look at the brighter side of anything in ecological discourse. The Pollyana Principle is violated to foreground the danger and insecurity that characterise the environment in the Reverend Father’s use of repetition – ‘Nobody is safe again. Nobody is safe again. The fear nursed by all in Okorinkoko village is articulated in the violation of this maxim.

Violation of Approbation Maxim

A1, U24 Ebinkpade’s wife: I’m listening, tell me about your brothers and sisters that you kill and kidnap.

A1, U25 Ebinkpade: They are just a lucky few that the community vested with the power to represent us before the oil companies because of the several hardships that oil exploration has brought on our people. Chief Ebie, Chief Zeide and Paul, a retired school teacher, they have become so rich, they are even richer than the king and they saw this assignment as an opportunity to enrich themselves while shutting their ears to the plights of our people.

A1, U26 Ebinkpade’s wife: How, how exactly?

A1, U27 Ebinkpade: Because they determined who gets employed into the oil companies’ in-service training, in a dire quest to have their children enrolled in the training programme, in order for them to get the jobs of the oil companies as attention was not paid to merit or excellence, many helpless women became vulnerable to the atrocities of this evil minded men. And then to the issue of pollution, our fishing creeks were polluted. The entire streams and rivers spilled with oil waste, and the fishes were dying in their numbers. And there came the problem of **water scarcity**. Our only source of drinking water was a stream and they polluted the stream with their oil spillage. There was no water to drink. It was terrible. Hence, we set out on rampage, seeking to be heard for the first time. We wanted our voices to be heard and the only way we could attract attention was to fight, fight.

A1, U28 Laifa: (*To the king*) His majesty, our people are suffering. Look at us with our kegs. Yet, no clean water to drink because of pollution. So here are our youths with our nets but no fish to catch. All the creeks have been poisoned by pollution. Our old men are dying of dehydration and our younger one dying of different forms of malnutrition diseases. Even our youths can no longer go on with their schooling. We are asking them, what have we done to the oil companies and our brother representatives before them to deserve this kind of neglect. Your majesty, please, please, I beg, we beg and we ask to know why.

A1, U29 Ebinkpade: In addition your majesty, our mothers and sisters have become objects of sexual abuse in the hands of those who represent us before the white man simply because they determine who gets a hold into the white man’s training as jobs. What of our lands, our farm lands that have been put into use by the white man and his oil companies. Are they not going to be compensated for that? We want answers your majesty.

The grouse about the injustice fanned by the greed and avarice of not just the government and the multinational oil companies, but their brother representatives makes the agitators maximise the disapproval of these agents of pain and consequently violate the approbation maxim in this context. The agitators condemn their representatives’ exploitation of the already exploited people – “... Many helpless women became vulnerable to the atrocities of these evil-minded men” (A1, U27). They condemn the

pollution of their streams by the oil companies, the non-payment of royalties, the denials of educational opportunities – “even our youths can no longer go on with their schooling (A1, U28). The third person, ‘they’ used in utterance A1, 25 cataphorically refers to Chief Ebie, Chief Zeide and Paul who are seen as agents of their people’s pain. Ebinkpade’s use of ‘they’ has a gestural deictic implication for indictment. His action, in specifically naming the culprits in utterance (A1, 25), is based on existential presupposition that

‘they’ and ‘them’ used deictically in the above excerpts serve ‘pointing’ and indicting roles. The interlocutors are disgusted with the actions of those at the hem of affairs and judgmentally disprove their atrocities, thereby violating the approbation maxim – as can be seen in utterance (A1, 27). ”Our only source of drinking water was a stream and they polluted the stream with their oil spillage.” “In addition your majesty, our mothers and sisters have become objects of sexual abuse in the hands of those who represent us before the white man simply because they determine who

gets a hold into the white man’s training as jobs” (A1, U27). Ebinkpade’s choice of expressions accusingly disapproves the violations of his people’s rights and denials of social amenities by the oil exploration companies, the conniving Nigerian government and their own brother representatives. He minces no words in the grouse about their oppression and exploitation of the oil region people. In so doing, approbation maxim as well as politeness as illocutionary phenomenon is also violated.

Another sample reflecting violation of approbation maxim includes the discourse below:

- B1, U30 D.P.O.: The result of your father’s autopsy is out. There was no bullet in your father’s corpse which is contrary to what your brother said. That’s it.
- B1. U31 Tamuno: No, no, no, you arranged all these.
- B1. U32 D.P.O: I don’t know what you are talking about.
- B1. U33 Tamuno: Why do you have to do evil instead of doing good? We all cry about our country Nigeria, how we want it to be, how we want it to change ehh. We wail about the governance of our country, our people and now you have a small opportunity to do a big change, small opportunity that can result to a huge difference and you just filter it away.
- B1. U34 D.P.O: Mr Tamuno, I don’t understand what you are saying.
- B1. U35 Tamuno: Do you realize that my father is one in a million and that anybody’s father can be killed in this country and absolutely nothing will be done about that? Do you realise that?
- B1. U36 D.P.O.: Look, my father died a long time ago, and I didn’t claim anybody killed him.
- B1. U37 Tamuno: What about your children’s father? You don’t think it can happen to him? Sir, this is not the end of this matter. Do you hear me? It is only a fool that thinks that he can do everything with money and so he chooses money over everything. This is not the end of this matter.

The discourse above involves Tamuno, the leader of the agitators **whose** father was killed by the order of the king and the D.P.O who covered the crime to favour the king. He had just announced to Tamuno that the autopsy revealed that his father was not shot as no bullet was found in his corpse. Tamuno’s choice of interrogative in the discourse was judgemental and condemnatory in maximising the disapproval of the D.P.O’s action. His utterances in this discourse violate the approbation maxim and at the same time violates politeness as illocutionary phenomenon in registering his protest over the D. P. O’s **Violation of Sympathy Maxim**

manipulation of justice. His last sentence in utterance (B1, U37) portends threat. The social status of the D. P. O. is neglected resulting in minus power deferential (-power deferential). His utterances are indicative of zero solidarity to show offence. The agitator’s lexical choices reflect the use of language to cause offence and to achieve defence for their action. In criticising the D. P. O’s action to his face, he minimizes dispraise of the other and maximises the disapproval of the D. P. O. and consequently violates the approbation maxim.

The utterances in the data that show instances of violation of sympathy maxim are stated below. The sympathy maxim demands that **interlocutors** should “minimise antipathy between self and other; and maximise sympathy between self and other.”

A1, U38 Pade: Welcome.

A1, U39 Militant 4: Pade, what are you doing in my house? What do you want from me? (*Biokpo pushes*

- him into the room from the back trying to strangle him.)* What have I done, what have I done eeh? Please don't kill me please.
- A1, U40 Pade: Shut up! I have always looked forward to this day (*Militant 4 starts crying and tries to run away but Biokpo pushes him back on the bed*) when I will grab your balls and crush them with my bare hands.
- A1, U41 Militant 4: Uncle Pade, remember when you used to send me on errands. When I used to go, Uncle Biokpo, please have mercy on me.
- A1, U42 Pade: I would have liked Laifa to do this by himself.
- A1, U43 Militant 4: Aaah Laifa!
- A1, U44 Pade: Unfortunately, he is not here. So I will do it myself. (*He brings out his knife and stabs Militant 4. He screams and Biokpo shoots him.*)

The above discourse involves Ebinkpade, Biokpo, Pade and Militant 4 who cross carpeted to the enemy camp – the king's camp. They wait to kill him in his house. All his entreaties for pardon fell on deaf ears. The last thing the agitators will do while on revenge mission is to listen to entreaties or pleas. By closing their ears to pleadings, they minimise sympathy and maximise antipathy between self and others, thereby violating the sympathy maxim.

Conclusion

Language use in ecological discourse is characterised by violations of politeness maxims to register revolt and show zero solidarity. Agitators use the highest frequency of violation of agreement maxim neglecting social status and solidarity. It is discovered that the agitators violate the agreement, approbation, sympathy and pollyanna maxims to register their revolt, criticism and disillusionment over agents of resource control and environmental man-handling. On the other hand, the conflict entrepreneur violates tact and generosity maxims to intimidate others in order to achieve their own gains.

From the pragmatic study conducted, it has been revealed that there are highly marked violations of the, agreement, pollyanna, approbation and sympathy maxims in the bid by the agitators to bluntly revolt and express their dissatisfaction over the confiscation of their land. Consequently, they adopt the violations of the politeness maxims to indict and humiliate agents of resource control and environmental man-handling. From the study, it is also evident that language is a context-dependent phenomenon. Context to a large extent determines so much of what is conveyed in utterances in communication situations; the situation prevalent in any discourse affects linguistic choices. Inappropriate linguistic usages that are considered rude characterise the language of agitation in select Nollywood eco-

films. The oppression of the citizens in the resource control maximized by the kings and their cohorts in confiscating people's landed property without compensation in the oil regions leads to aggression and revolt by agitators over the situation with the language of altercation. This form of language culminated in violations of politeness maxims. This study proffers the Deprivation/Oppression aggression revolt attack strategy as explanation for the unique language use in Nollywood eco-films in English. When people are oppressed, the consequence of the oppression is aggression which is expressed in revolt articulated with verbal attack which disregards existing standards and norms of politeness in order to indict, condemn and humiliate agents of their pains.

In language of agitation the use of honorifics like Your majesty, or Chief or D. P.O. does not index solidarity and deference as the agitators treat them to disrespect and antagonistically deride these high status personalities. The address forms do not reflect reverence otherwise how can one call a king your majesty and at the same time call him a beast – your majesty, you are a beast.

Recommendation

Information from this study points out to the need for more studies to be conducted in conflict resolutions so that Nigeria and the global communities will learn lexemes and expressions

that can be deployed in resolving conflict since words can make or mar; words can cause conflict and words can resolve conflict. Interlocutors need to learn the relevance of exploiting the maxims of politeness as lubricants to the wheel of communication to avoid conflict. The teachers of

English as second language need to incorporate passages on conflict and conflict resolution in comprehension passages to teach the dangers in wrong linguistic choices and usages as indices of conflict.

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