

The Pragmatics of Politeness in Kofi Awoonor's "*This Earth, My Brother...*" and "*Comes The Voyager At Last*"

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Abstract

Politeness deals with the processes that involve the social face of those engaged in interactions. Studies on politeness in diverse contexts have considered face to face interaction and other discourse events and have identified aspects of politeness marking in print media political interviews, doctor-client relationship, greetings amongst tribes in Nigeria, Im/politeness in Religious Discourse, amongst others. We are however uncertain of how this notion of politeness is expressed in the literary works of Kofi Awoonor. Hence, this study investigates Awoonor's two novels: '*This Earth, My Brother...*' and '*Comes the Voyager at Last*' to determine how politeness marking construes and enhances understanding of the texts. The study adopts Brown and Levinson (1987) aspects of self-image: Positive and Negative face to determine how people present themselves and other in speech. The study finds that face saving act featured in instances of greetings and banter especially in presenting self-image, while face threatening acts occurred mostly in challenging corruption particularly to the face of others. An understanding of the main tenets of politeness is essential therefore, for the proper understanding of the study texts and meaning generally.

Keywords: *Politeness, Implicature, Speech Acts, Pragmatics, Kofi Awoonor*

Introduction

The linguistic manifestation of politeness refers to the aspect of a speaker's social behaviour which shows deference towards the wishes and concerns of the addressee. The whole principle involves maximising deference in exchanges such as employing indirect speech acts or using formal address terms. This strategy aims at achieving goals such as, to save the face of the addressee. The term face refers to the public self-image of speakers and can be subdivided into: positive face, which refers to an individual's wish to be respected and appreciated by others; and negative face, which refers to the wish not to be restricted or impeded in the choices one makes concerning social behaviour, (Mey, 2001:27). Politeness is hence understood as a means of showing awareness of another's face.

Social behaviour can constitute face-saving acts by being deferential to others, emphasizing the importance of their wishes and concerns. On the contrary, a face-threatening act tends to encroach on another's freedom of action and may be interpreted as an imposition or indeed an insult. There are many linguistic strategies for minimising the threat to negative face, for instance, by apologizing in advance for disturbing someone, and for maximising the enhancement of positive face. For instance, by pointing out a common interest in some suggestions made to an addressee, (Grundy, 2008:67). Languages provide devices or strategies for reducing the potential loss of face in social interactions. For instance, hedges

are devices used in conversations that serve the purpose of weakening the force of a statement, e.g. 'He is perhaps the culprit after all'. 'Could you possibly give me a hand?' 'He's not up to scratch, I suppose. She won't leave us, will she? The face of one's interlocutor can be supported in conversation by back-channelling, a strategy in communication whereby the listener confirms his/her attention to what the other person is saying, (Lakoff's, 1973).

Statement of the problem

Previous studies like Odebunmi (2009) and (2013), Olaniyi (2017), Kareen (2018), Ayeloja and Alabi (2018), have investigated various aspects of politeness in print media political interviews, doctor-client relationship, Illorin greetings in Nigeria, Im/politeness in Muslim Discourse, and Discourse Functions in Doctor-Patient Verbal Interactions respectively. These studies have variously identified how discussants negotiate different approaches to deploy face-saving and face-threatening acts that adorn discourse interactions. We are however uncertain of how this notion of politeness is expressed in the literary works of Kofi Awoonor. This study thus, investigates politeness marking in the two novels of Kofi Awoonor: *This Earth My Brother* and *Comes the Voyager at Last*, in order to determine aspects of politeness marking in the texts and the significance of the politeness marking in the meaning making process in the texts. An understanding of this aspect of politeness will greatly enhance the total comprehension of meaning in the said texts.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate politeness as a pragmatic principle and how it enhances the construction and understanding of meaning in texts. The specific objectives are to:

- determine politeness marked as either positive or negative, and
- ascertain the meaning potential that is construed and understood from the context.

Research questions

To achieve the aforementioned aim and objectives, the following questions guided the prosecution of this study.

- What politeness markings are found in the selected texts?
- What meaning potentials are available in comprehending construed meaning in the texts?

Overview of conceptual and empirical literature

Grundy (2008) posits that politeness is not just about showing compliments but rather the use of language to create a context intended to match the addressee's notion of how he or she should be addressed. Therefore, being 'polite' is simply a way a speaker implicates a context that matches the one assumed by the hearer (144). Grundy (2008) also notes that if we do not see the relationship between us and the persons who address us as they do, we may be upset by the strategies they use, since these strategies imply the kind of relationship we have with them. According to Grundy, linguistic politeness is 'the function of language to imply the

most appropriate speaker-addressee relationship' (147). The politeness principle (PP) grew out of the weaknesses of the Co-operative Principles (CP). The politeness principle is generally considered a good complement to the CP. It is said to rescue the CP. For Leech, PP has a higher regulative value than CP; as being polite allows communication to be smooth and to continue in such a way that better cordiality is assured. However, he contends that both PP and CP have relative-overriding tendencies i.e. sometimes CP overrides PP, and vice-versa.

Other scholars who have explored the politeness principles are Brown and Levinson (1987). They are of the opinion that in order to enter into social relationships, we have to acknowledge and show an awareness of the "face", the "public self-image", the "sense of self", of the people we address. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory holds that people are motivated by their need to maintain their face. Simply put, face is "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (61). Stated in another way, face means roughly an individual's self-esteem. Fairclough (1989) sees politeness as "...part of concern from participants for each other's 'face' (wish to be liked, wish not to be imposed upon) and respect for status" (118). Brown and Levinson (1987) identify two aspects to this self-image: Positive face and Negative face. Positive face refers to our need to be accepted and liked by others and our need to feel that our social group shares common goals. Positive face also refers to the need to be appreciated by others, and to maintain a positive self-image. Face is considered to be a universal notion in any human society. As rational agents, conversational participants will ideally try to preserve both their own face and their interlocutors' face in a verbal interaction. When a speaker's face's wants are met, the individual is said to get his face saved; when the converse occurs, his face is said to be threatened. These events have been described as Face-Saving Acts (FSAs) and Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs) respectively.

Brown and Levinson (1987), further posit that face-threatening acts are illocutionary acts that are liable to damage or threaten the hearer's or readers' negative face. This happens, sometimes, when the hearer is insulted or when what the hearer holds dear is given disapproval or when an imposition is placed on the hearer's freedom. Sometimes, the illocutionary act may be potential to cause damage to the speaker's own positive face, negative face or both. Acts that threaten positive face include expressions of disapproval, accusations, criticisms, disagreements, and insults; those that threaten negative face include advice, orders, requests, suggestions, warnings; those that threaten both positive and negative face include complaints, interruptions, and threats. Furthermore, a second distinction can be made between acts that primarily threaten the speaker's face and those that primarily threaten the addressee's face. The speaker can threaten his or her own face by performing, for example, the acts of accepting compliments, expressing thanks, and making confessions. On the other hand, acts such as advice, reminding, and strong expression of emotions threaten primarily the addressee's face wants (67-68).

Leech (1983) identifies six different maxims of politeness which tend to go in pairs as follows:

- Tact Maxim (in impositives and commissives)
Minimize cost to other [(b) Maximize benefit to other]
- Generosity Maxim (in impositives and Commissives)
Minimize benefit to self [(b) Maximize cost to self]
- Approbation Maxim (in expressives and assertives)

- Minimize dispraise of other [(b) maximize praise of other]
 - Modesty Maxim (in expressive and assertives)
 - Minimize praise of self [(b) Maximize dispraise of self]
 - Agreement Maxim (in assertives)
 - Minimize disagreement between self and other [(b) Maximize agreement between self and other]
 - Sympathy Maxim (in assertives)
 - Minimize antipathy between self and other [(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other]
- (132)

Empirical review of literature

Previous studies on politeness marking include: Odebunmi (2009) and (2013), Olaniyi (2017), Kareen (2018), Ayeloja and Alabi (2018). While investigating politeness marking in the print media with a focus on political interviews in the Nigerian context, Odebunmi (2009) identifies that in achieving politeness, participants in print media political interviews particularly in Nigeria work on three contextual beliefs: shared knowledge of subjects, shared knowledge of political gimmicks, and shared knowledge of ideological expectations. He identified that participants in the interviews put up tactful, polite and impolite verbal behaviours, which are respectively indexed by confrontations and criticisms, veils, and condemnations and accusations. These indexes are respectively shown to be achieved with context-based understanding of discourse and activity types, face-threatening acts with redress, and face threatening acts without redress (bald on record). The paper looks at real life events as people negotiate politeness marking; the current study seeks to investigate fictional works to determine how the author imbues this concept of politeness in the interactions of characters. Similarly, Odebunmi (2013) looks at greetings and politeness in Doctor-Client Encounters in Southwestern Nigeria. The study found that institutional and cultural (dis)alignments occur in respect of adjacency and non-adjacency pair greetings. In both greeting types, face support, threat and stasis are conjointly co-constituted by doctors and Yoruba clients within the affordances of the cultural, institutional and situational context of the Southwestern Nigerian hospital setting. While this study is context and culture specific, as it deals with what obtains in the south-west region of Nigeria, this study accounts for the same principles but within the context of fictional prose texts.

In a similar study, Olaniyi (2017) does a sociolinguistic study of politeness principle and Ilorin Greetings in Nigeria. The study saw greetings as one of the elements of politeness in the Nigerian community and how it influences the cultural characteristics of the people. Adopting the use of speech act theory and politeness principle and the pragmatic context it identified different types of greetings such as condolences, departure and arrival, rejoicing, daily greetings, casual greetings, and seasonal or festivity greetings as aspects of greeting amongst the people. It concluded that greetings are part of the culture of Ilorin people, and the failure to comply is an aberration. While this study focuses on forms of greeting as aspects of politeness marking the present investigate all aspects of politeness marking that found in the context of Kofi Awoonor's fictional prose narratives. On his part, Kareen (2018) investigates Friday Islamic sermons by looking at Im/politeness in Muslim Discourse. The study adopted a modified version of Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness as an analytical framework to interrogate the Friday Islamic sermons. The study discovers that the clerics use

several politeness strategies that are influenced by Yorùbá culture as they used the traditional Face Threatening Acts (FTAs), that manifest as conventional aggression and concludes that clerics are characteristically polite in their delivery of sermons. Whereas this study has its context from the religious setting, the present study will focus on fictional works of Kofi Awoonor to determine if the same politeness principles and expressed in the texts. On their part, Ayelaja and Alabi (2018) look at politeness as a discourse functions in Doctor-Patient Verbal Interactions at the University College Hospital, Ibadan, Nigeria. Adopting a synthesis of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Leech's politeness maxims, a number of recorded interactions of doctor-patient were transcribed and examined to determine politeness marking. The study identified aspects of politeness including Face-Threatening-Acts (FTA) with redress to correct unwholesome health practices. Tact maxim is used to express compassion; generosity maxim to offer advice; sympathy maxim to offer guidance. This study like the other reviewed before it equally falls within the context of medical discourse and established politeness marking as an aspect of the interactions. The present study comes outside of such context by investigating fictional works to also determine aspect of politeness marking in them.

Theoretical perspective

The study adopts Brown and Levinson's (1978) and (1987) politeness model, which is founded on the notions of 'face' as propounded by Goffman and "conversational logic" as proposed by Grice. "Face" refers to the wants of every person: (1) to be approved by others (positive face), and (2) to have his/her actions or thoughts unimpeded by others (negative face). The face-saving view of politeness places emphasis on the wants of the participants in a given interaction rather than on the interaction itself or the norms operating in society. Face is "something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Odeunmi, 2003). For instance, in apologizing, speakers acknowledge the addressee's face - not to be offended. Apologizing is thus face-threatening for the speaker and face-saving for the addressee. In contrast with negative politeness, positive politeness is an involvement-based approach made by the speaker to ratify, understand, approve of, and admire the positive image of the addressee (Odeunmi, 2003). Brown and Levinson (1987:75) refer to the function of positive politeness strategies as one of minimizing the potential threat of a face-saving-act (FSA) by assuring the addressee that the speaker (S) has a positive regard for him or her and wants at least some of the wants of the addressee. Holmes (1995) claims that, apologies can also function as positive politeness strategies for addressee (A), since (S) supports A's need for positive feelings and affirmation.

The pragmatic approach that is adopted in this study incorporates the linguistic theories of politeness that developed on the grounds of the Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) and the Theory of Implicature by Grice (1975). Austin's view of speech as social action made it possible to integrate politeness phenomena into linguistic pragmatics as an aspect of certain speech acts. Grice's theory of Conversational Implicature gave rise to the idea that politeness should be described in terms of conversational maxims. Geoffrey Leech's approach (1977, 1980, and 1983) is somewhat more sophisticated and embedded in a general theory of pragmatics. Like Lakoff, Leech (1983) assumes a politeness principle operating alongside Grice's cooperation principle and consisting of several politeness maxims. What is essential

in Leech's concept is the assumption that degrees of politeness can be measured by value scales, such as, an indirectness scale, a cost-benefit scale and a social distance scale. Politeness appears thus to be a gradable characteristic of certain types of speech acts. The most famous and most frequently applied approach to linguistic politeness is indisputably Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) face-theory. Like Lakoff and Leech, Brown and Levinson start from the assumption that Grice's theory is basically right and view politeness as a major reason for deviation from the conversational maxims. Face is seen as a twofold aspect of human identity, namely positive and negative face: positive face refers to the fact that individuals need to be integrated and accepted by the community, negative face relates to the individual's wants that her/his actions be unimpeded by the community (cf. Brown and Levinson [1987: 129]). Brown and Levinson regard human interaction as potentially face-threatening – and politeness as a means to reduce that threat. Although their original model includes five different politeness strategies, it is the twofold typology of positive and negative politeness that has proved most fruitful. Positive politeness refers to the politeness efforts that are directed at the interlocutor's positive face wants; negative politeness is in return paid to the negative face of discussants.

Methodology

The information and data used for this study were obtained from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were drawn from Kofi Awoonor's novels *This Earth, My Brother... (TEMB)* and *Comes the Voyager at Last (CTVAL)*. *This Earth, My Brother...* is centered mostly on Amamu's (the central character's) personal recollections and reflections, narrated in the main in the third person narrative by Amamu. The story is told in fragments, and traverses time and incorporates myth. It is at times intensely poetic and, at others, deeply pessimistic about the neo-colonial/post-colonial African state.

Comes the Voyager at Last on the other hand, is an evocative tale of slavery, a forced journey to the New World and subsequent return to the native land of Ghana. Kofi Awoonor demonstrates his poetic acumen in the prose narrative of a haunting tale of slavery, the forced journey of the African to the New World and his subsequent return to the native land. The novel demonstrates how life's forces of love and humanity in the face of devastating forces of destruction, racism and oppression characterise black people both on the continent and in the diaspora. In the novel, the mythic journey of the protagonist ends on the African soil, in a final act of reconciliation and atonement, in the miracle of love, in the affirmation of the black man's ultimate and enduring humanity. Secondary data consist of extant literature to accommodate conceptual and theoretical review.

A critical and close reading of the novels was done to identify and highlight aspects of politeness marking using Brown and Livinson (1987) approach through a qualitative approach. Overall, the study extracted twelve (12) and nine (9) aspects that reflected politeness marking in TEMB and CTVAL respectively and subjected to pragma-linguistic analysis to determine politeness marking.

Data Analysis

This section begins with a brief background on the author Kofi Awoonor, whose texts are being studied and an overview of the texts in questions before the analysis.

Background Information on the Author

Kofi Awoonor is a Ghanaian poet and play-writer and novelist. He was the son of a tailor and a grandson of a traditional singer of dirges or songs of lament in the Ewe culture. He was born in Wheta, Ghana in 1935, baptized in the Presbyterian faith and given the name George Awoonor-Williams. He was raised in his maternal extended family and exposed to Ewe traditional culture more than to Christianity. Awoonor attended the University of Ghana and graduated in 1960 after which he took up teaching in the same University. His first poetic work, "Rediscovery and other Poems" was published in Nigeria in 1964. Critic, Derek Wright noted that Awoonor's works "drew on a personal family heirloom and opened up a channel into a broader African heritage."

Apart from poetry, Awoonor has written plays and his first experimental novel is called *This Earth, My Brother...*. The novel mirrors Awoonor's own African upbringing and transplantation to the West. It mixes realistic narrative with poetic elements. In fact, Virginia Ola (1986) describes it as a "poetic lament fitted into the framework of a novel. This fact has earned it the name of a prose-poem, one which the author is not too happy about." In *This Earth My Brother...*, Awoonor uses lyrical structures alongside repetition of lines and segments; similar images and motifs also dominate his poetry and this novel. Awoonor says: "...you must see *This Earth, My Brother...* and my poetry as constituting the same continuous poetic statement about man and society." One of his most widely known poems "The Weaver Bird" is used to comment on the effects of European domination of Africa; "The Weaver Bird" is a creature that destroys the very tree in which it takes up residence. This means that the Europeans constituted more of a destructible pest on the African continent more than any good they professed to have brought about.

Awoonor spent a year in prison on his return from overseas; and while in prison, he wrote and published "*The House by The Sea*" which marked a new and more political direction in his work. Upon his release from prison, he taught at the Cape Coast University after which he became Ghana's Ambassador to Brazil in 1984, Ambassador to Cuba in 1988, then Ghana's Ambassador to the United Nations in 1990. His second novel, *Comes the Voyager at Last* was published in 1992 while he was still an Ambassador to the United Nations. He is considered one of Ghana's most important writers. Awoonor, unfortunately, was killed during the attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall on 21st September, 2013 in Nairobi-Kenya. He was one of the key participants at the four-day celebration of writing, thinking and storytelling. His remains were flown to Accra Ghana, on 25 September 2013, and cremated and buried in his hometown at Keta in the Volta Region. Awoonor had willed (before his death) that there should be no crying or mourning at his funeral and that was respected.

Synopsis of Kofi Awoonor's Novels
This Earth, My Brother...

The two hundred and thirty two-page novel is set in a Ghanaian rural coastal fishing community. This allegorical tale (as the writer himself indicated early in the dedication section) about Amamu, has its main focus on Ghana's capital city of Accra. Through the flash back narrative technique, the story relates Amamu's early years as a boy growing up in a rural coastal world of fishermen. Later he leaves home at the age of eight to attend a primary school in another town. The narrative also includes his secondary school days in the colonial Gold Coast, his education as a legal student in England, and his return to work in a private legal practice in Accra, Ghana.

As a brilliant young lawyer, in his mid-thirties, he uses his wealth of knowledge to secure the rights of some rural dwellers from being dispossessed of their landed property by foreign diamond prospectors. Amamu equally uses his service as a lawyer to free some traumatized and helpless individuals from the hand of the law, including Adisa, with whom he once had an occasional but intimate relationship. Most of his happy moments were those spent fantasizing about his woman of the sea, his beloved who died a long time ago. Being visionary with a brooding, melancholic mood, Amamu is evidently a lonely and unhappy man because of the corrupt, materialistic society in which he finds himself. Even his marriage to a middle-class Ghanaian lady while in England has no auspicious prospects. Ultimately, feelings of loneliness and alienation drive him to despair, madness and death.

The story portrays Awoonor's voluntary exile from his homeland and his eventual return. Typified in the main character, Amamu the young lawyer in the novel, Awoonor tries to come to terms with realities that surfaced after independence from the colonialists in Ghana. By and large the text portrays how attempts are made by people to reconcile themselves with themselves.

Comes the Voyager at Last

Comes the Voyager at Last, a one hundred and thirty eight-page novel, contains three parallel narratives. The first narrator is a poor black American whose experiences during the 1950s fall into the familiar pattern of social deprivation, wrongful arrest and imprisonment, followed by conversion to Black Islam and a return to Africa. The second narrator is a garrulous and facetious Ghanaian intellectual and poet-broadcaster cloned from Awoonor's own public career. The two men meet in an Accra nightclub where the American, now called Brother Lumumba, gets into a fight with two white expatriates and ends up knifing their African friend. The unnamed Ghanaian manages to spirit the fugitive away to his native village in Ewe-land where, in a sentimental ending, he is adopted back into the ancestral African fold. At the novel's climax, its twin narratives of return—the American Negro to Africa and the Westernized African intellectual to his native roots—converge in the black American's dream-consciousness and links up with a third narrative, that of a mythic southward journey of a slave caravan from desert to coast, which is interspersed with the primary narratives throughout the book in a series of interludes.

Analysis, Discussions and Findings

The analysis identifies features of politeness that are found in the researched texts and determines how aspects of face-saving and or face-threatening-acts are realised and or manifested in the texts. Some instances as identified in the texts are illustrated below.

1. Amamu had brought his coat from the back of his car. As he stood wondering where to hang it, Richard came forward and took it. Now let's have a drink, said Row, who could hardly keep his eyes opened, as he belched palm nut soup and fufu. How did it go? Bob asked, that blasted firm is a nest of criminals. I don't know how they do it. And our government sits mum and doesn't say a word. What do you think they should do? Alex asked a little vexedly. He had always resented lawyers and their airs.
TEMB pg. 29
2. Hmm. It was Bob changing his voice into whisper... Don't you know why they can't do it? Chop some make I chop some. They collect from them; ministers collect. I hear the big man himself is inside. Old Row belched rather loudly. Is that so? ...as for you, Row you behave as if you don't know. Are you not a policeman? How I go know. As for me, I be ordinary policeman o. He meant he didn't want any trouble, his pension and gratuity were coming, and he would have a long booze till death called him.
TEMB pg. 29
3. My father's illness had grown worse the past few days... I was irritated to no end by the long time he took dying, by the space he occupied in our hearts, and the censorious silence with which he observed our every move. What manner of a man was he that he will take such a long messy time to die? Did he have none of his earlier sense of honor and pride left to enable him get it over with fast and leave us in peace? There was a gloom that had descended over our moderately happy household since he took ill...Why must our lives be blighted and our youth suspended because our father was dying?
CTVAL pg. 17
4. A young shy girl, hardly seventeen or eighteen, entered the room after saying "agoo." She knelt down besides my uncle and whispered something in his ears. My uncle showed no sign of having heard what the girl said. Then she rose up and walked out. I knew most of my female relatives. But I had never set eyes on this one. I was struck by her beauty. She was very black; her skin was shiny. Her eyes were brightly lit, large, sleepy, like a little lake beneath cool bushes tucked away from the disturbing feet of men and beast...
CTVAL pg. 113

Text 1 presents multiple cases of politeness as typified in the researched text. We learn that "Amamu had brought his coat from the back of his car. As he stood wondering where to hang it, Richard came forward and took it. Now let's have a drink, said Row, who could hardly keep his eyes opened, as he belched palm nut soup and fufu. How did it go? Bob asked That blasted firm is a nest of criminals. I don't know how they do it. And our government sits mum and doesn't say a word. What do you think they should do? Alex asked a little vexedly. He had always resented lawyers and their airs." In the excerpt, we understand that a group of friends and associates are gathered in a pub for a timeout. During their pleasantries and interactions, we observe in the first underlined portion, a blatant case of tagging an entire firm of being a nest of criminals by a lawyer. This is an instance of a *face threatening act* which tends to without mincing words, attack the personality of another; this may be interpreted in other climes as an imposition or indeed an insult. Such blatant speaking constitutes a face

threatening act, an aspect of politeness marking, where the speaker is not mindful of how the listener or addressee feels by his/her speech. The speaker after attacking the firm in that manner turns to the government, and it is observed that he is a little milder in their criticism. Instead of out-rightly calling the government incompetent of managing and regulating its affairs which results in the decay in the firm in question, the speaker chooses to use the words 'and our government sits mum and doesn't say a word.' This mitigation of tone unlike in the first instance constitutes a face saving act; which is equally another case of politeness.

Similarly, the next scenario in the excerpt is an instance of a situation where one detests another, but tries to restrain one's-self by not showing one's inert feelings. In the excerpt, Alex in response to Amamu's comments on the firm and the government said, "What do you think they should do? Alex asked a little vexedly. He had always resented lawyers and their airs". It is clear from the text that the lawyer has just won a law suit and comes to the pub to celebrate his victory. Alex on his part is known to be resentful of lawyers generally, probably because he feels they pervert justice – making evil look good, and good evil. When in the excerpt the lawyer makes his remarks on the firm and the government, Alex conceals his resentment for the legal profession and appears receptive and accommodating. This act of concealing feelings and not appearing abusive and appearing receptive is the act of saving face which is an aspect of politeness.

Text 2 equally presents another instance of dual politeness marking. The excerpt states: "Hmm. It was Bob changing his voice into whisper... Don't you know why they can't do it? Chop some make I chop some. They collect from them; ministers collect. I hear the big man himself is inside. Old Row belched rather loudly. Is that so? ...as for you, Row you behave as if you don't know. Are you not a policeman? How I go know. As for me I be ordinary policeman o. He meant he didn't want any trouble, his pension and gratuity were coming, and he would have long booze till death called him." It could be argued here that, by Bob changing his voice from its audible nature to a whisper, is in itself an act of politeness marking, signifying that what he is about to say is not to be blared on the roof top. This was an attempt to save his face and avoid threatening the face of the one talked about in the whisper. He goes further to accuse the government official that the reason corruption still persists is because the officials themselves share in the loot, hence the reason for the blind-eye they turn to the fraud in its agencies. This accusation is what he makes in a hush sound – meaning 'don't say I told you' – an act of face-saving that amounts to politeness. Equally noteworthy is the way he tagged Old Row, the police officer, to get his reaction on the accusation, "is that not so? ...as for you, Row you behave as if you don't know. Are you not a policeman?" This appears to be a bit confrontational – a kind of face threatening act. It is like telling Old Row, you know these things now, you are part of them. The response of Row equally portrays a face saving act, where he chooses neither to agree with nor disagree with the assertion made by Bob against the government. His evasive response 'how I go know... I be ordinary policeman o.' meant he does not want any trouble and an act of face saving, which amounts to politeness.

Text 3 highlights yet other instances of face threatening acts. The excerpt reads: "My father's illness had grown worse the past few days... I was irritated to no end by the long time he took dying, by the space he occupied in our hearts, and the censorious silence with which he observed our every move. What manner of a man was he that he will take such a long messy time to die? Did he have none of his earlier sense of honor and pride left to enable him get it

over with fast and leave us in peace? ...There was a gloom that had descended over our moderately happy household since he took ill... why must our lives be blighted and our youth suspended because our father was dying?" In the context of the novel the speaker is unhappy with his relationship with his father, whom he regards as a bully and too much of an intruder into his life. Even when the father falls terminally ill, this son could not but wait for the father to pass-on, supposedly so he could have his space and peace. The father's sickness lingers for some time and the son believes he deliberately chooses his sickness and keeps living as a way of punishing the family, people he is supposed to love. Hence, in the excerpt the speaker expresses disgust as to why the father would not just die quickly and be forgotten. Instances such as the highlighted portions of the extract represent face threatening act that rebuffs the feeling(s) of the other. To declare that: "I was irritated to no end by the long time he took dying" with reference to one's father cannot be anything short of a face threatening act where someone dares the feelings and emotions of another. There are a couple of other instances with the excerpt that all lament the failure of the father to die quickly as anticipated by the son; all these are face threatening acts that constitute politeness principle.

Equally, Text 4 instantiates politeness marking as reflected in the study text. This is expressed in the form of attitude and posture. "A young shy girl, hardly seventeen or eighteen, entered the room after saying "agoo." She knelt down besides my uncle and whispered something in his ears. My uncle showed no sign of having heard what the girl said. Then she rose up and walked out. I knew most of my female relatives. But I had never set eyes on this one. I was struck by her beauty. She was very black; her skin was shiny. Her eyes were brightly lit, large, sleepy, like a little lake beneath cool bushes tucked away from the disturbing feet of men and beast..." Here we observe how a damsel, described as hardly seventeen or eighteen, entered the room after saying "agoo", which is a form of salutation and announcing her presence before she kneels down to whisper something to the ears of the one she has come to deliver her message to. This act of announcing one's presence 'agoo' is first considered an act of politeness marking by respectfully seeking welcome as against encroaching one's privacy unannounced. Also after gaining access to the presence of the other, the lady kneels down to whisper something to the ears of the one she has come to deliver her message. Here too, the gesture of kneeling down portrays politeness as against standing before the person and uttering the said message to be delivered. It is noteworthy that in the African context respect for elders is something revered. This respect is expressed in salutations, manner of approach, and ways of talking to elders and in some instances choices of words to be used. By and large, this section has established the existence of politeness marking and instantiated with copious examples in the researched texts.

Conclusion

The study found from the foregoing that speakers' social behaviour show deference towards the concerns of the people being addressed in ways whereby utterances manifest strategies that maximise deference using indirect speech acts or formal address terms to achieve face saving acts. *Face* it was identified to be public self-image of speakers and is subdivided into positive face and negative face. While positive face showed how speakers' wish to be respected and appreciated by the audience, negative face indicated how speakers wish not to be concerned about the choice(s) the audience make concerning social behaviour. By social

behaviour, it entails *face-saving acts* by being deferential to others, in emphasizing the importance of the wishes and concerns of the other over self. On the contrary a *face-threatening act* tends to encroach on another's freedom of action and may be interpreted as an imposition or an insult. These aspects bring clearer understanding to the texts and meaning-making in discourse situations generally. Again, the paper has clearly contributed to the fact that the proper understanding of politeness as a principle in communication thus, enhances the total understanding of Awoonor's texts.

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