

Politeness Strategies and Face-threatening Acts in Master-Servant Relationships in Selected Wole Soyinka and William Shakespeare's Drama Texts

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Abstract

This paper presents pieces of evidence of the use of Politeness Strategies and Face threatening Acts in dialogues between characters in two drama texts: Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian author (text A) and Othello by William Shakespeare, an English author (text B). This research analyses the relationship between Pilkings, Amusa and Joseph in Death and the King's Horseman and the relationship between Othello and Iago in Othello. The analysis utilises the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1978 and 1987) which revolves around the concept of face by Erving Goffman (1967). The thrust of this theory is to minimise conflict and foster harmony in social interaction. In order to answer the following questions, the data were purposively selected and qualitative research design is utilized: Do the speeches in the texts satisfy the principle of politeness? What kind of meaning interpretation is depicted in these drama texts? How has speech been used to show the kind of relationship that exists between these characters? It was discovered that while Amusa is utilising negative strategy, Pilkings always makes use of negative face-threatening acts to avoid his subordinates losing their fear and respect for him; he uses positive face strategy when he dearly needs his subordinates to give him the response he needs. In Othello, the positive face strategy is deployed to enhance an ideal and harmonious master-servant relationship. This paper concludes that the use of politeness strategies is contextualised by the use of power relations between speaker and listener.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Politeness theory, Face-Threatening Acts, Positive face, Negative face, Master-Servant relationship

Introduction

Language is as old as man himself and has always been man's companion in conversation, as well as his defence when interacting. Language is very important to human existence; it is an inseparable part of human society. Often, language is referred to as verbal behaviour which includes gestures and body movements as well as spoken and written words (Ojotiku, 2013). As an aspect of linguistic analysis, pragmatics focuses on the actual use of language in speech and conversation, to identify intentions. Pragmatics, according to Horn and Ward (2006), "is the study of those context-dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of content or logical form". Pragmatics studies language use in a social context and politeness is an aspect of pragmatics which deals with face which has to do with the speech relationship between people. It is important to note that through people's conversation, a bystander would be able to decode their social status. In other words, in this aspect of pragmatics, speech or conversation between people is socially strategized.

This study focuses on the master-servant relationship in selected drama texts:

Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* and Shakespeare's *Othello*. This is to probe the kind of facework used by the dramatists, as well as the relationship established by the playwrights through their diction. The study aims to answer the following questions: Do the speeches in the texts reflect the principle of politeness? What kind of meaning or interpretation is depicted in these drama texts? How has speech been used to show the kind of relationship that exists between these characters?

This is an attempt to prove that politeness strategies and face work can be useful psychologically in studying and observing how people live, interact and socialize in society, just like psychoanalysis in literature and language studies.

Literature Review

Osuchukwu and Ojukwu (2022), examined how euphemism and contextual beliefs are used to describe gender issues in Helon Habila's *Measuring Time* in order to identify the contextual beliefs connected to such euphemistic expressions. Recognizing how literary authors use words and stylistic choices to convey social issues requires an understanding of euphemism and contextual beliefs. The study incorporates elements of the

contextual beliefs (CBs) model and politeness theory. Lexical and narrative analyses are performed on passages from the text that discuss widowhood or widower experiences. In the article, two CBs—Shared Knowledge of Patriarchal Laxity (SKPL) and Shared Knowledge of Loneliness or Companionship Search (SKL/CS)—are classified as widowhood/widowerhood concerns. These CBs projected euphemistic expressions for widowhood and widowerhood practises, respectively, with various underlying structures. The study discovered a relationship between euphemism and context because context can affect how euphemism is interpreted or used. Clearly, the authors employed euphemisms and contextual assumptions to form a large whole that aids in the gender construction of widowhood and widowerhood. In this study, politeness is a goal in widowhood/widowerhood communication because it is a culturally universal value. This study is related to the recent study because an aspect of politeness theory is adopted in its analysis.

Fitzwater Eva (2020), examined the master-servant relationship in *Doctor Faustus*. He investigated the desires of the protagonist in the text, Faustus, his

relationship with his servants and how such a relationship affected every one of them, including Faustus. For instance, the researcher looked at the relationship between Faustus and Mephistophilis, who came from hell and became Faustus' servant in order to fulfil all his evil desires, but unfortunately for Faustus, he became a slave to his own desires as he was asked to sell his soul to the devil. In fact, he was no longer a free man. Faustus eventually realiseshe served Lucifer and that everything in the universe is subjected to something else. The study further examined the master-servant relationship between Faustus and his pupil, Wagner, as well as the relationship between Robin and Ralph. It is established that every master-servant relationship in the text is loosely related to the serious aspects of the drama in which the master's actions influence the servants' behaviour and fate.

Kawakib AL Momani, et al. (2018) investigated the politeness strategies and representation of women in the holy Qur'an. The study's goal was to look at how the Qur'an, Muslims' holy book, addresses and represents women through politeness strategies. Many texts have explored men's power and hegemony as well as their dominance over women,

eliciting the face-threatening acts in the activities of these male characters and portraying them in negative light . However, this research engages a text (Islam's most sacred book) which portrays women differently. Women's representation in relation to sensitive issues like sex and marriage, as well as the forms of address and reference to women were both examined here. To provide interpretations of the hidden meanings in the selected excerpts, a qualitative approach was used with Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness and Leech's politeness maxims serving as guides for the analysis. According to the research, women are addressed and referred to in a decent and polite manner throughout the Qur'an. Unlike most other topics, where bald-on-the-record strategies are used, the use of off-the-record strategies and positive and negative face politeness strategies were found to be dominant in discussions about women's issues. These strategies were used to avoid awkward spiritual communication as well as the misrepresentation of women, dehumanization and embarrassment of their persons. As a result, both the women's and the recipients' faces are saved. However, when it comes to legal issues involving familial and social unity

and solidarity, bald-on-the-record strategies were sometimes used. The analysis has revealed that the glorious Qur'an uses language to address women courteously. When addressing and referring to women, the maxims of approval, modesty, sympathy, tact and agreement have all been deployed. This study contributes to the field of pragmatics at a time when Islam and its teachings are questioned and scrutinised. it will result in interfaith and intercultural understanding.

Bernd Evers (2000) compared master-servant relationship in two texts, Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*. The researcher looked at *July's People* as a wish Caliban had in *The Tempest*. Bernd painted out a scenario where the slave became the saviour of the master in his own homeland. Also, he portrayed July's *People* as the continuation of *The Tempest*. The focus was on Prospero and Caliban, July and the Smales.

Julie (1999) investigated the technique employed by Mark Thornton Burnett in accounting for the master-servant relationship in numerous renaissance drama texts such as *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*,

and *Duchess of Malfi*. Using the critical methodology, the study intends to make readers understand the term "servants" as well as give a rationale for their breakdowns in relationships. Hence, the reviewer opined that the work was more of cultural criticism than literature; thus, an in-depth analysis was not given to these texts as Burnett kept weaving in and out of these texts. However, through this method, Kin stated that Burnett was able to achieve the objectives of the work which were to prioritise the servant's voice rather than the master's; focus on the margins of literary discourse rather than the centre, and be aware of resistance expressions rather than the exercise of power.

Vidal (1983) looked at how French novels (from 1715-1789) show the three levels of meaning associated with the servants and the masters. At the literary level, focus was on the image of man's interaction in a social environment: on a social level, the researcher looked at the image of man's interaction in a social environment; and finally, an inquiry was made into the problem of human freedom on a philosophical level. In both literary and figurative terms, the researcher looked at the conditional formation and dissolution of the master-servant

relationship. In the conclusion of the paper, Vidal stated that these eighteenth-century models failed to achieve a dialectical resolution as a result of their structures which remained resistant to change.

These reviewed works are related to this research in their dealing with the master-servant relationship in literary texts and investigating politeness strategies as well as their specific roles in different contexts. However, none of them investigated the speech relationship between masters and their servants and the manner in which they speak to improve or destroy the relationship. This research further differs from the other studies reviewed in that it is anchored on the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1978).

Methodology

The purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of samples for the present study. The data used in this analysis were extracted from Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* specifically; only conversations between Pilkings, Joseph and Amusa were selected for this purpose from pages 25- 32. Also, dialogues were selected from Shakespeare's *Othello*: Act I scenes I and

II; Act II scenes I and III. The analysis is divided into two parts: the speech relationship between Pilkings, Amusa, and Joseph as well as the social relationship between Othello and Iago. It is, therefore, qualitative research, utilizing discourse analysis.

To achieve the objectives of this research, the first part of the analysis is from *Death and the King's Horseman*, captured as Text A, excerpts 1, 2 and 3, and primarily focusing on Pilkings, the white man in the play as well as Joseph and Amusa, his servants. The second part is the analysis of *Othello*, based on different Acts and Scenes selected and captured as Text B, excerpts 1-5 with a focus on Iago and Othello. The paper employs Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1978 and 1987) which revolves around the concept of face by Erving Goffman (1967).

Theoretical Framework

Politeness Theory and Concept of Face

The foundation of politeness theory is the idea that people actively project and work to preserve a social self-image. "Face" is the term used to describe this sense of self-image. The politeness principle is one of the domains of pragmatics championed by Penelope

Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (1978). According to the theory of politeness, there are four politeness strategies a speaker can employ to avoid threatening the listener's face. They are positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record and off-record. The strategy employed will be determined by the relationship between the speaker and the hearer.

Positive politeness is a tactic adopted when the speaker at least knows the listener. It acknowledges both the familiarity and the person's status. For instance, a speaker without his wallet might ask a colleague to lend him some cash so he can buy a coffee. Bald on-record politeness is employed among close friends, family, and associates. It enables straight forward communication that is not possible in other contexts and respect for the other's face is reduced. Negative politeness is deployed when a speaker is aware that he/she is impinging on someone else's time and wants to be respectful. Negative politeness is necessary when, for example, stopping someone on the street to ask for directions. In off-record (indirect politeness strategy), the speaker makes a request but not outright asking the listener to do it. The method is more

submissive and places the burden on the speaker. Instead of asking the listener to do something, a speaker might comment on something that needs to be done.

Brown and Levinson (1978 &1987) distinguished between positive politeness strategies and negative politeness. The positive strategies are those acts performed with the sole aim to avoid offending the hearer by emphasizing friendliness. It aims to prevent offence by emphasising friendliness. Establishing areas of agreement, employing jokes, nicknames, honorifics, tag questions, specific discourse markers (please), and using in-group jargon and slang are a few of these techniques while the negative strategies are those acts performed strategically to avoid offence through respect. They aim to avoid offence by appearing respectful. Questioning, hedging, and presenting disagreements as opinions are some of these strategies.

The Concept of Face

Politeness theory revolves around the concept of "face", introduced by the sociologist Ervin Goffman (1967).The term face was got from "The English folk term that associates facing up with feelings of embarrassment or humiliation"(Brown and Levinson,1978

&1987). Within the domain of politeness, face describes people's desire to protect their self-image, emotional image and social image from possible damage through social inferences. Hence, there are two kinds of faces: positive face and negative face.

The positive face is the desire to be well treated, to belong, and to be a member of a group. In a positive face, one wishes to gain the approval of others, liked or appreciated. The positive face should be thought of as one's self-esteem whereas the negative face is the desire to be independent and free of imposition. In a negative face, there is the wish of a person to avoid being constrained or restricted by others. The negative face should be thought of as an individual's desire to protect their personal rights, such as freedom of speech and action.

Face-Threatening Acts (FTA)

All people are conscious of their "face" or self-image when they speak. Even though conversation participants may not be aware of it, protecting one's face is crucial for effective communication and interpersonal behaviour.

Face-threatening acts can be non-verbal, verbal (using words or language), or para-

verbal (conveyed in speech patterns like intonation, tone, etc. A "face-threatening act" (FTA) is an action that could cause someone to lose face or damage it. FTAs, which frequently arise in daily interactions, are frequently mitigated by being polite. The two types of politeness are "positive politeness" (using "please" to try to win the other person over) and "negative politeness" (e.g., "I know this is a terrible imposition", to try to give the other person some space and not impose). A face-threatening act (FTA) is an act that offends the face wants of an interlocutor. Face-threatening acts can threaten either the speaker's face or the hearer's face, and they can threaten either a positive face or a negative face, according to Brown and Levinson (1987, 1978).

Positive face-threatening acts directly challenge the listener's face. Threats, insults, disapproval, criticism, accusation, interrupting and denigrating the listener are among the elements they contain, along with a disregard for the listener's perception of themselves. Speech that contains socially taboo subjects, such as sexual innuendo, racist slurs and topics that relate to race and religion, are considered positive FTA. Inappropriate comments about a listener's gender, age,

or status can also make them feel uncomfortable. In these circumstances, the necessity of an apology or an acknowledgement of personal weakness may harm the speaker's own reputation.

According to the politeness theory, a speaker impinges on the listener's negative face when making a statement. The speaker wants the person he/she is speaking to respond verbally or take action. Negative FTAs include advice, cautions, or recommendations for the listener to take a certain action. In that both the speaker and the listener must consent to the other's wishes, it is confrontational.

According to Brown and Levinson (1978 and 1987), the desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked, appreciated or admired is the most important aspect of a person's personality in interaction. However, some acts threaten both the negative face and the positive face. The linguists further argue that in order for politeness to occur, someone has to have recognised the other person's "self-esteem" and the need to safeguard it. One may try to mitigate the impact of one's threats by using redressive language designed to compensate for the threat.

The texts chosen for this study are examined using this theory of politeness and the notion of face work to critically analyse the politeness strategies and face-threatening acts employed by the selected characters, the effects and aftermaths of the effects on both the masters and their servants.

Data Analysis\ Results

A) Politeness strategies and Face-Threatening Acts in Master-Servant Relationships in *Death of the King's Horseman* (Text A)

Excerpt (1)

Pilkings:

Well, I've got it on. And what's more Jane and I have bet on it we're taking first prize at the ball. Now, if you can just put yourself together and tell me what you wanted to see me about... (pg. 24-25)

Amusa:

Sir, I cannot talk this matter to you in that dress. I no fit. (pg25)

Pilkings:

Delicately my...! Look here Amusa, I think this little joke has gone far enough hm? Let's have some sense; you seem to forget that you are a police officer in the

service of His Majesty's Government. I order you to report your business at once or face disciplinary action.

Amusa:

Sir, it is a matter of death. How can a man talk against death to a person in uniform of death? Is like talking against the government to person in uniform of police.

Please, sir. I go and come back.

Pilkings:

(roars): now! (Amusa switches his gaze to the ceiling suddenly remains mute)

Pilkings:

it's hopeless. We'll merely end up missing the best part of the ball. When they get this way there is nothing you can do. It's simply hammering against a brick wall. Write your report or whatever it is on that pad Amusa and take yourself out of here... (pg. 25)

Amusa's refusal to yield to his master can be seen as threatening the master's positive and negative faces. Amusa has refused to comply with a request from someone close to him thereby breaching relational expectations and posing an increasing threat to Pilkings' positive face. The first speaker in the dialogue is

Pilkings; he uses a positive face strategy at first, but when his interlocutor shows indifference to his positive face, he changes immediately and from the tone of the second speech, it is clear that Amusa is under his control and power. However, speaking to him in such a careless manner is a clear case of a negative face-threatening act. The speech above is a clear example of a master being rude and impolite to his servant simply because he sees himself as superior to the addressee and thus, cared less about his feelings. He uses this negative face-threatening act to defend his personality and image. Speakers use negative face-threatening acts when they try as much as possible to avoid impinging upon their interlocutor's freedom of action. Pilkings reminds Amusa of his social status--- just an ordinary police officer, serving under the law of the white man and him (Pilkings), being a representative of his Majesty, deserves to be respected and honoured. Pilkings in this speech tries to block or prevent Amusa from getting under his skin through what he called "little joke."

More so, when he cannot get Amusa to open up, he gives up, blaming it on the stereotypical perception of African personality and intelligence by the white,

and this is revealed when he says "...when they get this way there is nothing you can do. It's simply hammering against a brick wall" (pg25) One also notices Pilkings' sentiments about his interlocutor's belief. This means that Pilkings' has an opinion that is either held or expressed about the Africans. The structure of Pilking's speech is daunting and his voice never fails to niggle his subordinates.

Amusa afterwards uses a positive face act while trying to make him consider the risk of what Pilkings is asking of him as a native of Yoruba. He still pleads to go and return when his master must have taken off the costume, but all his effort to be considered and for his self-image to be appreciated is thwarted by Pilkings' negative face-threatening act.

Excerpt (2)

Pilkings: (wearily); oh, come in Joseph! I don't know where you pick up all these elephantine notions of tact. Come over here.

Joseph: Sir?

Pilkings: Joseph, are you a Christian or not?

Joseph: yes sir

Pilkings: Thank God for some sanity at last. Now Joseph, answer me on

the honour of a Christian what is supposed to be going on in town tonight? (pg 27)

It is quite noticeable that the servants are always conscious of their social status when they speak given that they cannot answer their master rudely even when he insults them. Joseph replies to every one of his master's questions with fear and reverence but the master does not care whether the servant is offended, as long as he gets what he wants. In the last dialogue, he says "thank God for some sanity..." He says this to Joseph's face without considering how he would feel. This also reveals a stereotypical relationship. Even when Joseph tries to be polite and humble, Pilkings still finds a fault in that and makes fun of his manner of speech by calling it "...elephantine notions of tact". However, the first question Pilkings asks has the element of a positive face strategy because he wants to get the piece of information Amusa could not give to him. He needs to get an answer that would satisfy his prejudice about the African man and his beliefs. Thus, Joseph replies, satisfying his master. Pilkings is a rude and arrogant man who cannot control his arrogance towards someone of lower social status. He finds fault with people trying to be nice around him. This reveals the fact that he

understands that he is not of good character, thus, whenever his subordinates try to ingratiate themselves with him, he feels uneasy.

Excerpt 3

Pilkings:

Let's ask our native guide. Joseph!
Just a minute Joseph. (Joseph re-enters) What's the drumming about?

Joseph: I don't know master

Pilkings:

What do you mean you don't know? It's only two years since your conversion. Don't tell me all that holy water nonsense also wiped out your tribal memory.

Joseph: (visibly shocked) master!

Pilkings: oh get back to the kitchen! A fat lot of help you are,

Joseph: yes master (goes) (Pg. 30)

From the above dialogue, it is noticeable that Pilkings gets angry over a sincere response; he calls his servants without regard; he talks to them as he pleases, thus they have no option but to comply. This last text reveals something spectacular about the personality of Pilkings in this study. The tone, which he uses to begin his last question, is quite different from his usual bossy tone.

Joseph is now referred to as "our native guide" because, in the former question he asked, Joseph gave him exactly what he wanted to hear. However, the subsequent questions introduce mood-swing, as Joseph becomes like Amusa saying "I don't hear master."

Pilkings had once commended him for accepting to be a Christian but here, the scenario changes to him insulting Joseph for being a baptized Christian, upholding his newly found belief; thus he calls it "...that holy water nonsense." Pilkings reveals himself to be a very complicated superior. He expects Joseph to remember every one of the traditional religious rituals despite being converted to Christianity. But, when he is confronted by Amusa, who still is a die-hard fan of the traditional religion, Pilkings criticizes him for his beliefs. In the end, Joseph is placed where Amusa had been ----- a stereotypical perception of African personality and intelligence. Pilkings uses a positive face-threatening act here.

B) Politeness strategies and Face-Threatening Acts in Master-Servant Relationships in *Othello* by William Shakespeare (Text B)

This section looks at the speech relationship between Othello and his right-handman, Iago, in the text, *Othello*

by William Shakespeare. The intention and effects of the speeches are probed using the politeness strategy.

Excerpt (1)

Act I, scene i

IAGO

O, sir, content you;

I follow him to serve my turn upon him:

We cannot all be masters, nor all masters

Cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark

Many a duteous and knee-crooking

knave, 22 That, doting on his own

obsequious bondage, 23

Wears out his time, much like his

master's ass, For nought but provender, 24

and when he's old, cashier'd: 25

Whip me such honest knaves. Others

there are Who, trimm'd 26 in forms and

visages of duty, Keep yet their hearts

attending on themselves,

And, throwing but shows of service on

their lords, Do well thrive by them and

when they have lined their coats 27

Do themselves homage: these fellows

have some soul; And such a one do I

profess myself. For, sir, pg. 28

It is as sure as you are Roderigo,

Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:

In following him, I follow but myself;

Heaven is my judge, not I for love and

duty, But seeming so, for my peculiar

end:

For when my outward action doth
demonstrate The native act and figure of
my heart 28 In compliment extern, 29 'tis
not long after But I will wear my heart
upon my sleeve For daws 30 to peck at: I
am not what I am. Shakespeare, 31

From the above conversation between Iago and Roderigo, it is evident that why Iago decided to be under Othello is only for his (Iago's) interest: to see his position in the castle elevated in the process of being Othello's right-hand man. He further buttresses this point by saying that every one of them cannot be masters at the same time and that not all masters can be followed with all sincerity. From this expression, Iago openly declares that a black man like Othello is not worthy of being a master to him and since his life (Iago's) may be at risk if he in any way found disrespectful so, he has decided to deal with him in a deadly-friendly way. He also distinguishes between two kinds of servants: the first is "duteous and knee crooking" while the latter are those "who, trimmed in forms and visages of duty, keep yet their hearts, attending on themselves and throwing but shows of service on their lords". Iago concludes by saying that he belongs to the latter: "And such a one do I profess myself." (pg. 7). It is observed that Iago, in the bid to get

what he wants, has determined to use the positive face strategy: the positive consistent self-image or personality crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of. The subsequent excerpts demonstrate this claim vividly.

Excerpt (2)

SCENE ii:

Enter OTHELLO, IAGO, and ATTENDANTS with torches.(pg. 15-17)

IAGO.

Though in the trade of war I have slain men, Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience To do no contrived murder: I lack iniquity Sometimes to do me service: nine or ten times I had thought to have yerk'd2 him here under the ribs.

OTHELLO. 'Tis better as it is.

IAGO.

Nay, but he prated, 3 And spoke such scurvy 4 and provoking terms Against your honor That, with the little godliness I have,

I did full hard forbear him. 5 But, I pray you, sir, Are you fast 6 married? Be assured of this, That the magnifico 7 is much beloved, And hath in his effect a voice potential As double as the duke's: he will divorce you; Or put upon you

what restraint and grievance The law,
with all his might to enforce it on, Will
give him cable. 8

From the way Iago speaks to Othello in the excerpt above, it is clear that he needs to get a piece of information from him and that is about his marriage with Desdemona. But he begins on a soft note, reporting everything Brabantio had said against Othello. It could be said that Iago wouldn't have achieved this purpose if he came in a different form or spoke out of line with Othello. This is what positive face strategy entails: the ability to make your listener feel loved and respected; the desire for connection with others; desires to be liked, admired, ratified, and related positively with mostly because you want to get something from that fellow. Iago has already said the only reason he is following him is for his selfish interest. Iago goes with Roderigo to Brabantio's house; he also tells them he needs to leave first to make sure that the Moor does not leave the castle. This fact is only known to Iago, Roderigo, Brabantio and of course the readers. Othello is oblivious to this matter.

The reason that Brabantio becomes aware of the secret nuptial tie is Iago. Also, Othello is aware of Brabantio's anger still because of Iago. The first thing Iago does

is say pleasing things about himself, trying to justify his personality before Othello. He claims never to have involved himself in any premeditated or intentional murder (contrived); according to him, he lacks wickedness (iniquity) to perform some acts and that is why Brabantio is still living. He says this to first gain ground and win "his master's" confidence in the conversation without having to convince him of his loyalty. Othello eventually falls into this trap. The result is his praise of Iago for being the good person he just professed himself to be. He also adds that he was almost unable to stop himself from hurting Brabantio when he (Brabantio) said despicable (scurvy) things against Othello. To show that his positive face strategy served its purpose, Othello praises him for not touching the old man: "Tis better as it is" Excerpt (3)

IAGO. Marry, 20 to—Come, captain, will you go?

OTHELLO. Have with you. 21

IAGO.

It is Brabantio. General, be advised; He comes to bad intent. (pg. 19)

Iago tries everything possible to make sure that Othello never leaves until

Brabantio and his servants show up. Cassio has come to tell the Moor that his attention is needed by the Signiors and when Othello makes to leave, Iago asks: "...captain, will you go?" Having built so much confidence in his servant, his reply is that he would go with Iago. Almost immediately, Brabantio shows up. Iago utters the last speech in the excerpt above. Looking at the structure of the statement, Iago is a polite jerk, whose every speech satisfies the principle of politeness but which eventually reveals his ability to do anything to get what he wants even if it means licking the sores of his master's feet.

Excerpt (4)

ACT II SCENE III

IAGO.

I do not know: friends all but now, even now, In quarter, 40 and in terms like bride and groom Devesting 41 them for bed; and then, but now— As if some planet had unwitted men— Swords out, and tilting⁴² one at other's breast, In opposition bloody. I cannot speak Any beginning to this peevish odds; 43 And would in action glorious I had lost Those legs that brought me to a part of it!

IAGO.

Touch me not so near: I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth Than it should do offense to Michael Cassio; Yet, I persuade myself, to speak the truth Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, general. Montano and myself being in speech, There comes a fellow crying out for help: And Cassio following him with determined sword, To execute upon him. 56 Sir, this gentleman Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause: 57 Myself the crying fellow did pursue, Lest by his clamor—as it so fell out— The town might fall in fright: he, swift of foot, Out ran my purpose; and I return'd the rather For that I heard the clink and fall of swords, And Cassio high in oath;⁵⁸ which till to-night I ne'er might say before. When I came back—For this was brief—I found them close together, At blow and thrust; even as again they were When you yourself did part them. More of this matter cannot I report: But men are men; the best sometimes forget: Though Cassio did some little wrong to him, As men in rage strike those that wish them best, Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received From him that fled some strange indignity, 59 Which patience could not pass. 60

OTHELLO.

I know, Iago, Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter, Making it light to Cassio. 61 Cassio, I love thee But never more be officer of mine. 62

The above speech from Iago is what Pilkings would call "elephantine notion of tact." This speech is made the night Cassio is made drunk by Iago; Iago had paid someone to fight the drunk Cassio but the assassin fails to kill Cassio. He is first asked what transpired between Cassio and Montano and like every skilful schemer, Iago declines. However, when nobody would say anything, he politely narrates the scene, softly blaming poor Cassio who cannot even remember what had happened as a result of being drunk. But Othello is so blinded by this notion of tact that would ordinarily annoy Pilkings, thus calling Iago an honest man. Iago is able to achieve his aim of stopping Cassio from getting the post of a senior officer, as well as robbing Othello of a good and honest man at his side, leaving him at the mercy of his (Iago's) evil plots.

Finally, these elements of politeness in speech lead Othello to his doom as Iago eventually accomplishes his objective which is to ruin Othello's life for good.

Discussion

From the analysis, it is evident that the kind of relationship portrayed in the text *Death and the King's Horseman* is the stereotypical master-servant one, where the master is socially right to treat and talk to his servants without regard because he owns and pays them for their services, not minding their positions. In the text, it is revealed that such a relationship does not foster love among people but "eye service". They are only obeying him because they have no other option and this is seen when after scolding Joseph, Pilkings calls him out again and Joseph comes out with a sulky appearance. Amusa on the other hand is more assertive than Joseph because he tries as much as possible to let his master know his mind even though it would not be recognized or considered.

The speeches have been used to show the master-servant relationship, in that the structure of Pilkings's speech is always authoritative and domineering over his servants while those of his servant, Joseph and Amusa, the local police officer serving under him portrays the lowly status of servants in any given setting.

Most of the speeches by Pilkings fail to satisfy the principle of politeness as he always hurts the feelings of those under him. He only used a positive face act when he needed to get a pleasant response from Joseph after which he went back to being his usual self. He also used both negative and positive face-threatening acts to get what he wanted. On the other hand, in Shakespeare's *Othello*, the case is different. The master-servant relationship is portrayed where the master is controlled by the servant through deception and insincere polite tact or politeness strategy. Yes, Iago in all his dealings with Othello seems polite and loving but, with the aid of the following dramatic techniques: aside and soliloquy, the reader can decode the intention of every polite speech uttered by Iago. Othello on the other hand, being the master, does not consider himself superior to his subordinates as he often refers to them as friends. Hence, the stereotypical master-servant relationship found in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* is not applicable here. Maybe

it would have been possible if Othello were to be fair-skinned.

All of Iago's speeches satisfy the principle of politeness and such a relationship could have led to the ideal communal and harmonious living among people of different social statuses; instead, the speeches lead to a disastrous demise.

Conclusion

This study has significantly shown that pragmatics can be seen as an attitude calculator, personality analyst and speech dissector. No speech goes unnoticed in pragmatics. Though there had been a lot of research on politeness strategy and master-servant relationship in the past, none had been able to look at the area which this research paper did.

The study reveals another side of human learning - a personality check through the analysed speeches and dialogues, which is obtainable in psychoanalysis.

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