



## Politeness strategies used by the characters in Ola Rotimi's *our husband has gone mad again*

**Samaila Yakubu**

Department of English and Literary Studies, Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria

\* Corresponding Author: **Samaila Yakubu**

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### Abstract

Politeness strategies are strategies used by interlocutors to soften threats to positive and negative face of others who are faced with Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) while engaging in conversation. This paper exploits politeness strategies used by the characters in Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* to soften threats to face of those who are threatened by Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) while conversing collectively. The study adopts Brown's and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as its Theoretical Framework and employed Qualitative Method of data analysis to analyse its data. Data for the study are excerpts from the text under review. They were analysed and the result showed that element of Bald on Record Politeness Strategy such as commands; components of positive politeness strategy like polite expressions of admiration, tag questions, honorifics, discourse marker (please), expressions of gratitude; features of Negative Politeness Strategy such as questions, hedges, apologies, pessimistic statements, generalised expressions, and constituents of off-record politeness strategy such as impersonal pronoun are used by the characters in the text to mitigate threats to positive and negative face of those who are faced with Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) while chatting accordingly. The study concludes that politeness strategies are important tools used to soften threats to positive and negative face of interlocutors who encountered Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) while conversing collectively.

**Keywords:** Politeness strategy, characters, Ola Rotimi, conversation, face threatening acts

### 1. Introduction

Politeness Strategies are devices interlocutors employ to mitigate threats to positive and negative face of those who are faced with Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) while talking with one another. Public self image which people claim for themselves may be threatened by others in the process of conversation. Interlocutors do employ politeness strategies to soften threats to the face of those who are faced with Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) in the course of conversation. Brown's and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory spelt out politeness strategies which can be used to mitigate threats to the face of interlocutors who are threatened by Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) as follows: Bald on Record Politeness Strategy, Positive Politeness Strategy, Negative politeness Strategy and Off-record politeness strategy.

Bald on Record politeness strategy is a politeness strategy used by an interlocutor to talk to a person directly without making an attempt to soften threat to the person's face. It is often used by interlocutors who are close to one another (Abdel *et al*, 2016 P. 49) <sup>[1]</sup>. Imperative form is usually employed by interlocutors who use this type of politeness strategy, example, "give me the pen". The mitigated form of the utterance is "please, give me the pen" Culper (1996, cited in Abdel *et al*, 2016, P.50) <sup>[1]</sup> Says Bald an Record is used when threat to the hearer's face is minimal, example, come in, sit down or in a situation where the speaker is more powerful than the hearer, as in the interaction between a parent and a child when the parent says: stop complaining (p.50).

Positive Politeness Strategy is a strategy used to lessen threat to the positive face of an interlocutor who is threatened by Face Threatening Acts while conversing with others.

Devices which Speakers employ to pacify threat to the hearers positive face include polite expressions of admiration, establishing common ground, using jokes, nick names, honorifics, tag questions, discourse marker (please), in group jargon and slang (para. 2). Apologies, expressions of gratitude and the use of counterfactual modal such as "would you?" and "could you?" are also used to soften threats to positive face of an interlocutor who encounter Face Threatening Acts while talking with others (Grin, 2022, para. 13) <sup>[3]</sup>.

Negative Politeness Strategy is used in order not to impede on the basic rights and freedom of the hearers. Negative Politeness Strategy involves questioning, hedging and presenting disagreement as opinions. Apologies, pessimistic statements, generalised expressions are other devices used by the speakers to avoid impeding on the basic rights and freedom of the hearers (Grin, 2022, para. 4) <sup>[3]</sup>.

Off-Record Politeness Strategy is a strategy used by a speaker to talk to a person indirectly. In constructing an off-record utterance, the speaker says something different from what he/she means. In this case, the hearer has to make an inference before he/she can understand the meaning embedded in the utterance (Neyole *et al.*, 2021, P. 73) <sup>[9]</sup>. Devices which are used by the speakers to construct off-record utterances include speaking vaguely, being ironic or using metaphors, not addressing the hearer directly, using contradictions and rhetoric questions (Grin, 2022, para. 15) <sup>[3]</sup>. Other devices that are employed to construct off-record utterances are ellipses (Abdel *et al.* 2016, P.51) <sup>[1]</sup>, and impersonal pronoun (Mansur, n.d, p. 141) <sup>[8]</sup>.

Ola Rotimi is preoccupied with play writing, directing and teaching. His writings focus on the theme of cultural diversity. He also exploits Nigerian history and ethnic traditions in his writings. He teaches at the University of Port-Harcourt, Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife and Manchester College in Saint Paul Minnesota. He authors plays such as *To Stir God of Iron* (1965), *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* (1977), *The Gods Are Not to Blame* (1968), *A Tragedy of the Ruled* (1983), and *Hope of the Living Dead* (1988). His radio play everyone has his/her problem was broadcast in 1987 and a book entitled *African Dramatic Literature*, published in 1991 (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d). *Our Husband Has Gone mad Again* is a play written by Ola Rotimi. The play focuses on politics after independence. The post-independence period was corrupt with looting of treasury. Many writers became dissatisfied with the politics of the period and wrote to ridicule the political abuse of the period in Nigeria. It was during this period that corrupt politicians were preoccupied with embezzlement of national funds that led to writing of *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* (Harrigurus, 2019, para 2) <sup>[4]</sup>. The play also mocks polygamy with its attendant consequences. Major Rahman Taslim Lejoka-Brown is married to his elder brother's wife, Mama Rashida, by his father without his consent. He marries Liza two days after his marriage with Mama Rashida. Liza leaves for America to go and study medicine. Lajoka-Brown also marries, Sikira, the daughter of the president of market women union in order to win election. Liza returns to Nigeria to discover that she is not only the wife to Lejoka-Brown. She does not tolerate polygamy, as such, she begins to give Sikira provoking ideas about what she calls women liberation. Sikira finally joins politics after much persuasion by Liza. Mama Rashida leaves Lagos to seek better condition in the village. This resolution comes as a result of Liza's tact of

handling Mama Rashida and Sikira. Lejoka-Brown is booted out of National Liberation Party because of high-handedness. He regrets leaving his lucrative Cocoa business to join politics (para. 4).

Many Scholars and academics have carried out research on Ola Rotimi's works, particularly, *Our Husband Has Gone mad Again* both linguistically and Literarily. To be specific, some aspects of *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* have been explored through Discourse Analysis (DA), Semantics, Stylistics and Pragmatics, but no enough scholarly attention has been given to politeness strategies used by the characters in it to soften threats to positive and negative face of others who encounter Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) in the course of conversation. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how politeness strategies are used by the interlocutors (characters) in the text to mitigate threats to positive and negative face of those who are faced with Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) while conversing collectively, through the following objectives:

1. To identify politeness strategies used in the text.
2. To discuss the politeness strategies in line with the text preoccupation.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

Njuki and Iren (2021) <sup>[10]</sup> carried out research on Positive and Negative Politeness Strategies used by Kenya's Members of National Assembly. The study aimed to find out Positive and Negative, Politeness Strategies which the members of National Assembly employ to interact with one another in the parliament. Brown's and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory was adopted as theoretical framework of the study. The data were downloaded from Hansard and analysed using descriptive qualitative research method. The research found out that members of National Assembly used Positive and Negative Politeness Strategies to soften threat to face of the members who are threatened by Face Threatening Acts. Based on the findings, the study concludes that members of National Assembly employed positive and negative politeness strategies to minimize threats to the positive and negative face of one another while interacting.

Ifechelobi (2014) <sup>[5]</sup> conducted research on students politeness in language use; *A Study of undergraduate students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka*. The study aimed at investigating the politeness strategies students used and the extent of students' impoliteness with their lectures as well as the repercussions. Brown's and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory was adopted as theoretical framework of the study. A non-participant observation was used to collect data for this study. The data were analysed and the result showed that there were situations where students utterance and actions amount to impoliteness and face Threatening Acts (FTAs). Such behaviour often leads to frictions and conflicts. The study concludes that for harmonious and peaceful co-existence between students and lectures, students must avoid face threatening acts in their language use.

Ulfa (2019) <sup>[16]</sup> undertook study on politeness strategies and cooperation principles in wonder movie. The study aimed at discussing politeness strategies and cooperation principles used by the characters in the movie. Brown's and Levison's (1987) politeness theory and Grice (1975) cooperative principles were adopted as theoretical frameworks of this study. Data for the study were expressions extracted from the utterances of the characters in the movie. The researchers employed descriptive method of data analysis to analyse data

for the study. The results showed that four kinds of politeness strategies were used by the characters in the movie to interact with one another. The politeness strategies they employed are Bald on record, Positive Politeness Strategy, Negative Politeness Strategy and Off-Record Politeness Strategy. The results also indicated that four maxims, namely, maxims of quality, quantity, relevance and manner were violated by the characters. Positive politeness strategy was the strategy used most. Based on the findings, the study concludes that four politeness strategies called Bald on Record, Positive Strategy, Negative Strategy and Off-Record were used by the characters in Wonder movie. Maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relevance and maxim of manner were violated by the characters in the movie.

Leihitu and Triprihatimimi (2021)<sup>[6]</sup> carried out research on politeness strategies used by Erin Gruwell in Freedom Writers Movie. The Study aimed to identify the politeness strategies used by Erin Gruwell in the Freedom Writers Movie and to find out factors that influenced the use of politeness strategies in the movie. Data for the study were obtained from the script of the movie. The researchers employed qualitative technique of data analysis to analyse the data for the study. The results of the analysis showed that Erin Gruwell used four politeness strategies, namely, Bald on record, Off-Record, Positive Strategy and Negative Strategy in the movie. The dominant politeness strategy Erin Gruwell used is positive politeness strategy. There are two factors that influenced Erin Gruwell in using politeness strategies. They are payoffs and sociological variables. The study concludes that Erin Gruwell used four politeness strategies, namely, Bald on Record, Off-Record, Positive Politeness Strategy and Negative Politeness Strategy in Freedom Writers Movie. The dominant politeness strategy he used is positive politeness strategy. The two factors which influenced Erin Gruwell in using politeness strategies are payoffs and sociological variables.

Lastari *et al.* (2018) undertook research on politeness strategy preference of male and female teachers in classroom interaction during English classes. The study aimed to identify the politeness strategies used by male and female teachers and to indicate the politeness strategies which male teachers prefer and those that female teachers prefer. The data for the Study were obtained through interview and observation during teaching and learning season in the class. Qualitative method of data analysis was used to analyse data for the study. The result showed that male and female teaches applied four types of politeness strategies called Bald on Record, Positive Politeness Strategy, Negative Politeness Strategy and Off-Record in classroom interaction during English class. Male teachers have preference for some politeness strategies more than female teachers and vice versa. The study concludes that both male and female teachers applied four types of politeness strategies, namely, Bald on Record, Positive Politeness Strategy, Negative Politeness Strategy and Off-record in classroom interaction. Male teachers have preference for some politeness strategies more than female teachers and vice versa.

Nugrahanto and Hartano (2020)<sup>[11]</sup> conducted research on politeness strategies on lecturer and students classroom interaction in Biology class. The study aimed to explain the types of politeness strategies used by lectures and Students in classroom interaction and to find out the most frequent politeness strategy used by lecturer and students in classroom interaction. The data for the study were obtained through

observation during teaching and learning season in the classroom. The study employed qualitative method of data analysis to analyse its data. The result showed that the types of politeness strategies used by lecturer and students in classroom interaction are Bald on Record, Positive Politeness Strategy, Negative Politeness Strategy and Off-Record Politeness Strategy. Politeness Strategy is the dominant politeness strategy used by lecturer and students in classroom interaction with 50%; followed by Bald on Record with 32%; followed by Negative politeness strategy with 16%, followed by Off-Record with 2%. Based on the findings, the study concludes that the kinds of politeness strategies that were used by lecturer and students in classroom interactions include Bald on Records, Positive Politeness Strategy, Negative Politeness Strategy and Off-record. Positive politeness strategy is the dominant politeness strategy used in lecturer and students classroom interaction followed by Bald on Record, Negative Politeness Strategy and Off- Record Strategy.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts Brown's and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as its theoretical framework. The theory is heavily influenced by Goffman's (1967) notion of face. Goffman (1967, P.5, cited in Agbaglo, 2017, P.31) defines face as "the positive value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular context". In the opinion of Brown and Levinson (1987), every person has two face needs called Positive Face and Negative Face. Positive Face is the desire to be loved and appreciated by others while Negative Face is the wish to have one's action unimpeded by others or to be independent of others. Brown and Levinson (1987) assert that certain acts may threaten the public self-image that a person claims for himself or herself. If this happens, the only thing to do is to mitigate the threats to the public self-image the person claims for himself or herself by applying politeness strategies. The politeness strategies are bald on record, positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, off-record and don't do the Face Threatening Acts (p.32). The politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson in 1987 was used to analyse spoken discourse, but currently it has been successfully applied to written discourse in general and written academic discourse in particular (p. 32).

### 4. Methodology

Data for this research are dialogues randomly extracted from the text under review. The politeness strategies embedded in the dialogues are identified, analysed and discussed based on Brown's and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The text Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* is marked by several elements of politeness strategies.

#### Datum No 1: Using subcomponent of Bald on Record called command to Talk Directly to people.

Commands are used by the characters in the text to talk directly to one another, examples:

Mama Rashida (angrily): "... lock him up..." p.19

Mama Rashida: " Out! p. 25

Mama Rashida: "...come now!" p. 26

Lejoka- Brown: "... come over here, you rascal ...." p.34

Eliza: "... don't shout!" p.39  
 Liza: "come over here" p.49  
 Liza: "Raise your arm up" p.54  
 Lejoka Brown: "... Throw it dawn..." p.56  
 Lejoka Brown: "Go on!" p.56  
 Lejoka Brown: "... get out of here!" p.57  
 Lejoka Brown: "... keep out of this!" p.58  
 Lejoka Brown: Attention!" p.59  
 Lejoka Brown: "aim, fire!" p.59  
 Lejoka Brown: "... don't let her come in ..." p.61  
 Lejoka Brown: "... hurry bring drinks ..." p.61  
 Lejoka Brown: "... go to your room ..." p.64  
 Lejoka Brown: "... stand up ..." p.65  
 Mallam Gaskiya: "be seated ...." p.65  
 Lejoka Brown: "face downward Liza! ..." p.69  
 Liza: "... get out of my life!" p.70  
 Lejoka Brown: "stand by me! ..." p.74  
 Lejoka Brown: "... sit down!" p.75  
 Sikira: "Rise up ..." p.76

### **Speakers (characters) employed commands in the above dialogues to talk directly to one another**

#### **Datum No 2: Polite Expressions of Admiration Used to Mitigate Threats to Positive Face**

Polite expressions of admiration are used by the characters in the text to soften threats to one another's positive face; examples:

Okonkwo, "Nice to have met you" p.37  
 Sikira: "...Mama Rashida, your chicken house looks so good ..." p.49  
 Sikira: "You are a strong woman, with a strong, strong heart. Sometimes I wish I, too, had your kind of strong, strong heart ." p.53

#### **Characters in the text used polite expressions to mitigate threat to positive face of one another.**

#### **Datum No 3: Using Tag Questions to Ease Threats to Face.**

Tag Question are used scantily by the characters in the text to soften threats to positive face of others, examples:

Liza: You are Mr Lejoka-Brown, aren't you?" p.35  
 Lejoka-Brown: "... You're not deserting me soon, are you?" p.74

#### **Tag questions are used in the text to lessen threat to positive face of the hearers**

#### **Datum No 4: Using Honorifics to Soften Threat to Face**

Honorifics are used in the text broadly to soften threats to positive face of the hearers, examples:

Sikira: "... Miss world is coming ... ?" p.15  
 Lejoka-Brown: "Dr... Elizabeth Lejoka-Brown" p.28  
 Lejoka-Brown: "Mrs Elizabeth Lejoka-Brown ...." p.29  
 Polycarp: "Sir!" p.35  
 Lejoka-Brown: "... Lawyer G, A. Okonkwo ... p.34  
 Okonkwo: "... Chief Justice!" p.35  
 Lejoka-Brown: "Attorney General. That sounds with power, man: Attorney General! Sounds like: Major General! ..." p.35  
 Liza (cooly): 'Mr Lejoka- Brown!" p.38  
 Liza: "... Mr Major" p.39  
 Liza: "...Mr Lejoka-Brown! In Congo, the French Law one man, one woman ..." p.39  
 Lejoka-Brown: "... Lady ! Aha - am I a bag of cement? ..." p.40  
 Member 1: Mr President ...." p.51  
 Lejoka-Brown: "... Mr Osagie" p.52

Osagie: "Mr chairman ... er ... I...I regret to say that I... er ... I have some doubts ..." p.52

Mallam Gaskiya: "Mr Lejoka-Brown's Statement is final". P.63

Mallam Gaskiya: (striking a gavel for silence): ... Madam Bambina Uchenna Ajanaku" p.66.

A Member: "Mr chairman...I... move that vote of confidence be cast on the leadership of Mr Lejoka-Brown p.69

Mama Rashida: "Alhaji Mustafa ... p.71

Okonkwo: "Major, Liza is coming to see you". p.72

Liza (Haltngly): "Mr Okonkwo has just told me that ... you have been ... voted out of office by your party" p.73

#### **Characters in the text employed honorifics in the above dialogues to soften threat to positive face of one another.**

#### **Datum No 5: Using Discourse Marker (please) to Mitigate Threat to Face.**

Please is used by the characters in the text to ease threats to positive face of one another, examples.

Polycarp: "Please send somebody to go call master" p.52

Liza ( cooly stopping him): "No ... please" p.34

Liza (still resisting): please - I have .... a pain!" p.34

Liza: "Please don't shout !" p.40

Liza: "Please don't interrupt!" p.41

Liza: "Please, let's not start a zoological seminar on behavioural patterns of snakes!..." p.42

Mallam Gaskiya: ... Let's stop fooling ourselves please!" p.52

Okonkwo: "Major, please ..." p.58

Lejoka-Brown: "Elizabeth, please ..." p.70

#### **Characters in the text used discourse marker "please" to mitigate threats to positive face of one another.**

#### **Datum No 6: Using Expressions of Gratitude to Ease Threats to Face.**

Expressions of gratitude are Used in the text to soften threats to the face of the hearers, examples:

Lejoka-Brown: "Thanks For your concern." p.10

Liza: "Thank you" p.42

Polycarp: "Hey! Thank you mama" p.49

Lejoka-Brown: "Thank you!" p.62

Mama Rashida: "I thank you my lord. May Allah grant you more..." p.72

#### **Characters employed expressions of gratitude to alleviate threats to face of one another. Datum No 7: Using Questions to Mitigate Threats to Negative Face.**

Questions are used extensively in the text to ease threats to negative face of the hearers, examples:

Sikira: "Has my lord finished eating?" p.3

Lejoka-Brown: "Are you here ...?" p.7

Mama Rashida: "What will my lord eat this afternoon?"

Okonkwo: "Who says you can't go visiting the woman?" p.11

Lejoka-Brown: "In their separate hotels?" p.11

Okonkwo: "Who is talking about hotels?" p.11

Mama Rashida: "Did my lord call...?" p.12

Sikira: "Who is Allah bringing ?" p.12

Sikira: "Hey! Will she be bringing us chewing- gum? ..." p.13

Sikira: "What is it ?" p.14

Sikira: "Will our husband care for me now that Miss World is coming here? p.15

Mama Rashida: "Who is it?" p.16

Mama Rashida: What again?" p.19

Liza: "Is that so? p.23

Liza: "Who is a cockroach?" p.24

Sikira: "Who is a housemaid?" p.24

Mama Rashida: "... What is phone?" p. 25

Okonkwo: "...how would your politics make Liza proud?" p.28

Lejoka-Brown: "You mean I shouldn't tell her all that ?" p.29

Liza: "Are you feeling hungry?" p.38

Okonkwo: "How now?" p.42

Sikira: "Am I a slave?" p.57

Liza: "What do you want me to do?" p.73

Okonkwo: "Is the major in?" p.75

**Characters in the text used questions to pacify threat to negative face of one another**

**Datum No 8: Using Hedges to Soften Threats to Negative Face**

Hedges are used in the text scantily to ease threats to negative face of the hearers, examples:

**Okonkwo:** "... maybe Liza wants a quiet afternoon with you alone..." p.37

**Polycarp:** "Maybe dat be true, Mister. But, na dat same major wey. say make I no let any person enter telee he tell me so" p.60.

**Hedges are used by the characters in the text to ease threats to negative face of one another.**

**Datum No 9: Using Apologies to Mitigate Threats to Face.**

Apologies are employed in the text to ease threats to negative face of the hearers, examples:

**Sikira:** "Sorry Sah" p.10

**Okonkwo:** "Major ... I'm sorry..."p.12

**Liza:** "Oh ... I'm sorry." p.21

**Liza:** "I'm sorry." p. 24

**Lejoka-Brown:** "...Elizabeth, I'm really very sorry for everything that has happened..." p.75

**Apologies are used by the characters in the above dialogues to soften threats to negative face of one another.**

**Datum No 10: Using Pessimistic Statements to Ease Threats to Face.**

Pessimistic statements are employed by the characters in the text to ease threats to negative face of one another, examples:

**Lejoka-Brown:** "...The a Egg Treatment won't work now" p.33

**Okonkwo:** "I doubt it, major." p.33

**Lejoka-Brown:** No more monkey politics for me ..." p.75.

**Pessimistic statements are used in the text to mitigate threats to negative face of the hearers.**

**Datum No 11: Using Generalised Expressions to Pacify Threats to Negative Face.**

Generalised expressions are employed by the characters in the text to soften threats to negative face of one another, examples:

**Mustafa:** "Hmm children of these days only Allah can save us." p.18

**Lejoka-Brown:** "Women are taking over the world." P.70

**Lejoka-Brown:** "A women world!" p.71

**Generalised expressions are used in the text to ease threats to hearers face.**

**Datum No 12: Using Contradiction to Soften Threat to Face.**

Contradiction is used in the text to soften threat to face, example.

**Lejoka- Brown:** "...Your suggestion is crazy and yet not crazy ..." p.12

**Contradiction is used in the above dialogue to mitigate threat to hearer(s) face.**

**Datum No 13: Asking Rhetoric Question to Soften Threats to Face.**

Rhetoric question is asked by a character in the text to ease threat to face of the hearer, example:

**Mustafa:** "Are the bodies of my masters wives... covered up against temptation?" p.16

**A rhetoric question is asked in the text to ease threat to negative face of the hearer.**

**Datum No 14: Using Ellipses to Mitigate Threats to Face.**

Ellipses are employed by the characters in the text to reduce threats to the face of one another, examples:

**Lejoka-Brown:** "Hep ... a woman ... hep ... an ordinary-hey ...woman! what does she knows... hep... hep

...about army... hep ... exercise? -hep... As

For you-help ... six years in England... p.5

**Lejoka-Brown:** "Are you there ...? This is how it works, I send ... " p.7

**Okonkwo:** "You the ... have a third wife?" p.8

**Okonkwo:** "All the same, you should have explained to Liza long before this ... this ..." p.9

**Okonkwo:** "Hey... I'll tell you what ...?" p.11

**Lejoka-Brown:** "Yes... mmm ... your ... I've had a cable gram ... your, mmm... sister-in- marriage is arriving this evening" p.12

**Sikira:** "Policemen with guns .... all over the place ...

Oh, come see, quick ... they're fighting the people." p.14

**Mustafa:** "The master ... is he not in?" p.17

**Mama Rashida (Sepulchrally):** "we ... did not know that you would come so ...early!" p.21

**Liza:** "Most ... spectacular! But... please, do me a favour ... get it out of my room." p.22

**Sikira:** "In bed ... terrible ... you wait; you'll see him tonight (signs)" p.23

**Mama Rashida:** "Oh ...Polycarp put them in your room" p.26

**Liza:** "Hail Mary, Mother of God. help me out of this zoo!" p.26

**Okonkwo:** "And she saw ...the other women!" p.30

**Mama Rashida (lifting her basket and backing away):** "I... beg you ... do not fight ... "p.33

**Lejoka-Brown:** "Oh...yes ... why not ..." p.35

**Lejoka-Brown:** "So ... You ... emm ... I ... I take it then that - emm ... emm ... things have gone well between you and them." p.36

**Liza:** "No, no ... that's supply" p. 47

**Mallam Gaskiya :** "This is beyond doubles... it's sheer... oh, hell ..." p.52

**Ellipses are used in the above dialogues to ease threats to the face of the hearers.**

**Datum No 15: Employing Impersonal Pronouns to soften Threats to Face.**

Impersonal pronouns are used by the characters in the text to weaken threats to face of the hearers, examples:

**Lejoka-Brown:** "...It is wat!... p.7

**Okonkwo:** "It sounds like waps p.7

**Lejoka-Brown:** "... It has to be" p.12

**Okonkwo:** "It's better for them to know ..." p.12

**Mama Rashida:** "It is nobody's fault that your baby didn't come out to see the world." p.15

**Mustafa:** "... It is a disgrace, sister... p.17

**Mama Rashida** " ... It is not easy to get a taxi here, sister ..." p.26

**Mama Rashida:** "It is well them" p.27

**Liza:** "It's divine!" p.37

**Ellipses are used by the characters in the above dialogues to mitigate threats to the face of one another.**

## 5. Findings

The study found that elements of Bald on Record politeness strategy such as commands; components of positive politeness strategy like polite expressions of admiration, tag questions, honorifics, discourse marker (please), expressions of gratitude; features of negative politeness strategy such as questions, hedges, apologies, pessimistic statements, generalised expressions and constituents of off-record politeness strategy such as contradiction, rhetoric question; ellipses and impersonal pronoun are used by the characters in the text to mitigate threats to the face of others who are faced with Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) while engaging in conversations.

## 6. Conclusion

The Study discloses that different elements of Bald on Record politeness strategy, positive politeness strategy, Negative Politeness strategy and Off-Record politeness strategy are employed by the characters in the text to soften threats to the face of the hearers who are threatened by Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) while conversing collectively. The study concludes that different politeness strategies used in the text performed a diverse variety of functions in the conversations.

## 7. Suggestion for Further Studies

The paper recommends that further studies be carried out on politeness strategies on same plays and short stories written by other prominent African Literary Artists.

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