

Greetings as a Politeness Strategy in a Yoruba Short Story Taught to High School Learners

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Abstract

This study investigates the cultural and linguistic aspects of politeness found in selected Yoruba greetings within a short story that is taught to high school learners. To examine the politeness strategies used in Yoruba greetings, a simple textual analysis was employed. The concept of politeness considers greetings as significant in all human conversational interactions since they contribute to establishing and maintaining rapport between speakers. This study identifies several functions of greetings, including discourse initiation and termination, gap filling, solidarity, security and acceptance, courtesy and respect, and comradeship. Additionally, the study explores the social distance between interlocutors, the power dynamics between the speaker and the listener, and the formal relationships between them, which influence the specific types of politeness strategies employed. This research provides valuable insights into the behavioural characteristics and cultural values of Yoruba language speakers and individuals from other linguistic backgrounds worldwide.

Keywords: Yoruba; greetings; high school; politeness; short stories

Introduction

This study explores cultural and linguistic elements of politeness in some selected Yoruba greetings in a short story taught to high school learners. Yoruba is one of the three main languages spoken in Nigeria and it belongs to the Niger-Congo group of languages with over 30 million speakers in Nigeria alone, with most speakers in the Southwest Nigeria (Adedokun, 2020). Yoruba is also a native language of over two million speakers in Togo, Republic of Benin, and other countries where Yoruba people emigrated. It is important to mention that the Yoruba alphabet is tonal, which makes it more challenging to recognise when compared to the printed alphabet of English. Yoruba speakers use the language for communicative purposes, greeting being one form of communication. The Yoruba community believes that greetings are an important part of every human communication from the start to the end and are a common marker and an integral part of politeness. This suggests that in all interpersonal communication, people usually employ politeness strategies, or set standards that guides conversational exchange.

Scholars such as Brown and Levinson (1987), Leech (2016), and Lakoff (2004) explore linguistic approaches to politeness. This study uses Brown and Levinson's (1987) description of politeness. Brown and Levinson describe politeness as a longing to secure self-image by language

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speakers. This implies that in order to be considered polite or well-mannered, a speaker should take into account the listener's facial expressions and self-perception by employing various approaches. This emphasises the importance of respecting and valuing every individual in all interactions. However, achieving success in human communication requires the implementation of essential politeness strategies, with greetings being of utmost importance. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), when a speaker utters something that poses a threat to someone's self-image, it is referred to as a 'face threatening act' (FTA). Conversely, when the speaker mitigates the potential threat, it is considered a "face saving act" (FSA). Based on this notion, the following are the four main strategies for managing Face Threatening Acts (FTA): Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Bald on Record, and Off Record.

Greeting is a type of speech act where the speaker intentionally makes their presence known to another, to show attention to, and suggest a type of relationship or social status between individuals or groups of people encountering each other (Kim et al., 2009). Jibreen (2010) asserts that greeting could then be regarded as a positive politeness strategy as it tends to cater for the positive face needs of the hearer. It is in this regard that Adeoye (2014) argues that greetings are customary phrases employed to extend a welcome or convey delight upon encountering someone. Greeting is not defined by its length or brevity but by its possession of more interactive expressions, more questions from the people involved, and more emotive feelings than when there is/are no greetings. In our meetings with people, greeting seems to be an indication of our readiness to participate socially and as conversational routines. Greetings are a part of the linguistic "catalogue of politeness" (Wu and Miller 2010). Greetings could therefore be described as the foremost contact that occur in human communal encounters and greetings could come in various forms such as "hi", "hello" from speakers and then followed by other sequence of greetings.

Greetings are very common in Yoruba short stories. Yoruba culture and people have greetings for almost every human day-to-day activity and the greetings constantly refer to the condition in which the recipient is found, the time of the day, the weather condition, and other factors (Oparinde, Makhubu and Bariki 2017). In many cases, a non-Yoruba speaker usually feels uneasy when a Yoruba speaker greets them in every encounter on the same day. The art of greetings is also reflected in Yoruba short stories which distinguishes them from short stories in other languages and cultures.

Remarkably, short stories exist in almost every language and culture worldwide, reflecting their respective cultural heritage and traditions (Ceylan, 2016). The Yoruba language, like other languages and cultures,

possesses its own collection of short stories that hold significant importance within Yoruba culture and tradition. These stories not only impart moral lessons to individuals of all ages but also provide guidance on cultivating positive interpersonal relationships and fostering harmony among community members (Barnabas, 2014). Numerous Yoruba short stories incorporate proverbs, wherein a specific proverb is intricately connected to a particular short story. In essence, each proverb is derived from a corresponding short story. In ancient Yoruba communities, elders (both male and female) used to narrate these short stories as part of Yoruba oral literature, typically in the evenings under the moonlight, to children, teenagers, young adults, and older members of the community. These stories share similarities with the "moonlight stories" told in various African cultures. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of these stories lies in imparting moral values, cautioning against societal vices, and teaching appropriate behavioural norms both within and outside the home. Most significantly, they emphasise the importance of politeness, with a particular focus on greetings.

The emergence of Western education has transformed short stories into Yoruba reading texts which have been infused into the curriculum (Adedokun, 2022) and learners now read in the classroom in printed text or digitally (Adedokun and Zulu, 2022). It should be noted that most Yoruba short stories usually do not have titles. The titles are usually supplied by the hearers of the stories at the end of the narrations. The titles are dependent on the moral lesson(s) that can be derived from such short stories. An interesting fact is that a short story might have more than one title since there might be more than one moral lesson derived from such story. The goals of these stories according to Pardede (2010) are to offer learners increased opportunities to derive enjoyment from learning activities, improve their language skills, cultivate cultural sensitivity, and refine their thinking abilities.

Literature Review

Greeting as a speech act is anchored on the initiative that goes beyond merely building and cementing interpersonal relationships. According to Searle (1969), the sounds or marks one makes in the performance of the speech act of greeting are characteristically said to have meaning and mean something by those sounds or marks produced or signalled in the process of speech utterance. This indicates that whenever we speak as humans, we mean something by what we say, and whatever we say, i.e., the thread of morphemes that we emit while speaking is typically supposedly to have a specific meaning or some string of meanings.

Greeting like other speech acts, such as asking, commanding, reporting and warning involves a speaker, a listener, and the utterance.

Fundamentally, any speech act that a speaker performs is accompanied by some semiotic movement of the body which makes such conversation to be either interesting or irritating to the hearer(s). Greeting is regarded as a modest type of speech act, which is uttered at the beginning, during, and at the end of an encounter. However, greeting performs more than observation of social obligation or as obedience to the norms of the community; it builds and cements social relationships, even to grease the wheel of communication (Bickmore and Picard, 2005; Wallwork 2011; Mohammed, 2017). In fact, Jibreen (2010) believes that greetings are considered speech acts or specific illocutionary acts that possess meanings or propositional contents with the purpose of fulfilling certain functions. Greeting as portrayed here could be said to facilitate the process of communication, making it easier for the speech to flow better during speech performance.

In their investigation on the greeting customs around the world, Zayats and Triput (2012:130) contend that while greetings may appear to be merely a linguistic formality, they serve as an excellent means of familiarizing oneself with the culture and traditions of a community. They further identify some linguistic politeness strategies that accompany greetings in some cultures around the world. To them, greeting during encounters like 'hello' is the commonest way of saying that the listener is welcome and that one means no harm. Zayats and Triput (2012) indicate that in the US, it is a common thing for fellow men to shake hands and a peck on a cheek for those who know each other well but in France on the other hand, it is casual for children, men and women to kiss their friends on both cheeks at the beginning and end of an encounter. In Japan, however, it is a common practice for men to bow when they greet, with a casual shaking of hands or a hug. Furthermore, in the Arab culture, close males greet each other with a hug and a kiss on both cheeks and shaking the right hands alone for longer, but not firmly like the West. To the Arabs, in public, any form of physical contact between individuals of different genders, even during greetings, is considered improper and illegitimate (Amir et al., 2012). This suggests that the form of greetings that is acceptable in a particular culture or part of the world could be a taboo in another.

In the same vein, other linguistic politeness strategies that are crucial to greetings in cultures around the world have to do with positioning of the fingers. For instance, the high five is a congratulatory hand signal which occurs when two individuals concurrently raise one hand, approximately in the height of the head, pushes, slides or slaps the level part of their palm and hand alongside the palm and level of the hand of their partner (Glowka et al, 2009; Baker and Warren 2015). The finger gesture during greeting is another linguistic politeness strategy that differs in use from culture to culture during greetings. We may thus, conclude at this point that every culture has its own politeness strategies of greetings, and it is quite

interesting that the strategies employed in one culture might be unacceptable in another. Yoruba greetings have some important politeness strategies which accompany them. These strategies are the focus of this study. The strategies that would be discussed include *prostrating (idobale)* as in the case of younger males in front of an older adult and kneeling with two knees - *kneeling (ikunle)* as in the case of younger females in front of an older individual. Another important politeness strategy that accompanies Yoruba greetings is folding of two fists inwards or outwards (*Osuba*) at the same time. This strategy is used when greeting a traditional ruler in Yorubaland. This is accompanied by prostrating or kneeling, depending on the gender of the greeter. In the Yoruba culture, everyone must show deference to the traditional rulers such as, kings, chiefs, clan head.

In addition is the *switching prostration (iyika)* which is an unusual kind of prostration that is accompanied by rolling on the floor from one side of the body to the other. This can be done by both males and females and is regarded as one of highest form of politeness strategy of greeting accorded to royal subjects and the traditional rulers. Unlike the *idobale, ikunle, osuba and the iyika* is the *ijuba*, otherwise referred to as ‘worship’, This is a strategy that involves touching the ground with the forehead while the buttocks are raised up. This strategy is related to the manner in which the Muslims pray. This strategy that accompanies greeting is exclusively reserved for the Yoruba deities (gods and goddesses) but not used for mortal beings. The last is *oro aponle* (use of honorifics). Abushariefeh (2016), defines honorifics as expressions or words that convey esteem or respect when referring to a person, especially when speaking to an elder or a social superior. The main functions of honorifics are to show deference and to communicate respect (Agyekum, 2004; Brown, 2011). The politeness strategies such as *osuba, iyika* and *oro aponle* are not a function of age of the recipient but a function of the office or title of such people. An interesting thing, for instance, is that the parents of the traditional rulers must also show courtesy to their son or daughter when such children are traditional office holders, just the same way other people show reverence to such rulers. The politeness strategies crucial to greetings as described above could be described pictorially as compiled by Kone (2017) except for the last one, which is the use of honorific (*oro aponle*). They are as follows:

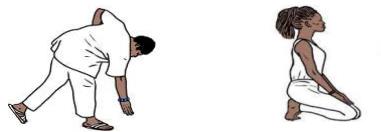


Figure 1 and 2: Idobale (prostration) and Ikunle (kneeling)

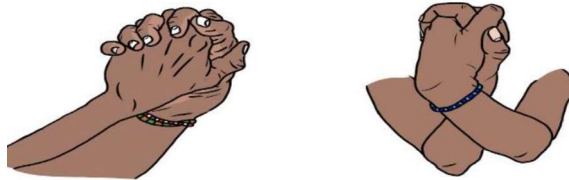


Figure 3: Osuba (reference)

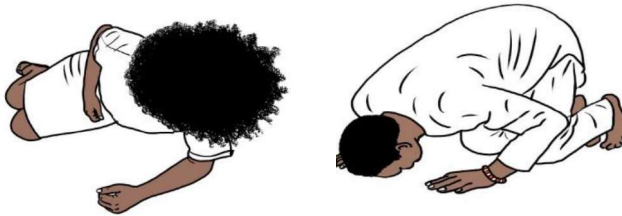


Figure 4: Iyika (switching prostration) and ijuba (worship)

The Functions of Greetings

The act of greeting performs specific functions. These functions generally are to show that the greeter wishes to establish a relationship in a harmless atmosphere, to appease and bond to neutralise possibility of aggressive behaviour (Rash, 2004; Wayar, 2015). The functions of greetings could be subdivided further. These functions include:

- (i) discourse initiation and termination
- (ii) gap filling
- (iii) solidarity
- (iv) security and acceptance
- (v) courtesy and respect and
- (vi) comradeship

Greeting could initiate and terminate discourse between two or more people. This is not based on whether the people involved have known one another for a long or short time. Discourse can be initiated by two strangers or two familiar individuals. For example, below is a dialogue between two students on a university campus who are possibly meeting for the first time and are English speakers.

Student A: Good day! Could you please show me the way to the Students' Union Building?

Student B: Ok, look at that building ahead, the Students' Union Building is behind it.

Speaker A: I am grateful. Thank you so much!

The second example below depicts a conversation between two Yoruba adult speakers who are somewhat familiar with each other but haven't seen each other in a long time. They unexpectedly run into each other on the street.

Adult A: E nle o! (Hello)!

Adult B: E rora o! (Hello)!

Adult A: E ku ijometa (Long time, no see).

Adult B: Oooo... (A common response to greetings)!

Adult A: Bawo ni? (How are you)?

Adult B: A dupe o (I thank God).

Adult A: Gbogbo ile nko? (How is the family)?

Adult B: A wa daada (We are fine).

Adult A: E ki gbogbo ile o (My regards to the family).

Adult B: Won a gbo o, e seun (They will hear, thank you).

Adult A: O dabo (Bye).

Adult B: O dabo (Bye).

In the two conversation threads above, the greeting words “Good day!” and “E nle o” are used to initiate discourse and the greeting expressions “Thanks” and “O dabo” are used to terminate discourse between speakers. According to Adegbija (1995), the discourse initiation function of greeting serves as an ‘atmosphere sanitizing tact’ and thereby waters the ground for the seed of conversation to germinate and to Chiluba (2009, 2010), it is grossly impolite to initiate a conversation without [a word of greeting], especially if the recipient lacks prior knowledge of the subject matter.

The gap-filling function of greeting is possible as a result of the first function which is discourse initiation. In order for humans to maintain harmonious relationships with one another, it is necessary to establish a ritual of initiating conversations with greetings. Consequently, when individuals have established a smooth rapport through greetings, their conversations tend to flow seamlessly. This notion aligns with the Yoruba proverb, "*Eni ti o ba d'ami si w'aju, a te ile tutu*" (Whoever pours water ahead will walk on a wet floor). Generally wet floors may connote danger of slipping, but in Yoruba, it means “as you make your bed, so you must lie on it”. Communication gaps between two or more individuals are filled by words of greetings, as greeting oils the wheel of verbal interaction between interlocutors (Akinwunmi, 2014).

Greeting could also function as solidarity. Every rational human understands and believes that being snubbed by someone whom one

believes should not, may be an indication of temporary or permanent animosity. At that point in time, the snubbed individual should not, as a matter of fact, expect any iota of support from the one who has snubbed them. The significance of solidarity becomes evident when individuals or families encounter difficulties or navigate through challenging periods, particularly in the context of greetings. For example, when a family is bereaved, the neighbour, friend, and other people's expression of condolence through greetings is a sign of solidarity for the bereaved family. Gestures such as vigorously shaking each other's right palms, snapping fingers, and warm embraces (Egblewogbe, 1990) are among the various indicators of solidarity.

Greetings, in the same vein, function as security and acceptance. For instance, a 10th grade female learner was heading home from school and happened to take a shortcut. The shortcut she took led her to a solitary place where she stumbles on three hefty men in a corner smoking and drinking, even with knives in their hands. She was terrified that they might harm her. Nevertheless, when she approached them, one of the men greets her with a warm smile. Her fears were allayed. As could be observed from the encounter above, the greeting by one of the men gave the teenager a sense of security and acceptance. She was quite aware that she would not be harmed by those armed men.

Brooks (2000) recounts his experience as a high school teacher. He notes that as a high school teacher, he needed to learn learners' names, then greet them with a warm smile at the door of the classroom each day to welcome them to school. The effect of this greeting accompanied with a warm smile, according to him, gave the learners a sense of security and acceptance. The effect of this was that the learners took him as a father figure. This suggests that the function of greetings goes beyond that of security and acceptability of an encounter as it could ease tension and dispel fear.

Greeting can serve as an expression of courtesy and respect. Regardless of gender or age, every individual desires to be treated with respect and shown common courtesy. It can be argued that a person who greets others is displaying courtesy and respect, as many societies view those who neglect greetings as disrespectful, antisocial, and rude. The significance attached to greeting within many communities implies that an interaction lacking a greeting is often perceived as lacking courtesy and respect. Relationships such as seller-buyer, doctor-patient, and lecturer-student, among others, may struggle to thrive if greetings are omitted at any point—be it the beginning, middle, or end—since such interactions partially disregard the importance of courtesy. According to Schottman (1995), when a visitor is in the Benin kingdom (Nigeria), they are advised

to show courtesy and respect by greeting individuals, particularly elders, before seeking directions. In return, the visitor is typically offered a seat and may even be served a refreshing drink before continuing their journey. It is worth noting that these greetings serve as indicators of courtesy and respect and can potentially result in additional advantages for the person extending the greeting.

The section will be wrapped up by discussing the comradeship function of greetings. Comradeship, as defined by the Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2020), refers to the friendship among individuals who belong to the same group, such as soldiers or co-workers. Greetings serve as a manifestation of comradeship, particularly when friends exchange greetings during social gatherings. The language they use during these interactions provides insights into the nature of their relationship. The following is an example of two people who happen to meet on the street in an African community.

Speaker A - Hello!

Speaker B - Hi!

Speaker A – Good to see you, my guy. How are you?

Speaker B - Great, thanks, and you?

Speaker A - Fine, thanks.

From the above conversational thread, one could notice that the two interlocutors seem to know each other, and a friendship relationship exists between them. Expressions such as 'good to see you' and 'my guy' signify that they are not just meeting for the first time. Greeting in this way shows comradeship among people of a particular social class and the social relationship that exists between speakers during the conversational encounter. In this section, the functions of greetings, including discourse initiation and termination, gap filling, solidarity, security, acceptance, courtesy, respect, and comradeship have been discussed. Greetings could be seen as an essential routine in conversational exchange, negotiation of social relationships and are guarded by shared communal factors.

Methodology

This study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate politeness routines strategies in a Yoruba short story taught to High school learners. Janks (1997) describes Critical Discourse Analysis as a research tool used in analysing a text with the intention of understanding the role and the relationship between discourse and power. In agreement, Rear (2013) identifies the aims of discourse analysis as inclusive of discovering the way the level of knowledge in society, the ideologies and assumptions influence, shape the way people talk, write and interact.

This research agrees with the submissions of Janks (1997) and Rear (2013) regarding the role of CDA and finds it to be a relevant research method for this study. This study is text based. It analyses politeness strategies in some selected Yoruba greetings in a Yoruba short story. This study examines the politeness strategies employed in greetings as a means of discourse and representation of power. Understanding the representation of politeness and its relationship to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is crucial for this research.

Janks (1997) argues further that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides researchers with the opportunity to focus on the specific 'signifiers' within a text. Thus, in this study, it is crucial to examine both politeness strategies and the linguistic choices of politeness forms in order to explore how politeness is portrayed in the text and the underlying reasons behind its presentation. According to Rear (2013), discourse serves an ideological function by contributing to the establishment and perpetuation of unequal power dynamics in society. He emphasizes that CDA's primary objective is to illuminate how the 'creation and perpetuation of unequal power relations' is achieved through a thorough analysis of the text. Therefore, the objective of this research is to investigate the depiction of politeness in the selected Yoruba greetings through textual analysis. The investigation of the various ways in which politeness is manifested in the text will involve a meticulous analysis of the contextual factors influencing the use of politeness strategies.

Findings

In his short story, Adegbite (2012) explores various themes, including the repercussions of disregarding Grice's (1975) conversational maxims, while also exploring the concept of "face" as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). To them, face is defined as an individual's self-esteem. Face has two aspects, positive and negative faces. Positive face is 'the desire to be accepted (in a way) and the negative is the longing to be unhindered in one's action'. In the text¹, the first paragraph introduces the reader to a very short biography of the two participant characters in the story (Oyeleke and Oyelakin) and what they intend to achieve. They both want to put on a *positive face*, they desire to be liked, appreciated, and possibly want to be approved. They want to make a good impression on people during their upcoming coronation ceremony. As a result, they both decide to visit a senior citizen (Otunba – a title of a chief who sits on the right hand side of

¹ Extract from "Life Lessons: Four Yoruba Stories." by Adebayo Adegbite 2012 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q8z8TTuIM06u7Gd-98KpBZW-EzPFitdm/view?usp=share_link]

the king in Yoruba land) to borrow his ceremonial outfit which happens to be an expensive one.

The second paragraph provides evidence of the visit by one of the duo, Oyeleke, who is soon to be coronated. Oyeleke, seemingly in a hurry, fails to initiate the conversation with a greeting when he visits Otunba to borrow his ceremonial attire. This goes against the politeness strategy of greeting, which is an essential aspect of discourse initiation. Greeting, serving to initiate discourse, plays a significant role in establishing rapport through the use of in-group address forms. For instance, Oyelakin refers to Otunba as "the only man in the kingdom who makes fear itself shiver" during his previous visit for the same purpose. According to Brown and Levinson (1987:107), the use of in-group address forms aims to fulfil the other participants' positive face desires and foster solidarity and intimacy between them. The absence of this device, the in-group address form, in Oyeleke's initial conversation with Otunba, signifies a deficiency that ultimately affects the outcome of the visit.

Subsequently, Oyelakin is conscious of a Yoruba proverb that says, "*Oro lo ma n mu ida jade ninu apo, oro naa lo si ma n mu obi jade ninu apo.*" This proverb means that "It is words that bring a sword out of the sheath, and it is also the same words that bring out 'kola nut' out of the pocket." Kola nut is a traditional plant whose fruit is often eaten as snacks, especially among the elderly in Nigeria (Odebunmi et al., 2009). The first 'apo' signifies 'sheath' and the second 'apo' signifies 'pocket'. This proverb summarily means that it is words that bring wrath to the speaker, and it is also words that bring blessings to the speaker. This implies that language can operate in various ways depending on how its users utilise it. When Oyelakin entered, he adhered to the protocol of initiating discourse, which involved beginning the interaction with a greeting as a means to overcome the barrier of non-acceptance by Otunba. He initiated the discourse with expressions of hailing and obeisance. Building relationship and rapport could also be seen when Oyelakin asked after Otunba's health (How are you?), family members (How is your wife and children), and his business. Goffman (1955) affirms that exchange of greeting works for re-establishment of social relations, acknowledgement of status, and guarantees for safe passage when performed. It is evident that Oyeleke has no interest in re-establishing a relationship with Otunba. His sole focus lies in obtaining what he desires. The utilisation of Oyelakin's diverse greetings, salutations, and respectful gestures greatly informs Otunba that Oyelakin is a cultured individual, exemplifying a consistent display of politeness during his interaction with him.

Likewise, after the building of rapport with Otunba by Oyelakin, through discourse initiation strategies of greetings such as hailing and

paying obeisance, he makes his intention known, which was to borrow Otunba's ceremonial attire. It is interesting to note that he is not queried as to why he wants what he requests (though we might say that Otunba as one of the current senior chiefs should know about what Oyelakin wants to use the ceremonial outfit for). Otunba grants his request immediately. It seems here that the previous building of rapport by Oyelakin acts as a gap filler for him before Otunba. He never needed to say much before his request is granted. This is contrary to what Oyeleke did who thought he could plunder the possession of Otunba without binding him first. Waetjen (2014) provides an illustration of this concept by citing Matthew chapter 3, verse 27, which states that no one can enter the house of a strong man and take his possessions without first subduing the strong man. Only then can the house be plundered. 'Plunder' in this sense does not mean 'to steal' but a devise to use to be able to get what one wants without stress. In the same vein, 'subduing the strong man' figuratively means the use of language to bind the listener(s) to comply without being coerced to do that which is requested of them. Otunba had to comply with Oyelakan's request as he had no other option. This suggests that greetings as a politeness routine does more than as gap filling mechanism, but also contributes to negotiating of and re-establishing relationships and social identities.

Meanwhile, as a result of the building of rapport and which has earned Oyelakin a gap filling relationship, Otunba's full attention was on Oyelakin as he (Otunba) replies promptly to his hailing and greetings and invites him to join him in his meal. This signals that he (Oyelakin) is being accepted, safe and welcome to stay to discuss whatever he has come for, though we are aware of the fact that Oyeleke, too, was accepted as he was also invited to join Otunba's meal but was not given full attention. This reflects an important aspect of Yoruba culture, wherein an angry adult openly conceals their anger and adheres to the proverb that states, "*Oruko ta o so omo eni, inu eni lo n gbe,*" meaning that "whatever name one wishes to give a newborn child is cherished in the heart." Despite being aware that Oyeleke invaded his space and behaved rudely towards him, Otunba, as a respected monarchical title holder in the community, chose not to confront him directly, considering it a sign of disrespect. Instead, Otunba continued to interact with Oyeleke as if nothing had happened, displaying maturity in handling such matters, which is fitting for someone of his stature as the king's right-hand man.

Although Oyeleke was invited to join Otunba's meal, he could hardly wait for a formal invitation before joining. In the Yoruba culture, when you're invited to join a meal by people you're not related to, you shouldn't join the meal immediately. You do not join the meal at the first invitation because you are not hungry and starving but as a polite way of saying that you have a good upbringing. You display an attitude of gratitude before

joining by saying “thank you, I’m fine”. When you are re-invited for the second time, that is when you can possibly join the meal. When you join after the first invite, you are regarded as rude and lack home training. Oyeleke’s display of indiscipline for the second time portrays him as a man who is not worthy to be one of the chiefs of the land, as he fails to display the virtue of patience.

It is worth mentioning that Oyelakin demonstrates courtesy, respect, and good upbringing by expressing his admiration and paying respects to Otunba.

‘Otunba, Otunba, the only man in this kingdom that makes fear itself shiver’ Oyelakin hailed. “Good afternoon my senior colleague. How are you? What of your wife and the children? I hope your businesses too are going well?”

The Yorubas replace the name of a person with their title in cases when the individual is a public or traditional office holder. The repetition of “Otunba, Otunba” by Oyelakin displays courtesy and respect with a sense of solidarity to the recipient (Otunba). Respect and courtesy towards office holders among the Yorubas are not determined by age or gender, instead, they are influenced by the status of the holders within the society. We would not know if Otunba is older or younger than Oyelakin, but he prostrated in reference for the office of Otunba. Schottman (1995) elucidates that prostration implies that the inferior lowers himself during the opening greeting, the difference in status determining just how low he should go. [Prostration is] being reserved for an out of the ordinary exchange of greetings with a supreme superior such as a chief, a man’s parents- in-law, or a fetish cult leader”. This suggests that the holders of public or traditional offices do not only enjoy the benefits attached to their offices but also enjoy the privilege of being accorded respect among their subject during private or public encounters. This accounts for why society, in turn, expects holders of such positions to demonstrate decorum and decency. Regarding prostration and kneeling, in Yoruba communities, for one to get things done on time, it is important to prostrate or kneel as male or female respectively. These strategies that accompany greetings tend to soften the heart of the recipient when you have gone to ask for a favour. This act of prostration signifies the gesture of politeness.

Undoubtedly, both visitors display the recognition of comradeship at different levels. Oyeleke in his case, probably because of his overfamiliarity, refuses to build and solidify his relationship with Otunba and it got him into trouble of forfeiting what could have been his going by the rule of ‘first come, first served’. On the other hand, Oyelakin asks the following questions from Otunba:

'Good afternoon, my senior colleague. How are you? What of your wife and the children? I hope your business too is going well'

We could say that the greetings show that Otunba is well known by Oyelakin and even if not, he has performed some research about Otunba before coming to his house to ask for his ceremonial outfit. The greetings of Oyelakin were so cordial that it becomes incredibly difficult for Otunba to detect if Oyelakin knows him really well or not.

Finally, the "Thank you very much, Otunba" expression by Oyelakin is a marker of discourse termination. Oyelakin terminated the discourse by muttering "thank you so much, Otunba" and left immediately after receiving what he came for. The expression is a sign of accomplishment. From the last paragraph, Oyeleke could not mutter the "thank you" expression and left in disappointment because he has 'put the cart before the horse'.

The findings of this study are based on two items: an examination of linguistic politeness strategies in some selected Yoruba greetings in a short story taught to high school learners and exploration of the manifestation of linguistic politeness strategies in some selected Yoruba greetings in a short story taught to high school learners. For linguistic politeness strategies of greeting, this study found six functions of greetings which are discourse initiation and termination, gap filling, solidarity, security and acceptance, courtesy and respect, and comradeship. Furthermore, as regards the manifestation of linguistic politeness, this study found out that greetings are always extremely formulaic discourse -that is, greetings in most cases are used to initiate a discourse and terminate discourse. Also, the routine of greetings is a structured sequence, where greeting(s) by an individual requires response(s) from the other individual being greeted. Failure to initiate a discourse with a form of greeting or respond to greetings is considered to be a violation of the politeness routine of greeting. This study also found out that an encounter cannot occur if recognition is not accomplished and greeting can be said to be an important tool that makes mutual recognition possible in any human encounter.

Conclusion

This study sets out to explore selected greetings as a form of linguistic politeness strategies in a Yoruba short story taught to high school learners. This study concluded that the type of politeness strategies of greeting serves as a pointer to the following: the social distance of the speakers, the relative power of the speakers and the statutory relationship of the speakers. These three could go a long way in determining who is who in a conversation and accord roles to the speakers during a conversation among the Yorubas. Future research should focus on the investigation of other forms of

linguistic politeness strategies and routines as evident in other literary narrative texts that are taught to high school learners.

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