Face Threatening Acts and Standing Orders: 'Politeness' or 'politics' in the Question Time Discussions of the Kenyan Parliament

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Abstract

This paper examines politeness in the context of politics during question time discussions of the Kenyan Parliament; politeness is an attempt by the speaker to linguistically show he cares about the others feelings. Question time is a highly aggressive session full of FTAs but the parliamentarians are constrained to produce parliamentary language required by the standing orders of 2008, thus politeness strategies become the only linguistic device to the realization of fruitful political discussions. The live televised question time sessions within a period of two weeks in the month of April and May 2009 were recorded, transcribed and sampled for analysis. This was done using a theoretical framework encompassing positive, negative, and image repair politeness strategies. The findings show that certain strategies are used to mitigate FTAs thus enhancing effective communication; others are a ritual requirement by the standing orders whereas others are as a result of mere politics between the different political factions.

Eight key words: Face Threatening Acts (FTAs), Standing Orders, Politeness, Politics, Mitigation, Members of Parliament (MPs), Effective Communication, Ideological Communication.

1. Introduction

Language can be used to encourage, discourage, enhance good communication or even cause conflict between interlocutors, hence there is need to use polite language for fruitful communication. Holtgrave (2008) explains that acts of communication are forms of social discourse which maintain and regulate social activities, and define status and power relations. Together with education, religion and law, politics is one of those spheres of institutional life in which language is largely, although not exclusively, constitutive of its actions. Van Djik (1997) expresses that politics is limited to the activity of the institutions, such as government, parliament and parties, fulfilling their role of distributing resources. Parliament is a place where people with diverse ideologies and character meet to make laws and assess how they are executed, it always has a potential of experiencing FTAs as the MPs challenge each other in their performance of duty and general political stands of the day. This can lead to communication breakdown a fact challenged by Harris (2000) who points out that such exchanges, though clearly intended to be face threatening do not apparently breach either the rules of debate or the discourse expectations of the members of the House. He further says that such behavior is precisely what is required of a good Parliamentarian and since this behavior function to maintain interaction, using Watts (2003, 2005) distinction it would be categorized as politic speech. In this paper communication breakdown entails lack of effective and efficient communication; however, various measures are linguistically put in place to avert such situations, minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange as noted by Brown and Levinson (1987).

2. Background and Theoretical framework

The idea that politeness should be understood as a strategic conflict avoidance can be found for example in the view of Brown and Levinson (1987) that the basic social role of politeness is in it's ability to function as away

of controlling potential aggression between interacting parties or in the views of Ide (1989) that connect politeness with smooth communication or that of Leech (1983: 17, 82) which entails avoiding disruption and maintaining social equilibrium and friendly relations. The approach of politeness as propounded by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) gets its strength over others by explaining it from more fundamental notions of what is to be a human being, the basic notion of face; which is all about the public self image that everyone wants to claim for him or herself. Their work was influenced by Goffman (1967) who published the article on face work. He discusses face in reference to how people present themselves in social situations and interactions. Lin (1935) argues that the original work on face stems from the Chinese language, which has three common words meaning face i.e. *mian, lian* and *yon.* Lin says that it is not a face that can be washed or shaved but a face that can be granted and lost, fought for and presented as a gift. Face is something that is emotionally invested and that it can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in an interaction. Goffman (1967) argues that face is a mask that changes depending on the audience and social interaction because in any society, whenever the physical possibility of spoken interaction arises, it seems that a system of practices, conventions and procedural rules comes into play which functions as a means of guiding and organizing the flow of messages. (Goffman 1967:33) breaks down face into two categories:

positive and negative face. Positive face, which is, as identified by Lim and Bowers (1991) as the need for appreciation expressed through inclusion or belongingness and need for approval expressed by respect for ones abilities. Harris (2003) describes negative face as an individual's basic claim to territories, personal preserves and self determination. Humans are social beings who need both autonomy and belongingness in differing degrees according to the context they find themselves. Brown and Levinson (1987) explains that every utterance carries with it the potential to create a threat to either the speaker's or hearer's negative or positive face and as such comprises a FTA e.g. request for information, help, advice, criticism, reminders, offers etc. Negative and positive face co-exist in a delicate balance; the threat to one kind of face can be seen as a direct support for the other kind of face for example request for information may satisfy the positive face but may be threatening the negative face.

In Brown and Levinson model interactants are rational agents hence they think strategically and are conscious of their language choices. They both have positive and negative face therefore believed that the model persons often want to maintain each others face but are often forced to commit FTAs. The FTAs often requires a mitigating statement or some sort of politeness or else the line of communication will break; politeness strategies are developed for the main purpose of dealing with this. Tracy (2008) equates impoliteness to failing to do the politeness strategies by going bald on record without redressing the FTA. Holtgraves (2005) discusses that in every interaction, participants ought to be aware of one another's face and maintain it for the sake of social harmony and smooth communication. Although watts (2003) in his argument desires to avoid associating politeness with social harmony or cooperation. He departs from the dominant research paradigm by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987); he located possible realizations of polite or impolite behavior and to offer a way of assessing how the members themselves may have evaluated the behavior. Locher and Watts (2008), Locher (2004) discusses about relational work as the work people invest in negotiating their relationships in interaction. It's based on the idea that any communicative act has both informational as well as interpersonal aspect an idea that is also expressed by Brown and Levinson (1987) but they also focus on impolite or rude aspects of social behavior. For a message to be perceived to be polite, impolite or merely appropriate depends on the judgments the interactants make at the level of relational work *insitu* i.e. during an ongoing interaction in a particular setting.

The Judgments are made on the basis of norms and expectations that individuals have constructed and acquired through categorizing the experiences of similar past situations, or conclusions that one draws from other people's experiences. They argued further that there is no linguistic behavior that is inherently polite or impolite as they are subject to change over time and situation. Christie (2005) referred to the politic behavior as communities of practice perspectives as some acts committed are dictated by the situation and may not necessarily be a FTA at that particular time. Culpeper (2005) and Bousfield (2007) also dealt with these but then they explicitly looked at intentional impoliteness or rudeness; they note that aggravation strategies are also sensitive to social factors; for example, a very powerful person will probably be attacked only by the off record means; whereas friends and intimates would probably be attacked by means of positive aggravation and socially distant persons would be attacked by means of negative aggravation, they base their argument on Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) politeness strategies which to some extent agree with the ideas of Watts (2003), and Locher and Watts (2008). They discussed that the degree of potential face threat of any utterance is based upon the perceived social distance between the speaker and hearer, the power of the speaker in relation to the hearer and the imposition of the act. Interactants use this knowledge when selecting from a set of super strategies used in crafting an utterance to manage FTAs.

First, the speaker can decide to perform an act on record which is the least polite way and only occurs when efficiency is of great importance. Secondly, the speaker can perform the FTA using positive politeness strategies that address the hearer's need for belonging or to be seen as desirable to others.

Third he can use negative politeness strategies to mitigate the FTA, such as utterances acknowledging or demonstrating respect for the hearer's autonomy. Fourth is the use of off record
like hints, placing the interpretive burden upon the hearer. Finally the speaker can choose to remain silent not performing the FTA at all or defending his or her face. This paper will only look at positive politeness, negative politeness and the image repair and on record strategy has been incorporated in negative politeness. Ulrich (2008) discussed that silence can be interpreted as being polite may be due to the fact that the offender is significantly more powerful than the hearer; therefore the power differential restricts the hearer's options for defending face. Moreover silence in itself is being impolite as it may imply not caring about the hearer's face; however silence is an offense according to the standing orders of the Kenyan parliament (2008) as MPs are supposed to answer Questions directed to them.

The model person's wants to maintain other's face but are often forced to commit FTAs which attack the image or self esteem of others. The image repair strategy was first discussed by Benoit (1995) as the image restoration theory; it was rooted from the fact that a picture drawn may appear blurred; failing to communicate what was originally intended therefore efforts will be made to correct the situation, this theory is mostly used in the corporate world but can also be applied in a one to one communicative interaction. Benoit says that an attack on ones image has two components; the accused is held responsible for an act and the act is portrayed as offensive. In this case when an FTA has already been committed various measures are put in place to deal with this like, outright denial of not being responsible for the FTA or shifting blame, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, making a corrective action and even mortification. The Kenyan parliament consists of three major factions, those that are allied to the president's party of PNU (Party of National Unity), those allied to the prime minister's party of ODM (Orange Democratic Movement) and those that are neither here nor there as they keep on changing their political stands depending on their political interests at that particular time. This August House is very interesting as within the two major parties forming the coalition government there are also smaller parties and within ODM and PNU, we have Government and Opposition sides also subject to their ideologies and interests over the matter being discussed.

This are groups governed by different ideologies hence we cannot assume the ideological communication as expressed by Matu (2007) while quoting Oktar (2001:319) which first, express or emphasize information that is positive about us; second, express or emphasize information that is negative about them; third, suppress or de-emphasize information that is positive about them and fourth, suppress or de-emphasize information that is negative about us. Matu notes that this constitutes the ideological square which performs a specific role in the contextual strategy of positive self presentation and its out-group counterpart negative presentation of the other basing on participants as social groups. The concept of ideological square is present in political topics as noted by Van Djik (1997) that this topic always features evaluation of performance in politics. The political factions in the Kenyan parliament would like to present themselves in a desirable way in relation to their counterparts hence as expressed by Heywood (1997) such power relations manifest themselves in the use of direct commands, threats and confrontational statements, acts that may appear as FTAs in this discussion.
 Despite the different ideas about politeness as discussed by Watts (2003), Culpeper (2005), Christie (2005). Bousfield (2007) amongst others who also included the notion of (im)politeness or rudeness and the appropriateness of an action depending on the context in their discussion, this paper will base its arguments on the ideas of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) and Benoit (2000), we assume that the Kenyan parliamentarian is a model person therefore a rational agent, who thinks strategically and are conscious of their language choices thus will seek to avoid FTAs or try to use certain strategies to minimize threats or even if an FTA is inevitable he or she can repair his or her image despite the different ideologies and power relations.

3. The Standing orders and FTAs

Parliamentarians are entitled to privileges and immunities, Abraham and Hantrey (1964) expresses that the most important is the freedom of speech. No action for defamation will lie against a member, nor can he be prosecuted for anything that he says in the house or any committee of the house or for anything contained in any written notice given by him. However the right of freedom of speech does not mean that a member can say anything he likes in the house whenever he likes, moreover, the standing orders of the Kenyan Parliament are very particular on the language use. For example looking at the standing orders of the parliament of Kenya (2008), Order 79, on contents of speeches; it shall be out of order to use offensive or insulting language whether in respect of members of the house or other person.

Moreover order 96 states that irrelevance or repetition on ones own argument or those used by other members is out of order; order 97 states that it is disorderly conduct for someone creating actual disorder, knowingly raising a false point of order, using or threatening violence against a member or other person, persisting in making serious allegations without in the speaker's opinion adequate substantiation and one abusing his or her privileges. All this acts have a potential of threatening the face therefore the rational actions parliamentarians take to preserve positive and negative face for themselves and the people they interact with, add up to politeness as expressed in Brown and Levinson's model.

4. Methodology

Data was collected through non-participant observation, live televised parliamentary proceedings of question time sessions were recorded for two weeks during the month May 2009, they were then transcribed and purposively sampled. Due to the qualitative nature of the study three sessions were randomly sampled for analysis; data was analyzed irrespective of gender or position as long as they are part of parliament which consists of 210 elected MPs, 12 nominated, the Speaker and the Attorney general. The various positive and negative politeness strategies used to mitigate FTAs were identified and explained.

5. Politeness in the Kenyan Parliament

The concerns for face address relational dimension of communication through helping others establish and maintain face, face work also serves the content dimension in two ways; first, many content dimension acts such as making requests can threaten the face needs of one or both interactants requiring some mitigation to lessen the threat potential. Second, face concerns may be explicitly addressed in an attempt to further communicative goals. FTAs can be conveyed over a sequence of utterances and any given utterance can serve relational and or instrumental goals. Harris (2003) notes that while negative politeness cultures emphasize greater power and social distance, positive politeness culture enhances lower power and social distance between interactants as we will verify in our analysis.

5.1. Positive Politeness

This is redress directed to the addressee's positive face; his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions / acquisitions / values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable. Ide (1989) refer to positive politeness as solidarity politeness because it emphasizes common ground between interactants therefore parliamentarians use this orientation to promote high involvement and solidarity. Brown and Levinson (1987) explains that Positive politeness is not necessarily redressive of the particular face want infringed by the FTA but a kind of social accelerator, it's the kernel of 'familiar' and 'joking' behaviors. Jokes may be used as an exploitation of politeness strategies as well as, since jokes are based on mutual shared background knowledge and values, they may be used to stress that shared background or those shared values. Joking is a basic positive politeness technique for putting issues at 'ease' or creating humor. Holmes (1998) notes that humor can protect the positive face needs of the Speaker by expressing self-deprecatory or apologetic sentiments; self deprecatory humor, where the speaker anticipates embarrassment and face loss, and responds by turning the source of embarrassment into a subject of humor. These views are shared by Norrick (2006), Martin (2007) and Martin, Kuiper and Olinger (1993) who argues that humor provides away for the individual to shift perspective on a stressful situation, reappraising it from a new and less threatening point of view. Consider the following example,

'Extract 1):'

Mp. B: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker sir. As much as I would not want to challenge your ruling on deferring the question I stand to be corrected if I misunderstood you the reason for deferring the question is because the minister had written to the speaker indicating that he may be out of the country and so in your assessment he could not be around. There was a cabinet reshuffle last week and my friend Mp. L, was appointed the assistant minister in the ministry and I have seen him loitering around. Is it in order for you to defer the question when there is somebody else who can answer it? We are all mortal.

Mp. C: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker sir. I have pleaded with our fellow colleagues to treat this house with the due decorum that it deserves. "Loitering," for heavens sake is not parliamentary language. Can he withdraw and apologize.

Mp. T1: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, Mp Q1! Mp B the word loitering is unparliamentarily. Honorable members and ministers do not loiter around. Could you withdraw?

Mp. B: Mr. Deputy Speaker sir, and may I clarify that I saw him wandering around.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! Order! Mp B! This is not a laughing matter. This is not a comedy. Withdraw the word "loitering."

Mp. B: Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, I really want to do it but which word would I use here?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You saw the Assistant minister in the precincts of parliament.

Mp. B: I saw the Assistant minister in the precincts of parliament.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You did not see him loitering.

Mp. B: I did not see him loitering.

(**Laughter**)

Mp. A: Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir I would like to seek your clarification on whether the honorable member actually met the chair's demand to withdraw and apologize for the language.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Indeed he has not met my demand. Please, withdraw and apologize. There is a standard procedure for doing that.

Mp. B: Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, I have said that I saw the Assistant minister within the precincts of parliament and I withdraw the words "loitering" and "wandering". (Tuesday, 19 May, 2009).

When the minister realized that he had committed an FTA and was being forced to withdraw and apologize an act that was also threatening his own face, he jokingly did it hence easing the whole act by creating humor. Nevertheless putting into consideration the argument of Norrick and Spitz (2010) as they discuss interrelationship of humor and conflict. They focus on contexts where humor provides constructive means of attenuating conflict and ending disagreements in conversation; then they turn to conflict talk as a source of humor. Showing how humor can mitigate conflict and how conflict talk can be funny like in our example above, Mp. B didn't want to appear to have committed an FTA, i.e. telling lies about the whereabouts of Mp. L, and also having used unparliamentary words 'loitering' and 'wandering', to ease up the whole situation he repeated the words of the Deputy Speaker, something that created humor which was noted through the laughter by the MPs. This is an indication that a serious confrontation or one which our actions or intentions are likely to be maligned can be converted into a jocular repartee, hence humor is valued as a social asset and if exercised judiciously, confers upon it encodes the animated interest and welcoming approval of others whether in-group or out-group as expressed by the ideological square. Sharing humor fosters rapport and intimacy and promotes friendship by showing common sentiment and reducing tensions.

Foot (1997) also notes that not all laughter is as a result of humor and not all humor causes laughter. Ojwang (2010) discusses that laughter may be an FTA in itself, as it may be away of exposing another FTA that the S is trying to mitigate. Just as it appear in our example, Mp. B is trying to mitigate the FTA by use of humor but the laughter brings it out even more. Moreover MP. B avoids disagreement through the "token agreement" where, he desires to agree or appear to agree with the Deputy Speaker which leads also to mechanisms of pretending to agree. When he says, 'I really want to do it, but which word do I use here?' The MPs keep on twisting their utterances so as to appear to agree or to hide disagreement, this is a common strategy employed in parliamentary discussions as a means of enhancing solidarity or common ground amongst them. Alternatively MPs may choose to be vague about his own opinions, so as not to be seen to disagree; the Deputy Speaker used the word 'indeed' to show his agreement with MP. A. and also appear not to totally disagree with MP. B. In this context these word does not openly show his stand of being in agreement or not. Repetition is another way of stressing being in agreement, apart from showing that one has heard correctly what was said, and the above example MP. B kept on repeating the words of the Deputy speaker to show agreement. The repetition caused humor which enhanced the positive politeness strategies that were being employed in this situation. Although to some extent he breached the Standing Order that prohibits acts of repetition.

Another characteristic of positive politeness evident is where Speaker stresses his general interest in the Hearer and he has no direct intention of doing an FTA by first discussing issues unrelated to the topic. For example, extract 1, MP. A called MP. L his friend and talked about his new ministerial position as a way of mitigating his own or the Hearer's face, just before committing the FTA, the use of the word 'friend' shows that they share or have something in common; nevertheless Leech (1983:132) calls the attempt for the Speakers to maximize praise for the other as an approbation strategy which shows ones loyalty to a particular social group, just as shown in our example where MP. A acknowledged the new position of MP. L (Assistant Minister) this further shows how he wouldn't want to threaten his face as they belong to the same social group. The other positive politeness strategy involves the inclusion of both Speaker and Hearer in an activity mitigates an FTA. The use of the cooperative assumptions 'we' when the Speaker really means 'you' or 'me' and thereby redressing FTAs. 'We' is often used to soften requests and offers, as if pretending that the Hearer wants the object or action requested as well. Another example is where MP. C talks of … our fellow colleagues…, he redresses the advice and the strong emotional expressions he has towards MP. C for using the unparliamentary language that is also considered an FTA. The other unavoidable strategy involves the use of in-group identity markers which in this case is an indication of a fact that they share a common ground with the Hearer that is carried by the definition of the group.

Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) says it involves the use of address forms which include the use of generic names and others that also doubles as honorifics, the use of language or dialect, jargon or slang, and ellipsis. Parliamentarians are fond of using; my friend, colleague, honorable member(s), minister, brother etc. This are used to show solidarity or cooperation despite the FTAs committed. This also takes us back to our ideological square of 'us' and 'them', the use of this in-group markers is also done with this in mind as our positives needs to be emphasized as their negatives are brought to light even though that is being masked in the general identity markers.

5.2. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded. Brown and Levinson (1987) argues that it is the heart of respect behavior, it performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the FTA effects, negative politeness is the most elaborate and most conventionalized set of linguistic strategies for FTA redress; this can be done directly or indirectly. One can minimize the imposition by coming rapidly to the point, avoiding a further imposition of prolixity and obscurity. This is an important feature of politeness as Lakoof (1973) notes a fact that Brown & Levinson disagree with; to them this strategy shows no effort to mitigate Hearer's face. In the Kenyan parliament this strategy is always used when MPs directly ask questions and further clarifications on issues arising from the answers communicated. On the other hand indirectness in any communicative behavior, verbal or non-verbal, that conveys something more than or different from what it literally means, which in context could not be defended as ambiguous between literal and conveyed meaning(s). It therefore provides no line of escape to the Speaker or Hearer, in this way the utterance goes on record and the Speaker indicates his desire to have gone off record; Conventional indirectness encodes the clash of wants, and so partially achieves them both. A good example is the use of indirect speech acts which function as hedges on illocutionary force as well like in

'Extract 2:'

Dr. Y2: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I really want to thank the minister for that very good answer, and for minding about the welfare of … However, since we anticipate a constant ... I would like the Minister to tell us whether there are plans to improve the sewer treatment… (Thursday, 21st May, 2009)

The use of 'would' in the above example makes the request more polite. In most cases the use of 'could', 'may', and 'might' makes a question or request to be more polite than the use of 'can' or 'want' without any other redressive hedge. Moreover other words signifying hedging like, 'I really', 'I think', 'I believe', 'I assume',' I suspect' are normally used; these may be a polite way of either distancing oneself from responsibility of the truth of the utterance or stress commitment to its truth, e.g.

'Extract 3:'

MP. B: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, sir, I think the Assistant Minister has to apologize for the insinuation that *miraa* causes illusion. I come from a district where *miraa* is the sole cash crop. My people depend on this crop. It is really revered from where I come. So, could he apologize for insinuating *miraa* causes illusion when this is the livelihood of many people from Igembe district? (Wednesday, 20th May, 2009)

In this instance, MP. B is making a point of order but at the same time indicating politely the need of distancing himself from the truth of his utterance by saying 'I think', nevertheless stressing the commitment of the truth that an apology has to be given for the FTA committed.

An FTA can also be stated as a general rule as one of the ways of dissociating Speaker and Hearer from the particular imposition in the FTA, therefore it is away of communicating that Speaker doesn't want to impinge but is merely forced to by circumstances. From extract 1, the FTA committed by MP. B forced MP. C and even the Deputy Speaker to commit FTAs towards him asking him to withdraw the unparliamentary word he had used in reference to standing order 79 (3) and 97 (c). It implies that some FTAs cannot be avoided, circumstances force that they have to be there. This is in agreement with the ideas of Watts (2003) of politic behavior, a concept designed to show linguistic behavior which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction and which is distinguished from (im)polite behavior that is perceived to be beyond the expected.

The Mps address each other by a relatively restricted and well defined range of parliamentary forms of addresses; gender specific titles, gender neutral title, institutional titles and personal names. For example the use of Sir/ Mr., Madam/ Mrs. / Ms, Honorable member, Doctor, Professor, Engineer. They encompass the use of honorifics; Habwe (2010) notes that referent honorifics give respect directly to Hearer while other referent honorifics can provide inferences that indirectly give respect to the addressee like the other general addresses which include the questioner, the chair, executive, backbencher, front bench etc.

The use of these forms of address shows that a part from doing that as a parliamentary ritual, they acknowledge the power differences amongst themselves. The most common example is when the MPs are given a chance to talk they always acknowledge the position of the Speaker or Deputy Speaker; it kind of mitigates any FTA to be committed or it shows that it's not his intention to commit the FTA but he is forced by circumstances and others use it just as a cover up to appear to be polite when in real sense they are not. This was also noted by Ayala (2001) who points out that MPs use politeness strategies in order to be able to carry FTAs, in illustrating this she refers to the practice whereby an MP speaking in the chamber addresses the speaker rather than the MP with whom s/he is talking to. This procedure softens the weight of the threat, because the FTA becomes indirect, and filtered by the speaker. In our observation to some extent this has also been made like a parliamentary ritual as at times the MPs use it in many instances to stress a point even if it does not entail an FTA. Nevertheless impersonalizing the hearer and speaker, that is the speaker doesn't want to impinge on hearer by phrasing the FTA as if the agent were other than speaker, or at least possibly not speaker or not speaker alone and the addressee were other than hearer or only inclusive of hearer, e.g.

'Extract 4:'
MP. C: Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, it appears like a precedence has been set. I seek the indulgence of the house to communicate the wrath of the chair … (Tuesday, 19th May 2009).

The use of impersonal verb 'it' shows the desire for Mp. C not to impinge on the Hearer. In addition the replacement of the pronouns 'I' and 'you' by indefinites or pluralization of the 'you' and 'I' pronouns also serve as a politeness strategy. Grundy (2000) explains that it seems to be very general in unrelated languages and cultures that the 'you' (plural) pronoun, when used to refer to a single addressee, is understood as indicating deference (P) or distance (D) while (Brown and Levinson 1987) expresses that on the other hand 'you' (plural) provides a conventional 'out' for the hearer, it does not literally single out the addressee, it is as if the speaker were giving hearer the option to interpret it as applying to him rather than, say to his companions. The fact that by conventionalization it no longer really does give hearer that 'out' does not render it useless rather, it conveys the desire of the speaker to render the hearer that tribute, while fulfilling the practical needs of clarity and on-record talk. In other words, 'you' (plural) can be understood as motivated by exactly the same wants that we use above to account for conventional indirectness. For example in extract 2, the plural 'you' used indicates that it's not just the Deputy Speaker who needs an answer to the question but all the parliamentarians. It should be noted that the inclusive 'we' is not just a positive politeness strategy but it can also be a conventionalized polite form more appropriate to formal situations and negative politeness, as it would act as a way of avoiding directly impinging on the hearer.

This is also noted by Christie (2005) who explains that referring to your opponent in the third person is required whether you are attacking your addresses or complimenting them, then it is more than a way of softening a specific FTA. Ayala also makes this observation and said that the use of politeness strategies extends to interventions, whose contents are perfectly acceptable to the House standards, a stand that Christie suggests that it should be considered as an example of politic behavior rather than a politeness strategy. All this ideas considered, this paper looks at it as a politeness strategy as 'we' is inclusive of the speaker, who even if he is doing an FTA s/he may not want to seem to be impinging on him/herself. Looking at this data another strategy used is nominalization; the more nouny an expression is, the removed an actor is from doing or feeling or being something, instead of the predicate being something attributed to the actor, the actor becomes an attribute. As far as FTA's are concerned, with the progressive removal of the active doing part of an expression, the less dangerous it seems to be, e.g.

'Extract 5:'
Mr. Deputy Speaker: … it is considered disorderly for a minister not to be available or to be around with an answer when … (Tuesday, 19th May, 2009) This is more polite than saying; '… the minister is considered out of order…' the Deputy Speaker is minimizing impingement on Hearer by distancing the FTA from the person it is really meant to address. Brown & Levinson noted a higher order strategy of negative politeness where partial compensation for the face threat in the FTA is done by redressing some particular other wants of hearer, focusing on a narrow band of hearer's wants, a very narrow facet of his person. This is in contrast to positive politeness where hearer's needs are attended to over a wide spectrum. It is from the core want that negative politeness attends to hearer's desire for territorial integrity and self determination hence the need to respect the hearer by either giving deference or explicitly claiming his indebtedness or by disclaiming any indebtedness of Hearer for example,

'Extract 6:'
Mp. C: Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir, I am sorry to seek the indulgence of the house … (Tuesday, 19th May, 2009)
Or

'**Extract 7:**'
MP. D1: Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to thank the member … (Wednesday, 20th May, 2009)
It is common for the MPs to thank, apologize and even beg over several issues that they encounter in the House. It is a direct way of acknowledging and showing respect or desire of not infringing in ones negative face, these strategies are the ones that are openly known and used by all but in Question Time they are only used as strategies to mitigate a FTA. One way of defusing the FTA is to minimize imposition, whereby it is not indicated which social factors, power, social distance or rate of imposition is most responsible in the weightiness of the FTA. I.e. the intrinsic seriousness of the imposition is not in itself great, leaving only social distance and power as possible weighty factors thus indirectly paying deference to the hearer, e.g.

'**Extract 8:**'
Mr. Speaker: Order, Mr. X1! What you are supposed to do is so simple! Just indicate if the chair has your concurrence that this Question be referred to the relevant ministry! Do you concur? (Thursday, 21st May, 2009).
The use of the word "just" minimizes the imposition of the FTA towards MP X1. The directive given to MP. X1 is being minimized by the use of the word "just"; it reduces the weight of the FTA. These examples show the desire not to interfere with each others negative face and face needs; the next part examines the off record strategy as a politeness strategy. The other mostly used negative politeness strategy is apologizing; it is also a form of image repair strategy. Watts (2003) examines parliamentary context bringing into view a distinction between apologies that are functioning as polite behavior and those that are merely politic. In the same light Christie (2005) discusses the apologies that, within the practice of parliamentary debate, appear to function as politeness strategies, and point out patterns in the data that indicate that Mps use apologies as a source for articulating specific aspects of political identity, rather than as other oriented face work. Given the above perspectives it is also a requirement by the Standing Orders, which unless one apologizes for committing an FTA parliamentary discussion cannot continue. Hence to apologize for doing an FTA, the speaker can indicate his reluctance to impinge on hearer's negative face and partially redress that impingement or it can also be discussed as an image repair strategy where one admits a wrong doing and apologizes. This can be done by admitting the impingement, indicating reluctance to impinge, give overwhelming reasons for doing the FTA and lastly beg forgiveness; e.g.

'**Extract 9:**'
MP. D: On a point of order Mr. Deputy Speaker, sir. I am raising this point of order with a lot of reluctance … (Tuesday, 19 May, 2009).
MP. D is indicating his reluctance to perform an FTA but he has to. Apologies are always given by parliamentarians in several instances; when an MP is not present to answer a question or when he has no ready answer or even when he commits an FTA. Response mechanism to wrong doing may take several forms, from simply denying the wrong doing to offering an apology. Benoit (1997) while expounding on the image restoration theory notes that when one encounters certain discourse messages like criticism, complaints, accusations, blame, censure, condemnation, rebukes, reproaches or objections or is suspected of wrong doing, failed obligations, mistakes or embarrassments, one needs to know how to respond, both mentally and behaviorally. The MPs, in their discussions tend to deny or shift blame of various actions that they are accused of being responsible for, for example, extract 1, MP B does not want to accept and apologize directly for using unparliamentary language, he shifts blame to the fact that he doesn't know the appropriate word to use as a way of repairing his image that was under attack.

Christie (2005) discusses that an apology is viewed as a type of rapport management as it is used to reduce uncertainty and assure membership in an in group. Holtgraves (1989) explains that apologies are increasingly effective in reducing negative repercussions. He gives a scale showing the list of most effective to least effective apologies as determined by respondent rankings, which based its decision on hearers' satisfaction, difficult of use, helpfulness in solving conflict and likelihood of use. He noted that confession, apologizing and offering compensation is highly effective than giving a mere justification for doing the act, this is also true with the findings of Benoit and Drew (1997) that mortification and corrective action to be most effective while provocation and denial (type of justification) to be the least effective. Christie (2005) also notes that some apologies are in response to call to order for transgressions, this is true looking at extract 1 where MP. B was being ordered to withdraw and apologize for the unparliamentary language he had used. It was not very effective because he did not openly accept his mistake and then apologize, he tried to use a different word i.e. 'wandering' which was not better than 'loitering' then he tried to justify his actions by giving reason of lack of an appropriate word to use, by the time he was repeating the words implied to mean apology that were said by the Deputy Speaker some parliamentarians still felt that was not adequate. All in all in our argument this is a very important strategy for the continuity of effective discussion.

Benoit contends that an organization may employ a combination of image repair tactics to solve a problem but it must be done carefully as not to contradict or back peddle to only worsen the credibility of the offender.

6. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed how negative and positive politeness strategies are employed during Question Time discussion in the Kenyan Parliament. It is evident that politeness influences both the relational and content dimensions of communication; this is because the MPs construct their communicative acts basing on each others response as they all struggle to maintain, save and repair their faces once encountered with an FTA. From the above analysis, some politeness strategies are used as a ritual requirement by the Standing Orders of the Kenyan Parliament, which dictates behavior and the language that is acceptable in parliament. Other strategies are used as away of doing FTAs while others appear as politic behavior as expressed by Watts (2005) and as communities of practice perspective as expressed by Christie (2005). The whole genres of Question Time is full of FTAs i.e. criticisms, requests, accusations, blames, complains, reproaches, rebukes, objections, embarrassments amongst others just as a way of manifestation of the power relations evident amongst the MPs. Therefore politeness strategies are used interchangeably to ensure continuity and enhance fruitful communication in the Kenyan Parliament.

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