

Sociolinguistic Implications of Politeness Strategies in the Bible: A Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract

From the earliest stage of human communication, polite expressions and behaviours underlie interactions in language use. It is observed that a bad interactant makes himself and others uneasy in conversations. To avoid such ugly situations, communicants strive to use polite strategies as a key to unlock hindrances in communications. This concept though universal, is expressed through different strategies in different social groups, linguistic or speech communities. The paper through the theory of politeness universals and face threatening acts, examines politeness strategies in the Bible, in an attempt to highlight their sociolinguistic implications. The method of data analysis follows the standard procedure of pragmatics. From the findings, we discover that these strategies were very much exploited in communication modes in the Bible as a means of achieving required goals and objectives. Sociolinguistically, they are used to mark respect and loyalty, prevent conflicts, sustain relationships as well as reverse severed relationships.

Introduction

To make our intention known to people far from and near to us, we communicate. In our everyday life, we are involved in one form of interaction or the other. Communication is the act of expression of thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions, etc. It is a process by which the above themes are shared between people. It is used in various branches of study. Communication from the linguistic point of view, according to Crystal (1997:72), is the “transmission and reception of information between a source and a receiver using a signalling system. In linguistic contexts, source and receiver are interpreted in human terms, the system involved is a language and the notion of response to the message becomes of crucial importance”. Put in another way, it is the giving and receiving of information through the use of language by the speaker or the addressee taking cognizance of the reaction of the addressee. Communication involves action, relationships between persons or objects as well as transmission of ideas into the receiver’s brain. It is a way of achieving social transaction, a process by which a message is sent to the receiver upon whom it has an effect. In other words, communication involves a two way process: sending and receiving or acting and reacting.

In discussing communication, it is necessary to talk about language, the major medium through which we communicate. Albert and Cable (1978:2) see language as “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which thought is communicated”. Abercrombie (1968) postulates that we speak with our vocal organs but we converse with our bodies. By implication, the above view shows that communication takes two forms – verbal and non-

verbal. Consequently, saying or doing equally transmits ideas, emotions, information and desires. The concept, communication is a very important aspect of pragmatics.

Pragmatics is that branch of linguistics that studies meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by an addressee. It is concerned with the analysis of what people mean by what they say than by the meaning of words or phrases in those utterances. This implies that it studies language from the point of view of users considering the choices they make, the constraints they encounter and the effects their use has on other participants in communication. Crystal (2006), observes that in modern linguistics, it is the study of principles that govern the communicative use of language especially as encountered in conversations. Yule (1996:59), claims that “in order to make sense of what is said in an interaction, we have to look at various factors as social distance or closeness tied to such things as age, power, degree of friendliness or imposition. These factors influence both what we say and how it is interpreted. In some cases, the interpretation goes beyond our intention to include evaluations such as being rude, inconsiderate or considerate. This evaluation is defined in terms of politeness, so in the process of communication, we try to say or do things in such a way to avoid hurting the feelings of the recipients or audience. In other words, appropriate choices of words are made to elicit positive responses from the addressee. The way the speaker chooses to speak, to avoid any kind of infringement and how the hearer reacts to the speaker’s gesture in conversation is termed politeness.

Politeness is one of the virtues desired to be found in every individual. Almost every society, social group or culture impart it in their citizens. Individuals, groups, government etc. have used polite behaviour and expressions to achieve their goals in communication. There are many strategies people adopt in order not to cause psychological pain to the addressee during speech-exchange. They are referred to as politeness strategies. The concept might differ from culture to culture, from one different social situation or context to another, but in all, its potency in conversation cannot be over emphasized, as it prevents communication breakdown, chaos and all sorts of negative responses in conversation. This study examines the politeness strategies in biblical contexts and social situations to ascertain their sociolinguistic implications in different contexts. The significance of the study is to teach our youths the importance of politeness.

2. Conceptual Framework

Politeness, a striking feature of human relationship has attained a global usage in cross-cultural and social group communication. The strategies are not personal norms captured by the hearer alone but they are issues that guide appropriateness of behaviour in a wider circle. The language in a communicative event is usually limited to a particular language community, social group, context, etc. We shall define the concepts: sociolinguistics, speech community and context.

2.1 Sociolinguistics

There exists a remarkable relationship between language and society. Society is a collection of organized individuals living in a specific area and share culture and specific pattern of relationship which separates them from other groups. According to Hudson (1980), sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to the society. Sociolinguists are concerned with explicating through field and using systematic ways of data collection to explain how language is interwoven with the society. Hudson claims that Sociolinguistics allows some kind of frame work containing terms such as language/speech, speaker,

addressee etc. in the process of analysis. Trudgil (1983) states that there are two aspects of language that are important: Its function in establishing social relationship as well as conveyance of information about speakers.

These two aspects of linguistic behaviours reflect the fact that there is a relationship between language and society. Whorf (1940) discussing the relationship between language and society observes that linguistic behaviour influences social structure. He says that one's native language determines to a great extent the way he understands the world. Wardhaugh (1983) outlines four possible ways by which one influences the other. The first is that society influences the language. The social structure influences or determines the linguistic behaviour. In other words some sociological attributes of man like age gender, regional background, social status etc. predisposes man to use language the way he uses it. The second option is that language influences the society. Agbedo (2000) observes that one's native language helps him in conceptualizing reality. Thirdly, both language and society influences each other. The last option says there is no influence of each over the other. The work agrees with the third option, so one obviously can not study language objectively without the involvement of the society. As a matter of fact, just as language is as necessary to the society, society is as well necessary to the language. We can reasonably argue that for the study of language or language use in the society, considerations about social, cultural contextual, status, etc. factors have to be taken into account.

Speech community

The term speech community has been widely used by various linguists. Traditional linguists holds that there is an 'ideal' speech community, that which Chomsky (1965:34) refers to as homogenous speech community. However Chomsky's theories and hypothesis to the sociolinguists seem more of abstraction than reality. They are more concerned with the existence of speech community (SC) in the real world. The issue of what constitutes SC prompted many definitions from various scholars. Lyons (1970:326) gave the definition of speech community as "all the people who use a language". Agbedo (2007) postulates that speech community refers to any group of people that communicate, any group that use language and any group that share a common attitude. Hockett (1958) claims that each language defines a speech community; the whole set of people who communicate with each other, either directly or indirectly. Hockett's view adds more information from the previous views by insisting on the criteria of a common language as well as the possibility of direct and indirect communication. Gumperz's (1971) definition of speech community captures a social group, which may be either monolingual or multilingual, held together by frequency of social interactions pattern and set off from the surrounding areas by weakness in the lines of communication. Here, a speech community is seen as a social group whose continual interaction isolates it from others by differences in ways of communication. In his own contribution, Labov (1972) is more interested in participation of shared norms exhibited in outward behaviour than any agreement in the use of language. In other words, norms and values tied in culture seem to overrule the yardstick of language over what constitutes speech community. Hymes (1972) and Halliday (1972) in their definition overlooked the term community but holds that it refers to a group in a society which has distinctive speech and other social characteristics. These behaviours are complementary rather than contradictory. The key notes as summarized by Agbedo (2007), are that it defines a group of people that use a common language, people who interact by means of speech, a given range of varieties and

rules for using them, any group sharing a set of norms and values is used to delineate speech community. From the definitions above, the groups of people that communicate in biblical contexts qualify as a speech community. They communicate by means of speech, observe common rules for using them and also share similar activities to varieties and items.

2.3 Context

Context refers to the actual situation of utterance. This situation, according to Van Dijk (1976) selects only those features that are culturally, socially and linguistically relevant to the production and interpretation of the utterance. Traugott and Pratt (1980:226), postulate that “utterance is governed by a wide range of contextual factors including physical and social circumstances, identities, attitudes, abilities and beliefs of participants”. This view emphasizes the fact that many other factors are considered in speech situation for a mutual understanding among the participants of a speech situation. One of such factors is the context. Ndimele (1999), observes that one major area that handles contexts as far as utterances are concerned is pragmatics. Pragmatics deals with aspect of language use in relation to context. Nwabadi (2006), is of opinion that the description of utterance can not be complete without some reference to the context of the situation where language or the utterance operates. From the discourse, it is obvious that context is vital to communicative situation whether at the point of utterance or analysis.

In pragmatics, Grice (1975) formulates a general principle which guides the participants involved in talk exchange. The maxims are: quality (say what is true), quantity (be precise), relation and manner (avoid ambiguity) Though Grice’s maxims are made to enhance effective exchange of information as well as aid conversational flow, participants flout or violate them most often. Sometimes, one may become truthful but the way the information is communicated might cause psychological pain to the addressee. As a matter of fact, the interactants are faced with the need both to be guided by the cooperative principle and the need to be polite. Consider these two sentences:

- 1a) Could you mind closing the windows?
- b) Close the windows.

For Gricean principle, sentence ‘b’ is an “ideal”- be precise. This very statement, if it is uttered within a circle of friends or age mates will be acceptable or taken for granted. If it is said to an elder or to a boss it is taken to be harsh and likely to infringe on the addressee’s personal image. The speaker did not probably consider the social and cultural situations under which the utterance is made. However, Finch (2000:161) however claims that cooperative principle have been refined in two ways, one of which is politeness principle by Brown and Levinson (1980). The present study is therefore anchored on the theories of politeness universals and face threatening acts as propounded by Brown and Levinson (1980).

3 Scope of Study

This work covers only positive and negative polite strategies and expressions in some Biblical contexts. It particularly makes a sociolinguistic analysis of the values of politeness strategies in communication as can established from the contexts. The wok is limited to five books {Genesis, Samuel, Exodus, Kings, & Job) of the Old Testament and five from the New Testament (the synoptic gospels and the Acts of the Apostles).

Brown and Levinson (1980) postulate that there are four major polite expression strategies which includes:

2(a) The bald-on-record strategy—This involves the most direct approach. It poses threats to the hearer's face.

(b) The off-record strategy:-The statements used here are not directly addressed to the hearer. The speaker makes effort to minimize threats to the addressee. The strategy is also referred to as a face saving act.

(c) The positive politeness strategy:-This includes all actions or utterances that show readiness on the part of the speaker to save face. Usually, the strategy leads the speaker to appeal to a common goal.

(d) The negative politeness strategy:- The strategy carries expressions of apology for impositions to achieve their face wants. It uses indirectness also to achieve efficient communication.

Discussing theoretical Study, Brown (1980:15) notes that politeness is "saying and doing things in such a way as to take into consideration the other person's feelings". Lakoff (1978) postulates that it is saying or doing things that are correct. Politeness can be seen as a mindful and careful way of acting in an attempt to avoid infringement on the personal image of the hearer. It is also seen as a means of showing good manners and concern for other people's feelings. Lakoff's definition has some lapses because one may say or do something correctly yet may hurt the feelings of the addressee. This may be the reason why Adebije (1989) cited in Dioka (2009) sees politeness as a situation in which one behaves in a way that is socially and culturally acceptable and pleasant to the listeners. Duranti and Godwin (2001) note that politeness is a technical term used in pragmatic and sociolinguistic study of socio-communicative verbal interactions. In the words of Lyons (1995) politeness is socially determined by ensuring that appropriate choices of words are made by different speakers which are not the same for every situation. Fraser (1980) observes that it is expected in different social situations, that we will be obligated to adjust our use of words to fit the occasion. In other words, the choice of linguistic expression has to match with the social status of the hearer or by the special nature of the setting in which the conversation is taking place. Laver (1975) upholds the view that the speaker has to realize that the hearer needs his/her social identity to be acceptable. The characteristics of politeness in a speech community ranges from a specific kind of words, contexts, tone of the speaker, and or polite expressions accompanied by any other paralinguistic features. Politeness strategies are employed by the speaker's conscious desire to save face, other than his own or that of the hearers. Impoliteness on the other hand, is the saying or doing things without due consideration of the other persons feelings.

In communication, speech is seen as a skilled work in which each interactant tries to establish a better interaction than the others. Goffman (1955) says that a bad interactant makes himself and others uneasy in conversation, wears an awful look around and most often is referred to as a faulty person. Argyle and Kendon (1967) commenting on communication as a skilled work, postulates that the same is true for either aspects of social interaction in face communication. Face is the self respect, image or personality which an individual has for himself. According to Goffman, face is the way in which the person maintains his/her face which is done by presenting a consistent image to other people. One can gain or loose face by spoiling or improving on his communicative skill. Communication is indeed one of the most important ways in which one presents a personal image of himself for others to

evaluate through what one says and the way he says it. It is a cooperative activity where every one tries hard to help every one else to maintain their personal images.

Brown and Levinson (1980) argue that politeness strategies are developed in order to save face. They hold that 'face' refers to the respect a person has for him or herself and holds that 'self-esteem' in public or private situations. 'Face' can be positive or negative. Positive face according to Levinson and Brown (1976) is the desire of every competent adult speaker, that his personal wants, actions, values etc. should be thought as desirable. Negative face is the want of every adult member to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded. In communicative situation, one may decide/choose to maintain positive or negative face. The need to communicate effectively to achieve our goals and the need to maintain face creates problems for interlocutors. For instance consider the statements: (3a) would you, please take your hands off me?. (b) Take your hands off me". Between these two statements, one does not think far to realize that the second option is geared towards a maximal efficient communication as a means to achieve the intended goal. However, it has elements of harshness which may infringe on the addressee's image or personality. In other words, it threatens the face of the addressee. Therefore, in such a situation the speaker is placed in-between two needs.

Positive politeness strategies according to Dioka (2009) comprises both verbal and non-verbal strategies such as actions, clauses, phrases or utterances that confirm the speaker's readiness to attend to positive wants of the addressee. This is usually attained through friendly gestures. Although politeness is encouraged in utterances, there are situations where the need for maximum efficiency of communication overrides the need to be polite. Brown and Levinson (1978) postulates that an emergency case needs urgent action, in such situations, imperative verbs are used eg. 'Don't insult her', 'caution them', 'get out', etc. Sometimes formulaic words such as 'Excuse me', 'pardon me', etc. may be used Adebije (1989) cited in Dioka (2009), Brown and Levinson (1980), outline certain ways by which positive or negative politeness can be achieved. (a) showing and seeking agreement: this entails repetition of some part of what was said. It uses positive back channel cues as 'yes', 'I agree', of course, confirmed, etc. (b) expressing an interest in and noticing the hearer. (c) using in-group language such as address terms and slangs. (d) using ellipses

Ways of achieving negative politeness includes: (a) indirectness-the speaker has a desire which he does not make explicit to the addressee. eg. 'imagine how interesting the journey would be, if you come with us' (b) hedging. eg.. "I am not sure if", "I may be mistaken", "to the best of my knowledge", presequences as please, 'excuse me', 'I tell you'. (c) Impersonalization-It uses passives and inclusive 'we'/'us' to avoid exclusive 'I' and 'you'. E.g. of passives- 'No male is allowed in the female hostel'. The use of address terms such as Dear sir, my Lord, 'your Highness', 'Chief' etc. From the discourse we observe that politeness strategies are applied in communication to save face, avoid infringement on the hearer and at the same time attain our goal in conversation.

Empirically Lambert and Tucker (1976) discussing politeness in the pronominal choice between 'Tu' and 'Vous' point that all French community and all groups within a community are not alike in the use of 'Tu' and 'Vous' forms. He claims that in Canada and French island, children use 'Tu' with all kin and godparents as politeness behaviour. Wardhaugh (1983) explaining the importance of politeness expression in France observes

that a book *savoir-vivre en France* gives the following advice to foreigners on the current use of 'Tu' and 'Vous'. 'Tu' should be used between spouses, close relatives, brothers and sisters, (regardless of age), parents and children, people living or working together. 'Vous' should be used between strangers, those who have no ties of any kind and between inferior and superior. Gilman and Brown (1979) cited in Wardhaugh (1983:253) postulates that in Europe the upper-class youth addressing a lower-class youth has 'tu; at his disposal but for politeness attitude, the use of 'lei' is proper and safe. This practice is a pointer that politeness expressions are held in high esteem in many parts of the world. The implication is to bridge the gap between the upper-class and the lower class, thereby minimizing imposition with the aim of saving face. Gumperz (1971) expressions that is used in normal situations and shows a mark of respect, 'Tu' is used extremely in intimate or disrespectful situations. 'Tum' is an informal use designating faint intimacy.

Gomez (2003) discussing politeness in Hungarian also expresses that the word *maga* is used formally in communication to show the gap or distance between the speaker and the addressee. A boss talking to an employee may use it. The expression *Hogy vagy?* (How are you) is used by adults while children use 'tetszik' (you like) as a kind of appendage to all other verbs. Anya (1995:6) in his sociolinguistic analysis of greeting in Awlaw dialect of Igbo has this to say: "Greeting has far more to it than uttering of words. For greeting to be genuine, so many things like politeness of the speaker are usually considered". This is because greeting is as important as the manner with which it is said, and may lose its purpose and acceptability unless it is said in a respectful manner. In other words, Anya is of the opinion that greeting terms per se, do not mean politeness in which case polite speech or behaviour must accompany these terms to retain its purpose and acceptability.

Ugwu (2001) in his study of address and greeting in Ede-oballa speech community, distinguishes different words used by adults and children in inquiring about one's condition of health. For adult and elderly people, the form 'I dā oyi?' (sic) is used but it is not acceptable when a younger person uses it for an elder. The form "I me agaa/I dā agaa" (sic) is used by the younger person and it shows a mark of respect for the elder. Dioka (2009) postulates that Mbaise dialect uses indirect politeness strategy in achieving efficient communication and at the same time achieve the goal without infringing on the image of the addressee. For example, a speaker who wants to put off a fan in a room where he and another person is occupying may indirectly seek the approval thus "oyi tū m, o tū kwa g[atu?" (Are you feeling the cold as am feeling?). The speaker simply wants to tell the hearer that he is feeling cold and as such wants to put off the fan. Dioka also observes some impolite expressions in Mbaise. eg "I mecha he hi I mee ga agakwa mee ka qzq gbuo gbuo". (When you finish what you are doing, you do the other one right now. Aloba (2007) observes that Igede people use a number of politeness strategies like euphemisms, greetings, honorifics, addition of pre or post politeness markers etc. to show politeness. He is of the opinion that imperatives are used in Igede as impolite expressions, consequently, polite markers (weę and cheęme) are added to imperatives for polite purposes. Impoliteness as can be inferred from the discourse is doing or saying things without taking into consideration other people's feelings.

From the foregoing expositions, we observe that polite strategies prevalent in one speech community or social group may differ in another or be available in another but use different expressions. We shall try in this study to examine politeness strategies and their sociolinguistic implication as seen from some Biblical context.. (See scope above.)

4. Language Use and Politeness Expressions in the Bible

Speakers make use of politeness strategies to express a wide range of attitudinal functions. Communication, as it concerns the biblical discourse is geared towards reaching out to evangelize, eradicate evil or negative attitudes. In the Bible, the communicative objective is focused towards establishing relationship (Genesis 17), where God established relationship with Abraham, closing gaps in relationship (Isaiah 61), God reconciled with mankind by sending his son to redeem the world. Ezekiel 2:22), correcting /rebuking (1Timothy 4), here, st. Paul explains the efficacy of the word of God in correcting and rebuking evil, expression of love (John3:15), hatred, etc. In discussing politeness strategies, we shall divide the communicants or the social groups into three:- God and Satan /Jesus and Satan (Demon), God and man or Jesus and Man and Man and Man.

In using positive politeness strategy of the use of tag questions, presequence to directives, address terms etc. consider the verbal interaction between God/Jesus and Satan from the Book of Job. God: "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil?. (Job1:8-9) Satan: "Does Job fear God for naught?. "Have You not put a hedge about him and his house?. "Thou hast blessed the work of his hands but put forth thy hand now and touch all that he has and he will curse thee to thy face (verses 10-11) God:- "Behold, all that he has is in your power, only upon himself do not put forth your hand".

In the above conversation, God the Supreme Being, not minding his authority over Satan or assurance of Job's faithfulness to Him did not speak with pride or boast with Job's apparent stewardship. God spoke to Satan like a friend here, their enmity notwithstanding. In the passage (Job1:8-12), both entered into dialogue that suggests friendliness and discussed the terms of agreement of Job's trial. Perhaps the polite expression used by God here is to bring into Satan's awareness to the fact that touching Job's life would amount to infringement on his own part. The speech exchange also shows that God paid attention to the positive wants of the Satan as he grants him his request to take away Jobs wealth. Consider this passage from St Luke's Gospel.

Demon: "I beseech you (the demon fell down) please do not torment me..." (Luke8:28) Jesus:-"What is your name?". Demon: "Legion", for they are many and they begged him not to command them to the abyss but to the swine on the hillside. God: "He gave them leave to enter the swine".

The demon uses the strategy called presequence to directives; this is a type of negative politeness strategy. Just as speakers know that agents need a reason to act (which of course depends on the speaker's utterances/choice of words), the demon uses presequence as a way of achieving his desire without provoking the hearer. In this passage, the demons pleaded with Jesus not to send them to the Abyss but that they may enter the pigs at the hillside, the hearer therefore got motivated to do the speakers' wish. The demons' negative face desire was duly preserved. Their freedom of intention to enter the pigs was unhindered, most likely because of the use of polite expression. In Mark1:24, the demon used a kind of tag/rhetorical question to present himself politely to Jesus. Although in the passage, the Devil expected Jesus to attend to his face want to avoid infringements but Jesus acted in line with Brown and Levinson's (1980) observation that emergency situations demand urgent action. His utterance was characterized therefore by imperative verb forms: -"Be quiet, come out of him" in order to arrest the situation. This also bears out

Fraser's (1980) postulation that in different social situations, we will adjust our choice of words to suit the occasion. Further still, Jesus realized that in many occasions of conversation, the need for maximum efficiency of communication overrides the need to be polite. In Mark 9:25, Jesus uses the similar speech act-“come out of him and never enter him again.

Using polite strategy of expressing an interest in and noticing the hearer and address terms, consider conversation between Jesus and Man from the Gospel according to Luke.

Man: “Lord do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, If only you would say a word and my servant is healed”.(Luke7:6-7). Jesus: “I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such a faith.” (verse 9)

In the above passage, the centurion uses this polite expression as a mark of humility acknowledging his unworthy nature in the presence of a superior. This approach is positive politeness strategy referred to as showing or seeking agreement. The speaker works hard to protect the positive face of the hearer in order not to get involved in losing face with the speaker. This bears out Argyle and Kendon (1967) postulation that communication is a skilled work where every interlocutor tries to maintain face by what he says and the way he says it. The speaker here is only being careful. In Mark1:40, a man suffering from leprosy addresses Jesus in a similar manner-“if you will, you can make me clean”. In that passage the strategy or skill employed as polite behaviour yielded a positive result. They all receive healing which was their goal of communication. Below is also an extract from the Gospel according to John

Samaritan woman:- “Sir you have nothing to draw with.....”.(John4:10-12)

Jesus: Whoever that drinks of the water that I shall give.....(verse 14).

In the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, while Jesus uses a polite expression of indirectness, the woman uses the differential address term ‘sir’ to make the communicative event productive. Jesus on His own part did not make explicit his intention of not letting the woman realize that He is the messiah obvious on the onset but as the conversation widens, she came to discover who the speaker was. There is also the use of inclusive we/us recorded in the Book of Genesis as in the conversation below:

God: “Let us create man in our own image. “(Genesis1:26}.

God was addressing other Supernatural beings. God in His omnipotence deemed it worthy to call on the lower beings for the creation of man. He exhibits a cooperative spirit, not that He needed their help. God is here using impersonalized strategy which involves the use of passives and inclusive ‘we/us’. This form is seen throughout the book of Genesis. In one instance, this strategy functions to bridge the gap between the social status of the speaker and the addressee. In another instance, it creates a greater distance between the speaker and the addressee or the entity.

The strategy of indirectness (negative politeness strategy), presequence to directives etc are also explored from the Gospel according to Mark below:

Jesus:- “Truly I say to you, one of you would betray me.” (Mark14:18-44). Judas: “Is it I?”.

In this passage Jesus was not explicit in talking about his betrayer although he knew who it would be. He spoke indirectly using the presequence ‘truly’. Jesus wanted to elicit a response from the betrayer. In verse 44, the betrayer used what seemed to be a polite behaviour (a kiss) to achieve his wicked motive. This shows that at times a polite behaviour can be deceptive in nature. Sometimes, is the case when people use politeness expressions

like 'please' in English or 'biko' in Igbo just to fulfil all righteousness not that they really want to be polite. Example-“Biko nwoke m, mara onwe g[! or in English – please get out. In other words, people use politeness presequence or behaviour at times without meaning to be polite. However, according to Brown and Levinson (1987) when an utterance is addressed to an agent, the speaker believes that the hearer will act, based on some reasons. In the foregoing situation, Judas knew the reason why Jesus would not refuse to act according to his wish.

Let us note the use of the above strategies in the conversations between Man and Man from

the Acts of the Apostles and the second Book of Samuel respectively.

St. Paul – “Please, let me speak to the people”.(Acts21:39)

St. Paul uses the positive strategy to seek permission from the commander of the Roman troops to defend his action. His request was granted owing to the commander's consideration of Paul's polite expression. Through this show of friendliness he was able to gain time, his case was taken to the Sanhedrin, to Governor Felix, to Festus and finally to Agrippa who granted his release.

Prophet Nathan:- “A certain Man sinned.....”(11Sam12:1-5)

David: As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die...(verses 5-15)

Here David sinned but instead of speaking harshly to him, Nathan used an analogous situation to rouse David's conscience about the evil he had committed. He used indirectness in presenting David's case. He referred to David as a certain man not wanting to be harsh or explicit. However, Nathan's strategy is in line with Play's (2005) postulation that when an utterance is addressed to an agent, he performs other inferences which will push him to see reasons to adopt the speaker's intention. The hearer in context discovered the reason why the speaker believes that he (the addressee) can act. David showed remorse when he reasoned in line with the speaker's presentation and his punishment was reduced. With the use of Bald-on-record strategy, consider the extract from the Gospel according to Mathew 12:24-25, 34-35

Pharisees:--“It is only by Bel-elzebul, the prince of demons that this man casts out demons”.

Jesus:--“Every kingdom divided against itself.....(Mathew12: 24-35)

The Pharisees used this statement to infuriate Jesus to achieve maximal efficient communication in an attempt to stop Jesus from further infringement on the laws of the Sabbath. This statement is an example of face threatening act by the Pharisees on Jesus. Jesus, sounded very blunt using the statement “you brood of vipers”, when He could no longer take their impolite expressions.

There is an appendix for full conversations of the above passages at the back.

5.) Sociolinguistic Implications of Politeness Strategies in Language Use in the Bible.

5.1 Creating and Maintaining Good Relationship

The value of communication in establishing, fostering or maintaining relationship lies on the power of polite expressions used by interlocutors in conversations. In speech situations, the choice of words or the way people choose to talk in an attempt to show good manners or take into consideration other people's feelings unlocks the possible hindrances to achieving goals in communication. As a matter of fact, acceptability of the individual or the subject depends on how the speaker tries to preserve his face through shows of friendliness.

No one wants to spoil his face in conversation, every one tries to gain face by improving on his image. Goffman (1955) observes that a bad interactant makes himself and others uneasy in conversation. Politeness is employed in language use as a device to maintain social order. Each interactant tries to help every agent to maintain their image to achieve cooperation and friendship. For example, these chapters and verses in the bible illustrate this point (see Luke8: 28, Exodus 2:7, John2:3 etc.). In a nutshell, polite expression and behaviour are the key foundation of good relationship, they create, sustain, deepen relationship and drive it to intimacy. It closes social gaps.

5.2 Conflict Control and Avoidance

Politeness remains the greatest challenge to conflict and controversies. Lakoff (1980) claims that the main objective of polite behaviour in language use is to avoid conflict. The strategy of polite expression quenches the flame of rage, aggressiveness, and also breaks barriers to friendship and unity. If this concept is overlooked in discourse situations, anarchy, chaos and serious wars are likely to occur between individuals, groups and societies. Examples of the contexts where politeness was used to avoid conflicts are seen in John 9:25:36, John: 3, Acts: 15-12-14 etc. If we consider the face wants of an interlocutor or consider his feelings during interactions, the chances of communication breakdown will be so slim. On the other hand, if we are bad interactants, we lose face and breakdown in communication follows. Politeness behaviour or expression has the potency of closing gaps in relationship. When there is a breakdown in communication, that is, when the relationship has been severed, one can reverse the situation using polite expression, like sorry, I apologize, forgive me, I crave your indulgence, I have sinned etc. as recorded in the story of the prodigal son, the relationship between David and God (11Sam12), between the servant and his master in Mt18:22-26. Such polite utterances are used to bring a situation to normal. Individuals and groups in society have used politeness strategy in closing the gap between the authority and the workers, between the leader and the led and also between one community and another.

5.3 Respect and Loyalty Measures

In many cultures, politeness and loyalty expressions and behaviour underline their address and greeting terms. One is respectful when he is polite and loyal. However, greeting and address expressions such as Dear Sir, "Good mourning Sir", Good day Madam etc. do not automatically entail respect unless they are accompanied with polite behaviour. This notion bears out Ugwu's (2001) observation that greetings have far more to it than mere uttering of words. They are important as the manner with which they are said. They may lose their purpose and acceptability unless said with respect and politeness. Nevertheless, these appendages such as Sir, Honourable, Excellency, Chief etc. are highly encouraged in talk exchange situations as they tend towards politeness. In the Bible, such polite affixes such as My Lord (Exodus4:13), Sir (John4:11), Hail o favoured one! (Luke1:28), Rabai (John3:2), Messiah (John21:18), etc are used to open and oil speech exchanges. The interactions here, if said in respectful manner means a lot to maintain face and prevent uneasiness in conversation. The speaker gains face before the addressee who would want to attend to his face in return. Respect, it is said, is reciprocal as long as polite expressions are encouraged. The non acknowledgement of this gesture is taken as a serious infringement as the omission of it. The use of polite affixes in achieving respects tends to bridge the gap in the society or communicative contexts. According to Leech (1983) many factors of social distance such as

age, status, and sexes are narrowed by polite expressions to achieve overall degree of respectfulness.

7. Summary of findings and conclusion

The paper studied politeness strategies and its sociolinguistic implications using the Biblical communication as a point of reference. Politeness captures that behaviour, expression or manner by a speaker that tends to avoid the infringement on the addressee in a communicative situation. It is the desire to consider the feelings of an interlocutor when saying or doing things. Politeness in language use is a virtue held in high esteem by all cultures across the world. It is encouraged in every setting and contexts of talk exchange. As a matter of fact, it is a universal phenomenon in human societies.

Sociolinguistically, it is the key foundation of good relationships. It not only creates but maintains and sustains relationship. By implication, polite behaviour and expressions, function to control and avoid conflicts, anarchy, chaos and wars; show respect and loyalty, engineer harmonious co-existence and acceptance in the society or social group.

This work also cautions that polite strategies, greeting or some special kind of expressions at times may just be an outward observance rather than respect. God having experienced such made this statement about the Israelites “this people honour me with their lips but their hearts are far away from me (Hosea: 5). Politeness behaviour or expression does not imply the notion of subordination, that is, it is not only used for superiors or elders; it shows willingness on both parties to maintain faces. By so doing, it closes social gaps between interactants. In the Bible polite expressions were used by both superiors and inferiors although it is more with inferior persons.

In conclusion we have, using Biblical examples observe that politeness expressions are used by speakers to motivate the hearer to pay attention to the face wants of the speaker. In the Bible such words and phrases like Rabai, my Lord, o favoured one, Almighty, my beloved son etc were used to fulfil the following functions: to bridge communication gaps, foster relationship, mark respect, as well as avoid conflicts. Therefore, in all communicative situations, interlocutors must try hard to maintain personal images and avoid conflicts through politeness. Nevertheless, for situations that require urgent attention, interlocutors should know that efficiency of communication overrides the need to be polite.

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Appendix

Full conversations between interactants in the work

5.2b) The Gospel According to John.

Samaritan woman: "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep where do you get that living water?. Are you greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well, and drank of it." Jesus: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst again.

"Samaritan woman: "Sir, I can see you are a prophet, our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that Jerusalem is the place of worship; I know that Messiah called Christ is coming. When he comes he will show us all things." Jesus: "I who speak to you am he."

5.2d) From the Gospel According to Mark

Jesus: Truly I say to you, one of you would betray me, one who is eating with me.

Judas: Is it I? Jesus: "It is one of the twelve, the one who is dipping bread in the same dish with me. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many; I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. Rise, let us be going; my betrayer is at hand"

Judas: The one I shall kiss is the man". He kissed him.

5.3a) From the Acts of the Apostles

Jews from Asia: "Men of Israel, this is the man who is teaching men everywhere against the people and the law and this place; moreover he also brought the Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place" Paul: "May I say something to you?". The soldier: Do you know Greek?, are not the Egyptian?.

Paul: I am a Jew in Cilicia; please, I beg you, let me speak to the people."

5.3b) From the Book of Samuel

Prophet Nathan: "A certain man sinned; there were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought....it use to eat of his morsel, and drink of his and lie in his bosom. It was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveller to the rich man , and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

David: "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die and he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he had no pity." Nathan: "You are the man. ...You have smitten Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and has taken his wife to be your wife. Now the sword shall never depart from your house...." Nathan: "I have sinned against the Lord".

5.3c) From the Gospel According to Mathew

Pharisees: "It is only by Bel-ezebul, the prince of demons that this man casts out demons"

Jesus: "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city divided against itself will stand; and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself, how then will his kingdom stand?"