

LANGUAGE AND GOVERNANCE: A PRAGMATIC STUDY OF ACHEBE'S

ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH

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Abstract

This study examines language use in governance and its implication for positive nationhood in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*. In Nigeria and Africa, many leaders use language devoid of politeness considerations and this situation has caused various shades of clashes that hinder positive nationhood. Consequently, the face-threatening acts and violations of politeness maxims in a leader's language use in the text are assessed. The strategies for face-threatening act are highlighted. Forty excerpts selected from the study text serve as data for examining the variables identified. Goffman's (1967) Face-act theory, Leech's (1973) Politeness Maxims and Austin's (1972) Speech Act theories constitute the theoretical approaches for data analysis. From the investigation, it is discovered that utterances of a leader devoid of politeness and face considerations are harbingers of conflict. It is recommended that such matters as language use in administration should not be neglected.

Introduction

Creative works are mirrors that reflect every society. No creative writer can consequently be divorced from the socio-political issues of his time. In essence, they become very active participants as well as vanguards of issues of nation building and development. The sociological realities of the time constitute artists' thematic preoccupations and thrusts. Igbokwe and Chukwu (2013, p.1) corroborate this view adding that "they

consciously select themes that would define the structure, operation and anticipated future of such programmes and people’s expectations and reactions”. This way, the task of full participation in the political, economic, socio-religious and otherwise of the nation hang on their necks like a precious ornament. Achebe (1975) quoted in David and Emejulu (2008, p.365) points out that “...an African creative writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of Africa will end up being completely irrelevant like that absurd man in the proverb who leaves his house burning to pursue a rat fleeing from the flames”. Nigerian literary artists have not really shied away from any national issue. The four genres of literature have been manipulated by them to address the burning issues of a particular time. Poetry, for instance has confronted all national issues in both simple and complex languages. Ecological matters have been addressed by both poets and authors of various genres. Environmental man-handling of the Niger Delta has been decried by Ken Saro Wiwa, Steve E. Ogude, Akachi Ezigbo, Darah, Ushie, Nwahunanya, Chinaka, Onyerionwu, Onukaogu and a host of others in poetry.

Ecological issues on another hand have been addressed in prose by Isidore Okpewho’s *Call Me by My Rightful Name*, Buchi Emecheta’s *In the Ditch*, and Festus Iyayi. Niger Delta Drama include: Ene Henshaw’s *Twilight in the Homestead*, Irobi’s *Hangmen also Die*, Tunde Fatunde’s *No More Oil Boom*, J.P. Clark’s *All for Oil* etc. All these literary artists comment on the issues of resource control, exploitation, injustice, resistance, terrorists’ policies, fight for the inalienable rights, survival and struggle for freedom in Niger Delta.

Other literary artists have addressed some other societal and national concerns. Achebe has directed attention on cultural and political problems in his creative work. Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah* and Okpewho’s *Tides* have crafted ‘dictatorship’ and ‘terrorism’ in their narrative structure.

The thrust of this discourse is that creative art has a voice in the affairs of any nation which is conducted with language. With language, they question the appropriateness or inappropriateness of any event or occurrence in the nation. Breylenbach (2007, p.166) then asserts that “a writer, any writer, to my mind has at least two tasks, sometimes overlapping; he is also the questioner and implacable critic of the mores and attitudes and

myths of his society, but he is also the exponent of the aspirations of his people”. The main fact is that “Literature belongs to all nations and speaks all languages” (Morrison 1992). Literature employs language to discuss and explore the activities of any nation in its entirety. Language is deployed to question the citizens’ satisfaction over the conduct of the affairs of the nation, the appropriateness or otherwise of the leaders’ actions. Creative artists thrive on the gymnastics of words to create awareness. They expose artistically the dire evils of the disparity of words and deeds in political leadership. Eko (2013, p.13) talking about creative works and the power of words avers: “there is power in good or positive words, and there is also great power in evil or negative words”. This study examines the effect of negative language use in governance in Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah*.

Individual’s language use can make or may. It can stir up confidence or distrust. It can build up and at the same time destroy relationships leading to conflict and subsequent enmity. Language is the tool of narration of all issues of every nation. It is the voice of every nation. Eko (2013) authenticates this view adding that Literature is inextricably bound in a beautiful union with language as a sister discipline. They flow together because they share building blocks, even words. She adds “Literature, in my view, can be called the sister of language and the mother of all disciplines, because she is the narrator of everyone’s story or history”. Literature explores the power of words to communicate and at the same time highlight through the utterances of characters, the dangers of inappropriate language use as a catalyst for conflict. It is against this backdrop that the poor language use by a dictator and its attendant consequences in Achebe’s *Anthills of the Savannah* are studied. People learn best and with ease from the creatively arranged words in stories and can consequently learn and explore world views and cultural values articulated in many disciplines of life like History, Sociology, Politics, Economics, Medicine, Religion etc. Literature is designed to be a good teacher who assesses standard with questions. Literature is primarily about man and intends to imbue him with knowledge that will make existence rational and manageable. It educates man through histories of past mistakes, positive accomplishments, success stories and directs his attention to the challenges of tomorrow if today’s affairs are not carefully piloted. By so

doing, creative works contribute their quota to sustainable development and national problems.

Objectives

This study sets to:

- Assess violations of tact politeness principle to intimidate the political class and deny citizen's right to infrastructure.
- Examine face-threatening acts in a political leader's language use to prevent political participation.
- Highlight violation of agreement politeness maxims as indices of conflict and failure of an administration.

Conceptual clarification

The dictionary of Social Science defines a nation as:

the largest society of people united by a common culture and consciousness. While a nation occupies a common territory so that its members have common interests of place and land, the binding force of the nation is variously derived from a strong sense of its own history, its special religion or its unique culture, including language. A nation may exist as a historical community and a cultural nexus without political autonomy or statehood (p.451).

The definition lays emphasis on shared cultural heritage and language as essential indices of nationhood instead of such surface facts as territorial and political specificities. Emphasis has been on an indigenous language serving as the link among the various nation states. This would have been a very serious handicap to nationhood with Nigeria having about four hundred and fifty (450) ethnic groups but the language of the colonial master solves the problem of linguistic diversity as Nigeria has not been able to evolve a lingua-franca out of the number of languages that make up the nation.

One major ingredient of nationhood is political participation. Public opinion in any governance plays a prominent role in the success and failure of any administration.

Political participation involves inputs from citizens and government's effective communication with citizens. Consequently, language use in governance occupies a significant place in successful national development and progress. This is another motivating factor for projecting investigative lens on the language use of a dictator in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* and asking if it is ideal for positive nationhood. The major problem is the language of governance reflecting political philosophy which in the observation of Ajileye (2016, p.35) "deals with forms of government, societal organizations, and characteristics of various forms of government, indices of good governance etc as integral to sustainable development of the 3rd world and responsible governance. Using impolite language to intimidate cabinet members and defend the denial of citizens' rights to infrastructure and amenities cannot reflect good governance and sustainable development. This justifies the preoccupation of this discourse which is the neglected aspect of governance – the language use of the political leaders as indices of conflict in nationhood.

Every creative work is designed to accomplish a purpose by the message it communicates. Its communicative intent ranges from teaching, questioning the state of affairs, creating awareness to even congratulating accomplishments of individuals – both small and mighty; nations and others. Goldberg (2016) consequently summarizes creative writing as an attempt to 'penetrate life'. The writer who brings about by imaginative skill something purposefully wants to achieve an impact in the reader's life. Creative works are expressive in sharing the totality of human experience. They strive to x-ray the truth about humanity through the various types of creative writing as:

- Drama
- Poetry
- Prose – novels, novellas, short stories
- Movies
- Television scripts
- Songs
- Speeches
- Memories

Through this media, creative writers address human affairs and experiences. Literature is an expression of humanity in totality. The function of literature at its deeper level is to affirm life and declare people's right to be in the world and to enjoy justice and freedom. Literature explores thoughts, raises issues to make people think; interrogates their quality of life and enriches life with added values... The sum total of it all is that literature presides over the world of knowledge as a mother and as an eternal story teller. She was there at the beginning, to tell the story of the creation. She was there to midwife every invention, revolution, rise and fall of nations, earthshaking disasters, tsunamis and all the socio-politicalisms of transformations. She will be there to tell the story to the end because her other name is wisdom. She is the all encompassing Truth and Beauty of John Keats, which every discipline must struggle to partake of and none can do without, if its own story must be told or recorded for both academic and pleasurable readings (Eko, 2003, p.19).

To this end, creative artists play indispensable socio-political, economic, religious etc roles in the life of both people and nations. When no man can come up courageously to yell for all, especially the leaders, to hear, creative works can. They are eloquent voices that can penetrate any purposeful reader's heart, mind and life. Creative works are meant to be read. If they are not read, the message will be lost. But then, there must be readers and those who read, will always tell those who are not ready to read the story of the message. So literature continues to be the messenger and harbinger of all news and information concerning humanity. Creative works also assess the affairs of humanity and nation. It is also the vanguard of the people as well as the nation. Creative works have consequently contributed to the progress of every nation through:

- conveying very important messages about life
- teaching essential concepts
- emphasizing need for change
- highlighting application of knowledge designed for real life survival
- strategies for/hindrances to sustainable development

Creative works predominantly serve as mirrors with which society's actions and inactions, accomplishments of visions and failures are assessed. They consequently serve as a tool with which every activity of the society is assessed. This evidently explains the inexplicable nexus between society and literature. Issues of terrorism and violence among other things in governance are also reflected. Nnolim, (2012, p.47) describes creative works and invariably literature as

imaginative writing... that writing which is more emotionally moving than intellectually instructive, that writing which primarily deals with a make-believe world, that writing whose language is highly connotative rather than denotative, symbolic rather than literal, figurative rather than plain; that writing we regard as “verbal works of art”, that writing that is remarked by its functionality and imaginative import; that writing in which ideas are wrapped up in symbols, images, concepts; that writing which normally catapults us into another world of appearance and reality through the powers of imagination... Writing in which aesthetic function dominates; writing in which the ultimate aim of the author is to produce an object of art (p.47).

Literature's functional reflection of the society in all its ramifications in consonance with the expectation and trends of the era is of relevance here. The relationship between literature and the society propels creative writers of the modern times to question the realities of positive nationhood with the attendant high level of terrorism in the nation today in their works. It is against this backdrop that this study examines face-threatening acts in *Anthills of the Savannah* as language of intimidation and violence against the citizenries to prevent political participation and rights to infrastructure. Issues of terrorism in political event are highlighted in the text to show how language is manipulated for intimidation and denial of human rights as well as ethnic survival.

Creative writers use their work to portray sensitivity to burning issues pertaining to political, economic, socio-cultural life of the nation and ask whether this should be. *Anthills of the Savannah* focuses attention on the corrupt, greedy, insensitive, avaricious and purposeless leadership which has contemporary relevance and still characterizes the nation's leadership till today. On the materialism of political leaders, Odumegwu – Ojukwu's (1989) statement on Nigeria's situation still re-echoes. "It is easy to notice these days that generals who are penniless are mostly those who served under icons. The era of millionaire-generals has become the rule rather than exception (p.190).

Language plays significant roles in creative writers' portrayals. Austin (1972) theory on 'how to do things with words' comes to play in their manipulation of words for situations. The writers' words act out the actions or inactions of characters that foreground the intended messages. Writers manipulate words to depict terrorism with other issues of societal events- political, social or socio-economic texture.

The World Bank (1989) assesses development in terms of human-centered social indicators such as basic health service, food, education and life expectancy which reflect more accurately the condition of most of the population because of their broader distribution across households. Thus, development in broad terms should be measured in terms of the provision and assess of the whole population of a country to social amenities such as education (i.e. increased level of literacy), good health, potable water, good roads, electricity, information and communication facilities. The masses of a nation cannot be mobilized to participate in national goals especially political goals without appropriate language use. Members of the national and state assembles utilize language to participate in the deliberations to actualize the national goals. Every government conducts its official business with language. Language contributes immensely to political success. Yet, it receives little or no attention in issues of national development. Bamgbose (2012) is of the opinion that language, apart from being a marker of identity, also marks individual's individuality and national sovereignty". The import of the language use of a leader is that solidarity that can be a necessary tool, for sustainable development can either be gained or lost.

Pragmatics views language use from language users' intentions and perspective in consonance with context. When an interlocutor says something to an interlocutor partner, the interlocutor intends that the discourse partner be affected in some ways. Pragmatics concerns both the relationships between context of use and sentence meaning, and the relationships among sentence meaning, context of use, and speakers meaning. (Fasold and Connor-Linton 2012, P.157).

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on the theoretical frameworks propounded by Goffman (1967) on face and Leech's (1983) politeness maxims. The essence of face and face work as essential ingredients of interactions was propounded by Erving Goffman (1999). He defines face as "the positive value a person claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a personal contact" (p.306). He sees 'face as an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes. Behaviours or acts which protect face are described as tactful or diplomatic or face-saving acts. While those that make one lose face are described as tactless, face-threatening, crass, gauche or undiplomatic. Goffman (1999,p.419) explains face as "a person's sense of self-esteem (positive face) and the desire to determine their own course of action(negative face). Spolsky (2008,p.87) asserts that "showing consideration for people's feelings is related to the notion of face.

Any action or utterance, however mild, which might conceivably upset the delicate balance of face maintenance, is a face-threatening activity (FTA). The types of FTAs in the process of talk management include:

- starting an unsolicited conversations;
- challenging an opinion or assertion made by the addressee
- interrupting another person's turn;
- raising a topic known to be unwelcome to the addressee
- changing the topic;
- adversely commenting on or directing the addressee's speech (e.g. please speak up! Could you please get to the point?);
- raising taboo topics or uttering taboo words;

- ending the interaction. (Bloor and Bloor, 2007, p.102).

FTAs are potentially highly embarrassing. Brown and Levinson's (2005) model proposes two types of face-positive and negative. Positive face depicts the wish to be approved of in certain respects, to be thought of as a friend while negative face depicts freedom from imposition.

To Jackson (2007, p.62) any utterance or action perceived as insulting is a face-threatening act.

The three strategies for effecting face-threatening acts are;

- (i) Do the act on record – badly without redress
 - with negative politeness
 - with positive politeness redress
- (ii) Do the act off-record
- (iii) Don't do the act at all

Politeness entails a special way of treating people, saying or doing things in ways that show consideration of others' feelings. Leech (1983) postulates politeness principle as a pragmatic concept involving a verbal and non-verbal behaviour which help in maintaining harmonious relations". Brown and Levinson (2005) add that politeness phenomena are universal and treat deference as a politeness strategy. Deference can be equated with the speaker's respecting an individual's right to non-imposition (p.409).

Politeness principles bind cordial relationships between participants firmly and so Adegbija (2011, p.52) describes it as "the oil that lubricates the channels of communication. Yule (2007, p.137) discussing the importance of politeness describes it as "showing awareness of another person's face". This implies still that politeness involves taking into account the feelings of others. The advice according to Wardhaugh (2010,p.291) is that in any discourse "we must constantly adjust to others in our social relationships and we must do that in ways each society deems appropriate to its existence and functioning". When interactants are not mindful of the other's face, they are bound to hurt and intimidate others. "A world without politeness phenomena would be a very scary place. Politeness is a dimension of language that reflects the identity of the speaker"

(Grundy, 2008, p.189). We try to give the most interactional leeway possible, and this, in one sense, is what is to be polite (Spolsky, 2008, p.87).

Leech's (1983) Politeness Maxims are:

- (i) Tact maxim
- (ii) Generosity maxim
- (iii) Approbation maxim
- (iv) Modesty maxim
- (v) Agreement maxim
- (vi) Sympathy maxim

Eelen (2001, p.20) views politeness not only as the notion of strategic conflict - avoidance, but as the notion of social indexing being universal in various frameworks of politeness. Adducing avoidance of conflict is designed as a means of controlling potential aggression in interaction.

Austin's (1962) speech act insists that when people use language, they are performing a kind of action. Speech acts are clearly demonstrated when interlocutors or speakers use utterances to state or signal their intentions to accomplish certain action which the hearer or interlocutor partners infer from the utterance. "When people make bets and threats and promises, offer congratulations and apologies, or issue orders or challenges, they are using language to accomplish actions" (Fasold, 2012, p.162).

Analysis

a. Violation of Tact Maxim, Agreement and Face-Threatening Acts.

'Tact' entails the process of speaking with wisdom in consideration of the situation as well as the people associated with the situation in order to accomplish the desired goals and objectives. Tact emphasizes the more appropriate manner of communicating information so as not to 'sound insulting', 'two pointed' or 'uncultured'. "People who speak just any how" are often accused of lacking tact in communication (NTI Module, 2013, p.133). When an interlocutor makes an utterance and another or the interlocutor partner feels that he/she does not apply some 'tact', the reason is that "Language has

something in common with politeness and common sense” and tact is a type of politeness. Accomplishing politeness is the major aim of tact.

Adegbite (2000) sees tact as a means of interpreting the discourse value of information encoded in a word and its relationship with other linguistic items which precede or follow the items as well as some other non-linguistic factors of communication based on the communicative context of an utterance. “Discourse Value” is the meaning which the speaker or the writer expects his hearer or reader to decode or interpret. Tact therefore is the alternative discourse options which are available to one that will enable one communicate more comprehensively, appropriately and most friendly. With tact, what could otherwise have appeared offensive is more receptive and polite. Speaker’s utterances have force on hearers which can be judged as negative or positive. Leech (1983) states that tact maxim involves minimizing expressions which imply cost to others and maximize expressions which imply benefit to others.

Text 1: You’re wasting everybody’s time, Mr. Commissioner for Information. I will not go to Abazon. Finish! Kabisa! Any other business? (p.1)

Text 2: As your Excellency wishes. But ... (p.1)

Text 3: But me no buts, Mr. Oriko! The matter is closed, I said. How many times for God’s sake, am I expected to repeat it? Why do you find it so difficult to swallow my ruling on anything? (p.1).

His Excellency’s utterance in text 1 is a combination face-threatening act performed bald on-record without redress and violations of the agreement and tact politeness maxims to preclude the citizenry from political participation. The ‘I’ feeling supersedes the ‘we’ feeling. Personal good is given more presidency than the people’s good. Shouting down and lording it over an intelligent, educated and prominent man in the society with insulting imperatives demeans his image as a man. His Excellency’s utterance lack considerations for the face-want and face-worth of the Commissioner of Information. The Commissioner makes a prayer for the people of Abazon and His Excellence rejects giving ears to the people’s problems. Maximizing disagreement between self and others violates the agreement politeness maxims. He eschews the avoid disagreement principle and shouts them down.

One's suggestion being rudely dismissed as useless and of no value is highly embarrassing to the commissioner's personality. The risk of hurting the other is at very high scale. The utterance "You are wasting everybody's time, Mr. Commissioner for Information" is a deliberate intimidatory scheme. The interlocutor follows up utterance I with another intimidating declarative, "I will not go to Abazon. Finish! Kabisa! Any other business?" His Excellency's totalitarian domination of the affairs of the state council finds expression in the above declaratives' exclamatory and interrogative expressions to deny the people their human and infrastructural rights.

The interrogative – "Any other business?" spells end of the discussion. He strikes a zero optionality scale. He does not cherish another's contribution. Making a prominent personality an object of laughter is face-threatening. Even the demand for 'any other business' is a mere content less expression. The interlocutor is not poised to treat or receive any other discourse because even as the Honourable Commissioner tries furthering the discourse in text 2 with "As your Excellency wishes. But ...". His Excellency snatches the floor from him with an interruption and intimidates him into silence with an imperative which violates tact politeness maxim. "But me no buts, Mr. Oriko! The matter is closed, I said!. How many times, for God's sake, am I expected to repeat it? Why do you find it so difficult to swallow my ruling on anything?"

Snatching the floor insultingly from a cabinet member commanding high prestige accorded his education and job status with an imposition to shut up is face-threatening and violation of tact maxim designed to dodge his political responsibility. The interlocutor browbeats the interlocutor partner into silence. His Excellency's deliberate scheme to prevent both the citizens as well as the cabinet members from political expression finds expression in his bald on-record face-threatening acts. The risk of hurting the other is at high scale. The honorifics – Honourable commissioner is jettisoned for interlocutor partner's name plus imperative – Mr. Oriko! His scorn and disrespect for the addressee is evident. He bans his attempt at making further contributions: "The matter is closed, I said".

Lording it over the Honourable Commissioner for information is an imposition that cost him his:

-
- ego
 - face-worth
 - dignity
 - face – want

The ratio of cost is relatively very high. The imperatives do not offer the commissioner any option, consequently, the optionality scale is zero as the speaker dominates the floor and refuses to relinquish it. The interlocutor's absolute neglect of the hearer's want violates the politeness rule of 'maintain camaraderie'. By maximizing cost for interlocutor partner, tact politeness maxim is violated.

b. Use of Interrogative as Face-Threatening Act.

The cantankerous discourse deploys condemnatory interrogative to accuse the interlocutor partner of recalcitrance 'How many times for God's sakes am I expected to repeat it! Why do you find it difficult to swallow my ruling; on anything?'

The interrogatives accuse the interlocutor partner of insubordination. His ego is thwarted. Verbally browbeating and humiliating the Commissioner without consideration of the risk of hurting the other, constitute bald on-record face-threatening act to foil political participation. Furthermore, the impositions violate tact politeness principles. Politeness as real world goal is also violated. The pragmatic goal of the discourse of intimidation is denial of political rights – "I will not go to Abazon. Finish! Kabisa!" The exclamatory sentences functioning as imperatives denote the finality of His Excellency's assertions. When he speaks, he

- dominates the floor
- violates turn taking rules
- violates adjacency pair rules
- disallows preferred second part
- exploits dispreferred second part in his discourse

Turns go in pairs as adjacency pairs. "A greeting expects another greeting in response; a question expects a reply; an offer expects acceptance. A second part which conforms to the expectation is called the preferred second part ... while a second part that fails to fit

the expectations is a dispreferred second part (Bloor and Bloor, 2007, p.106-107). His Excellency does not expect any cabinet member to make any response when he does not call for any and they all know it. The commissioner for information explains that;

Text 4: On a bad day, such as this one ..., there is nothing for it but to lie close to your hole, ready to scramble in. And particularly to keep **your mouth shut**, for nothing is safe, not even the flattery we have become such experts in disguising as debate. (p.2)

The embarrassing fear, His Excellency, Sam, has instilled in his cabinet members from the above excerpt is face-threatening as they are reduced to mere rubber-stamps coerced into unwilling docility. The uneasy relationship between them spells danger and terror- "...for nothing is safe, not even the flattery we have become such experts in disguising as debate". Discourse of national/sustainable development is ignored as he ruthlessly opposes any suggestion for the improvement of the lots of the rural peasants.

c. **Fright as Face-Threatening Act**

The panic and fright of the Honourable Commissioner for Education constitute another instance of face-threatening act.

Text 5: On my right side sat the Honourable commissioner for Education. **He is by far the most frightened of the lot**. As soon as he had sniffed peril in the air **he had begun to disappear into his hole** as some animals and insects do, backwards. (P.2-3)

Text 6: Instinctively he had gathered his papers together and was in the very act of lifting the file-cover over them and dragging **them into his hole after** him when his entire body suddenly went rigid. Stronger alarms from deeper recesses of instinct may have alerted him to the similarity between his impending act and a slamming of the door in the face of His Excellency. A fantastic thing happened then. He dropped the file-cover in such panic that every one now turns to him and sees him perform the strangest act of all: the **scattering again of his council papers in panic atonement** and

restitution for the sacrilege he has come so close to committing inadvertently. (p.3).

Text 7: Then he glances round the table until his eyes **meet His Excellency's and falls dead on the mahogany**. The silence had not been broken since my second apology. I was quite certain that the poor fellow (**never a strong one for originality**) was getting ready to speak my very words, strictly in the same sequence. I swear it. He had drawn his upper arms tight to his sides as though to diminish his bulk; and clasped his hands before him like a supplicant. (P.3).

Being depicted as cowardly is face-threatening. Disappearing into his hole has the import of being cowardly which is face-threatening and suggests not contributing anything to national development.

The Honourable Commissioner for education's discomfiture as the aftermath of the president's terrific anger is face-threatening. Like a child caught stealing a piece of fish from the soup pot, the fright of a man of high position has face-threatening import of depicting him as cowardly – "as soon he had sniffed peril in the air he had begun to **disappear into his hole** as some animal and insect do, backwards". This vivid image of panic at mere 'sniffing peril in the air' is heightened by dropping the file and scattering its content, instinctively, ... body suddenly went rigid, 'the scattering again of his council papers' depict him as lily-livered which is face-threatening enough. Being described as "disappearing into his hole as some animals and insects do, backwards" cast him as spineless and weak-kneed at the sight of the dreaded autocratic president. He adds no value to the progress of the nation.

Another instance of face-threatening act which the fear for the intimidating president has produced in the Honourable Commissioner is seen in his panic attempt at apology which also x-rays his weak personality. **Creative works condemn the reign of terror that lacks regard for political participation**. It criticizes corrupt polity.

Text 8: ...That army car drove up furiously, went into reverse before it had time to stop going forward and backed at high speed into a young man and his clothe who just barely managed to scramble out of the car's vicious path.

A cry went up all around. The driver climbed out, pressed down the lock button and slammed the door. The young trader found his voice then and asked timidly:

Text 9: The young trader found his voice then asked timidly ‘Oga, you want to kill me?’

Text 10: ‘If I kill you, I kill a dog?’, said the soldier with a vehemence ... (p.48)

Text 11: Does he mean that after killing me, he will go and kill a dog?

Text 12: No, he means that to kill you is like to kill a dog.

Text 13: So therefore you na dog ... Na dog born you. (p.48)

His Excellency and his agent deploy language to humiliate and terrorize not just the cabinet members but the rural and urban populace as well. Linguistic fascism as the tool of terrorism is evidenced in one of the soldier’s confrontation with a hawker in the Gelegele market.

Rather than be remorseful for his dastardly action with polite linguistic choices, he dismissed the poor hawker with a bald on-record face-threatening utterance – “If I kill you, I kill a dog”.

The ruling class’ disregard for the human worth can be clearly demonstrated by their expressions. None matters, none has the right to life and good things except them. The linguistic expressions are devoid of politeness considerations and laden with arrogant demonstration of callousness. The poor masses start pondering on the pragmatic import of the soldier’s utterance.

“Does he mean that after killing me, he will go and kill
a dog?

“No, he means that to kill you is like to kill a dog”.

“So therefore you na dog ... na dog born you” (p.48)

The animal comparison of the rural and urban populace by the political class is demeaning and face-threatening. The citizenry has no regard in the country – “...to kill you is like to kill a dog”. “So therefore, you na dog ... na dog born you”. Dog has more value than human beings “if I kill you, I kill dog?”.

The Nigerian English is deployed to drive home the message of the disregard for the poor masses ‘...so therefore, you na dog... na dog born you’. The human race in the ruling class power-drunk assessment is nothing but useless animals – ‘dogs’ that need to be ridiculed and intimidated. The insult of the hawkers is a face-threatening act on the whole citizenry – ‘you na dog... na dog born you’.

d. Bald On-Record Ftas as Political Responsibility Avoidance

Text 14: Do you realize what you are asking me to do Chris? (p.4)

Text 15: You are telling me to insult the intelligence of these people, he says, his tone mollified and rather superior. I shake my head, then, slowly. (p.4)

Text 16: Yes, that’s precisely what you are telling me to do; he says spiritedly, spurred to **battle by my faint resurgent opposition.** (p.4)

Text 17: These people believe in rain makers, so let’s go ahead and exploit their ignorance for cheap popularity. That’s exactly what you are telling me to do, Chris. Well, I can’t do it. You all seem to forget that I am still a soldier, not a politician. (p.4)

Text 18: Your Excellency, let us not flaunt the wishes of the people. (p.5)

Text 19: Flout, you mean, I said

Text 20: The people? Asked His Excellency, ignoring my piece of pedantry.

Text 21: Yes, your Excellency’, replied the Attorney General boldly. ‘The people have spoken. Their desire is manifest. You are condemned to serve them for life’. (p.5)

Text 22: Your Excellency, three provinces out of four is a majority anywhere.

Text 23: ‘Any other business?’ The way he says it this time it no longer as an idle formula. It had the ring of rebuke: something like ‘**How many times do you want me to ask this question?**’

His chief secretary is attacked and put in utter confusion and inelegance of speech. This is very face-threatening. His Excellency’s neglect of his political responsibilities is covered by his face-threatening attack of his cabinet members. His dispreferred follow-up to suggestions about the citizen’s needs is a characteristic of the national discourse. He

adopts aggressive confrontations to intimidate and attack the cabinet members' faces to silence them. **He deploys unredressed face-threatening act to ridicule cabinet members to avoid talking about his political responsibilities.**

Text 24: But your Excellency, if I may – erm – crave your indulgence – erm – your Excellency's indulgence – and – erm – put in a word for the Honourable Commissioner'. (p.6)

Text 25: Which Honourable Commissioner? There are twelve of them, you know'. This would have excited laughter at other times, but something totally new is happening now and we are all too amazed. (p.6)

Text 26: Your Excellency, I mean the Honourable Commissioner for Information (p.6).

Text 27: He doesn't need a word from you. Remember, he owns all the words in this country – newspaper, radio and television stations ... (p.6).

Text 28: ... but His Excellency wasn't done with us yet, alas!

Text 29: What were you going to say for the Commissioner of Information, anyway? (p.7).

Text 30: Your Excellency, it is – erm – about this visit to Abazon (p.7).

Text 31: In that case, this meeting stands adjourned.' He gets up abruptly. So abruptly that the noise we make scrambling to our feet would have been likened to a knee – sore congregation rising rowdily from the prayers of a garrulous priest (p.7).

His rude dismissal of the Attorney-General is bald on-record face threatening act not just for him alone but all cabinet members. He adjourns the meeting unceremoniously as if he deals with brainless idiots and not the various representatives of the nation who are projecting a state in need – Abazon. He shies away from political participations and responsibilities with intimidations. All discourse rules and strategies are flouted. There is neither phatic communion to establish social rapport at the beginning of discourses nor appropriate closing strategy.

Text 32: Sometimes he would say good afternoon, gentlemen on taking leave of us. Today, naturally, he said nothing.

f. Violation of Approbation Maxim and Face-Threatening Acts.

The Abazonian protest makes him rush back to attack the Inspector-General of police of incompetence and negligence. Maximizing the dispraise of others violates the approbation politeness maxim.

Text 33: ‘Look at him! Just look at him’, sneers His Excellency. ‘Gentlemen, this is my chief of police. He stands here gossiping while hoodlums storm the presidential palace. And he has no clue what is going on. Sit down! Inspector-General of police! (p.9)

The intimidatory tone of His Excellency portrays the texture of raw militarism. His Excellency’s utterance to the inspector-General of police is clear face-threatening act devoid of any linguistic mitigation. He hauls the insulting and embarrassing abuse on him bald on-record without linguistic redress.

Line 1 of the text – “Look at him! Just look at him” conveys his scorn. He riddles the Inspector-General of police, a man of very high status like a child. He sneers at him and reduces him to nothing. He makes him an object of ridicule and caricature. His high-handed, over bearing arrogant disrespect finds expression in his further utterance:

Gentlemen, this is my chief of police. He stands here
gossiping while hoodlums torn the presidential palace.

He strips the chief of police’s face-worth naked. He further shows his disregard for the entire cabinet by regarding their deliberations as ‘mere gossip’. He intimidates the inspector general of police into silence and fear. The face-worth of a man of high authority is harassed and embarrassed. The bald on-record face-threatening act is also extended to the entire Executive council:

Text 34: That’s what I mean when I say that I have no Executive council. Can you see what I mean now, all of you? Take your seats, gentlemen, and stay there! He rushes out again.

His utterances are condemnatory and violate approbation politeness maxim. He dismisses his entire Executive Council as incompetent and useless – “can you see what I mean now,

all of you?” The rhetorical question is inclusive and makes room for no exemption. He furthers the face-threatening act by locking up and detaining members of his own cabinet. His Excellency’s detention of the members of his executive council also violates the tact politeness maxim. The detention cost them their:

- face-worth
- freedom
- dignity

The disillusionment of the citizenry at His Excellency’s linguistic choices and misrule make his downfall imminent. Professor Okong, a member of the cabinet says:

Text 35: I go to prepare a place for you, gentlemen ... But rest assured I will keep the most comfortable cell for myself.

Text 36: I have thought of all this as a game that began innocently enough and then went suddenly **strange and poisonous**. But I may prove to be too sanguine even in that. For, if I am right, then looking back on the last two years it should be possible to point to specific and decisive event and say; it was at such and such a point that everything went wrong and the rules were suspended. But I have not found such a moment or such a cause although I have sought hard and long for it. And so it begins to seem to me that this thing probably never was a game that the present was there from the very beginning only I was too blind or too busy to notice. **But the real question which I have often asked myself is why then do I go on with it now that I can see**. I don’t know. Simple inertia, maybe. Or perhaps sheer curiosity: **to see where it will all ... well, end.** (p.2)

Ab initio, Chris, the Commissioner for Information predicts that His Excellency’s irascibility will lead to doom – ‘but the real question which I have often asked myself is why then do I go on with it now that I can see... Simple inertia, maybe. Or perhaps sheer curiosity: to see where it will all ...well end’. When members of a leader’s cabinet cannot work harmoniously with him, they will rather work assiduously to make his administration crumble without accomplishing anything. Intimidation, face-threatening

acts bar citizenry from political participation which hinder sustainable development. It also breeds ill will that climaxes to conflict.

He misread my quietude I think as either agreement or disagreement... it was neither, but pure, unadulterated disinterest. (p.4)

g. Violation of Agreement Maxim/Fta

• Dumb Insolence as Face-threatening Act:

Text 37: For a full minute or so, the fury of his eyes lay on me. Briefly our eyes had been locked in combat. Then I had lowered mine to the shiny table-top in ceremonial capitulation. Long silence. **But he was not appeased.** Rather he was making the silence itself grow rapidly into its own kind of contest, like the eyewink duel of children. I conceded victory there as well. Without raising my eyes I said again: ‘I am very sorry, your Excellence.’ A year ago I would never have said it again that second time – without doing grave violence to myself. Now I did it like a casual favour to him. It meant nothing at all to me – no inconvenience whatever – and yet everything to him.(p.1)

There is a determined contest which His Excellency intends to win even in silence. “Briefly our eyes had been locked in combat. Then I had lowered mine to the shiny table-top in ceremonial capitulation. Long silence. But he was not appeased. Rather he was making the silence itself grow rapidly into its own kind of contest, like the eyewink duel of children. I conceded victory there as well”. The agreement politeness maxim of avoid disagreement is violated. The president’s menacing gesture is pure threat.

The Lexemes ‘capitulation’ ‘conceded’ in conceded victory are face-threatening to the Commissioner for Information because he considers these acts as “doing grave violence to himself” (p.1). The president’s assertive nature blinds him to the fact. The absurdity of His Excellency’s thirst for power in everything is depicted in the simile which likens the silly contest to children’s game “Like the eyewink duel of children”. The childish

behaviour demeans the image of the president. In belittling another, his moral bankruptcy is exposed.

h. Violation of Cooperative Principles of Quantity, Quality, Relation And Manner

The perlocutionary force of His Excellency's over-bearing attitude, violations of politeness maxims and face-threatening acts is deadly silence in the face of trouble. Since he will not heed their suggestions for the good of the rural and urban populace, their solidarity is lost. During the Abazon protest, the perlocutionary perspective finds expression in every member of the political class leaving him to his fate.

Text 38: He turns to me. 'Do you know anything about this?'

Text 39: I am sorry I don't your Excellency'

Text 40: Beautiful. Just beautiful. Now can anyone here tell me anything about that crowd screaming out there? (p.9). He looks at each of us in turn. No one stirs or opens his mouth.

All his cabinet members refuse 'to stir' or 'open their mouth' at this point in time. They have been denied political participation which leads to lack of solidarity lack of development and the attendant conflict in the nation. At the end of the day, there is a coup d'état. The putsch brings an end to Sam's regime. Keeping mute violates all the co-operative principles to show revolt against ill treatment. He is left to his fate.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the foregoing, it is evident that creative works have constituted voices discussing all affairs of the people's and nation's life. Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* has explored the consequences of a leader's use of language of altercation and intimidation against cabinet members as well as the populace and ethnic minorities in Nigeria. It draws attention on the power of language to cause administrative conflict and subsequent failure of leadership. It warns that the use of violence and terrorism can frustrate political participation and positive nationhood even in the now.

From the study, it is clearly evident that one's language use demonstrates one's moral backing and moral ineptitude is evidenced in such acts as ethnicism, corruption, nepotism and the likes which have worked against positive nationhood. His Excellency's intimidating language use characterized by face-threatening acts and violations of politeness principles mark him out as morally bankrupt and unable to gender sustainable development. His personal 'good' supersedes the general "good". He shouts down the suggestions to better the lots of the Abazon people and his other citizens. His language use portrays his disregard for public good and consequent neglect of development.

Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* demonstrates that utterances devoid of face-worth and politeness considerations for cabinet members and citizenry lead to leadership failure which breeds collapse of sustainable development. Language has to be properly managed by leaders to win the hearts of the followers and not annoy them. Achebe highlights instances in *Anthills of the Savannah* akin to one in which a leader, a former military dictator makes a sweeping statement that "Nigeria Youths are Lazy" without considering the impact of such unguarded utterance.

Language plays a great role in issues of politics and administration of any nation. It is the voice with which all national transactions are conducted. This paper consequently adduces that conscious and appropriate language use devoid of impolite and ridiculing intimidate expressions by the leader can help in achieving sustainable national development through political participation.

It is therefore concluded that for every political leader to succeed, he must learn to speak with tact for when a man's drum starts sounding loudest, it tears. Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* uses the violations of politeness maxims in a leader's utterance to explicate the impending doom that awaits any leader that fails to apply tact in his utterances. For such failure indexes conflict.

One expects that an attribute of positive nationhood is good governance that is mindful of both physical and psychological needs of the people. Creative writers as well as journalists which perform the gate keeping role of the nation seem to assert that Africa and Nigeria in particular is far from claims of positive nationhood. A political leader's language use devoid of politeness principles cannot promote the solidarity that can make the political class and citizenry work harmoniously to achieve sustainable development. For condemning corrupt leadership and reign of terror, literature has contributed its quota to positive nationhood.

It concludes that the rule of terror does not portray positive nationhood as sustainable development can never be achieved in such regime. No single leader's ideas can make for successful leadership. And when a man's drum beats loudest, a tear is imminent.

Civilians in government should not outing the military in terrorism. Positive nationhood has to do with overall development.

Creative language should be introduced as a school subject in the secondary and tertiary institutions where students will be taught effective use of language.

Recommendations

- From the discourse above, we recommend that leaders before assuming offices can have leadership orientation which content will also be language for addressing the masses.
- Creative language should be introduced as a school subject in the secondary and tertiary institutions where students will be taught effective use of language.
- Since the youths are the leaders of tomorrow, it is important to educate them on the importance and power of language for language can make or mar. Knowledge of appropriate language use can make one successful in all spheres of life.

- Youths should be advised to avoid language that can hurt, create tension or cause violence.
- Since the home is the basis of the society, parents should desist from using vulgar language devoid of politeness principles in addressing their children.

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