

APOLOGY STRATEGIES IN DISCOURSE: A STUDY OF SELECTED OLA ROTIMI AND WOLE SOYINKA'S PLAYS

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Abstract

Different researchers from different climes and orientations have worked on apology strategies in different situations using interview and Discourse Completion Task Questionnaire (DCTQ). However, to the best of our knowledge, no research exists on apology strategies in Yoruba cultural space with specific references to King - Subject and Husband - Wife role relations. This work fills this gap in knowledge. The data for the research were got from four selected play-texts written by Ola Rotimi and Femi Osofisan. The work makes use of sociopragmatics as its theoretical framework. Findings reveal that subjects use explicit apology strategies with non-verbal means such as prostrating to apologise to kings. Kings on the other hand do not often use explicit apology strategies to apologise to their subjects but may use indirect strategies such as presentation of gifts, serving drinks, using familiar vocatives and other strategies to apologise to the offended party. In Husband - Wife role relation, it is discovered that traditional Yoruba housewives kneel for their husbands when apologising and equally use the expression "my lord" to make it culturally complete unlike educated housewives who may prefer to use modern terms of endearment like "honey", "darling", "sweetie", etc. without necessarily kneeling for their husband when apologising. When husbands apologise to their wives, they use a combination of methods.

Keywords: King - Subject role relation; Husband-Wife role relation, explicit apology, justifying the anger strategy, repercussion strategy.

Introduction

Communication through language is one of the basic features of every human society; wherever human beings live, communication must surely take place which leads to different emotions being overtly or covertly displayed. These emotions may be those of joy, sadness, or anger which can be triggered by what the interlocutor does or says. In any normal interaction, when one of the interlocutors knows that they have made the other interactant to be angry, the onus lies on them to do the needful which is usually to tender an apology in line with the established rules and convention operating in the cultural space which both of them are familiar with.

According to Slocum, Allan and Allan (2011), “the word apology derives from the Greek *apo* and *logos* to form *apologia* and its original and still accepted meaning was that it was a formal, usually written defense, or rebuttal, of a position in the Greek legal system.” They write further that the meaning of the word as “it is used today appeared in the English language towards the middle of the 16th century when Johnson (1755/1996) published the first edition of his *Dictionary of the English language*.” In the view of Goffman (1971), apology encompasses:

Expressions of embarrassment and chagrin; clarification that one knows what conduct had been expected and sympathizes with the application of negative sanction; verbal rejection, repudiation, and disavowal of the wrong way of behaving along with vilification of the right way and avowal henceforth to pursue that course; performance of penance and volunteering of restitution (p. 113).

In the words of Lazare (1995, p. 263), an apology is “an acknowledgement of an offense together with an expression of remorse. It is an ongoing commitment by the offending party to change his or her behaviour.” In the same vein, Taft (2000, P.156) avers that “if an apology is to be authentic, the offender must clearly admit his wrongdoing; he must truly repent if the apology is to be a moral act.”

Spencer Oatey (2000, p. 19) is of the view that “apologies are typically post-event speech acts, in the sense that some kind of offence or violation of social norms has taken place.”

From the above and other definitions in the literature, it is clear that for a speech act to be called an apology, the apologisers must have realised that they have done or said something that destabilises the other person’s emotion in the interaction; the apologisers know the correct thing to do or say; the apologisers in the spirit of rapport maintenance, show remorse for the wrong thing that had been said or done either overtly or covertly. In essence, the overall aim of apology is revealed by Huwari (2018: p.3) when he writes that apology is an action that is meant to set things right between the apologisee and the recipient.

Literature Review

Scholars have written extensively on the topic of apology from different perspectives and from different climes. Uгла and Abidin (2016) carried out a study of apology strategies used by Iraqi EFL University Students. The major findings of the study is that Iraqi EFL students are acquainted with how “to use adequate apology forms to meet the requirements of specific situations and relationship.” Ashy, M. and Malley-Morrison’s (2010) work is on apology, forgiveness and reconciliation using ecological world view framework. The authors reveal that “fearful attachment style, religiosity, tolerance for governmental aggression, and (non) advocacy of non-violence are some factors that play prominent roles in choosing apology strategies.”

Huwari (2018) “investigates the similarities and differences in the speech act of apology in English between Jordanian EFL learners and Asian Undergraduate students at Zorqa University.” The work elaborates on apology strategies used by Jordanians such as: account, compensation, self-castigation, blaming victim, brushing off incident as unimportant, assessment of responsibilities, reparation and asking a victim not to be angry etc. The author discovered “that the most frequently apology strategy used among the Jordanians and the Asian

participants in the work are: account, compensation and brushing of the incident as not important.” Allan, and Allan’s (2011) research titled “An emerging theory of apology” uses “grounded theory technique to map out a theory of apology based on lay people’s understanding of apologetic responses. The authors conclude by writing that “what will be accepted as a *good enough* apology appears to depend on the severity of the consequences of the wrong, the level of responsibility attributed to the wrong doer and the perceived wrongfulness of the behaviour.” Chapman and Jennifer (n.d) write on “The five languages of apology.” The writers reveal that apology can be rendered through any of the following expressions: statements of regret, statements of accepting responsibility, statements of restitution and statements of requesting forgiveness. In the same vein, Sugimoto (1997) put forward the following apology strategies for EFL learners: damage, assessment of responsibility, self castigation, statement of remorse, compensation, accounts, gratitude, promise not to repeat offense and contextualisation. No doubt that there are other works on apology in the literature, but none currently exists on the current topic. It is this knowledge in gap that the current work aims to fill.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this work is sociopragmatics. Sociopragmatics is one of the two components of pragmatics of which pragmalinguistics is the other. According to Haugh, Kádár and Terkourafi (2021, p. 1), these two components of pragmatics were recognised by Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) who both proposed that a distinction should “be made between *pragmalinguistics* (the study of meanings conveyed by different linguistic forms and strategies) and *sociopragmatics* (the study of user’s perceptions of the contextual factors including perceived sociocultural norms, underlying the interpretation and performance of communicative acts as (in) appropriate,” (emphasis not ours). Although, Kádár and Terkourafi (2021) reveal that these two areas typically deal with topics such as implicature, speech acts, deixis, politeness from a more

cognitive, linguistic or social perspective, the fact remains that sociopragmatics encompasses additional topics such as “face, relationships, identities, power, emotion, stance and humour” (p. 1).

The authors above further reveal that sociopragmatics centres on the role of “socio conditions and variables in determining the use of language to mean and do things in the world (p. 4). One of the things that language is used to do is to tender apology. Sarah Sahid (n. d) writes that sociopragmatics principally pays attention to the way by which speakers make use of insight from general norms to generate particular meanings and take up a particular social position. However, for listeners and speakers to interpret and communicate meaning effectively, they must take note of the immediate text and co-text which is the most local, the social situation of interaction (which encompasses speech events, activity type frames etc. and the prevailing culture (national, regional, institutional cultures) which is the most general (Sarah Sahid n. d).

In interpreting and communicating meaning, interlocutors take into account some social factors which may be age, sex, colour etc. or what Spencer Oatey (2000) refers to as contextual variables. Sociopragmatics explains how meanings are passed across and interpreted in line with their social context or factors or contextual variables. These contextual variables which are participants’ relations, message content, socio/interactional roles and activity type have a great influence on the apology strategies that one can adopt during interaction. Under participants’ relations, Spencer Oatey (2000) discusses how power and distance influence how a particular speech act, in this case, apology can be conveyed. Diana Stukan (2018: p. 29) writes that power and distance “refers to different styles of communication between people of different power and social status: for example, employers and employees, senior and young people, teacher and students etc.” The second contextual variable which is “message content: cost-benefit consideration (Spencer Oatey, 2000: p. 37) refers to “cost of time, effort imposition, inconvenience, risk and so on” which a particular message carries. The higher the costs implied in

a particular message, the higher the influence it will have on the apology strategies that are selected in a communicative situation. The third contextual variable that is discussed by Spencer Oatey is social/interactional roles that people take up during interaction. These roles may be that of teacher-teacher, husband-wife, king-subject, and master-servant; as such, this role relationship will have influence on the apology strategy to be adopted during interaction.

Aim of the Study

The main aim of this work is to investigate the apology strategies used in two role relations: king-subject role relation and husband-wife role relation in our data with a view to pointing out their cultural (in) appropriateness with reference to Yoruba cultural space. The Yoruba people are found in the South - western part of Nigeria.

Source of Data

Unlike the interview and questionnaire (Discourse Completion Task Questionnaires (DCTQ)) methods that are normally used in gathering data for apology strategies (see Slocum, Allan and Allan, 2011; Huwari, 2018; Ugla and Abidin, 2016), the current study gathered data from four play texts purposively sampled for the study. The play texts are: *Kurunmi*, *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, and *The Gods are not to Blame* by Ola Rotimi and *The Midnight Blackout* by Femi Osofisan. The researcher believes that there is a limitation to the effectiveness of using questionnaire and interview methods in gathering data for a study of this nature in that researchers can only think of questions/options that they are familiar with or come across and not necessarily the ones that can arise unconsciously in a situation of real interaction. Interaction is not predictable in terms of both the verbal and non-verbal resources that may be called upon to serve the purpose of apology and which will be deemed to serve the purpose of apology within a particular culture. For respondents, the limitation to the use of questionnaire method to serve as a reliable method of gathering data in this situation is that most respondents may just pick options from

the ones given without necessarily being sure of its wide usage but just for him/her to choose a particular response or option. However, any data gathered from a situation of real interaction reflects how language is used in such a cultural space or speech community.

Method of Data Analysis

The data for the study are analysed by identifying the strategies used in any situation of apology with particular reference to the role relations between the interlocutors. However, for the purpose of this work, the researcher uses Holme's (1990) apology strategies classification as cited in Uгла and Abidin (2016: p. 16).

Holmes's (1990) Apology Strategies Classification

1. An explicit expression of apology
 - a) An offer of apology/IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device)
 - b) An expression of regret
 - c) A request for forgiveness
2. An explanation or account
3. An acknowledgement of responsibility
 - a) Accepting the blame
 - b) Express self-deficiency
 - c) Recognize H (hearer) as entitled to an apology
 - d) Express lack of intent
 - e) Offer of repair
4. A promise of Forbearance

Instances of apology are identified in our data which may or may not fit into the classification of Holmes above. Excerpts are brought out from the play texts to illustrate the identified classification of apology after which additional explanations are given where necessary.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The first part of this section sheds light on the apology strategies that may be chosen when the role relation is that of king-subject. It covers situations where subjects need to apologise to the king for an offence committed. It equally deals with situations where the king also needs to apologise to his subjects for not doing something that is appropriate or for doing something that is not appropriate.

A: Apology Strategy Used in King- Subject Role Relation i: An Explicit Expression of Apology

In Yoruba cultural space, when somebody wishes to apologise for any offence committed against traditional rulers like kings/chiefs, it is explicit apology that is required which often goes with non-verbal communication of prostrating or kneeling to make it totally acceptable and complete. If the person apologising is a woman, she kneels while uttering the explicit apology. The following excerpts clarify the point.

ALL: H-e-l-p us ... h - e -l - p us ...!

ODEWALE: My people [*voices still indignantly beseeching*]

OGUN PRIEST: Ha! Enough, ha - ha! [*Noise subsides*] The king speaks.

You have had your say now, pray, let the king speak. Ha!

ODEWALE: My people. Children of our fathers. Sickness is like rain.

Does the rain fall on one roof alone? No! Does it fall on one body and not on another? No. Whoever the rain sees, on him it rains. Does it not? It is the same with sickness. You do me great wrong therefore, to think that, like a rock in the middle of a lake, forever cooled by flowing waters, I do not know, and cannot know the sun's hotness that burns and dries up the open land. Indeed, you do me wrong, my people...

CITIZENS: [*prostrating themselves*]. We beg for forgiveness.

ODEWALE: No, no - do not beg. I have said nothing yet to prove me innocent of your charges... (*The gods are not to blame* pg. 10)

In the above, Odewale is the King of Kutuje and there is sickness in the land and the town's people came to inform him of their suffering and to appeal to him to help them. In his reply, the king tells

them of his unhappiness by the way they have accused him of not doing anything to alleviate the suffering of his subjects. In fact, he concludes with a statement which indicates that he feels offended. This leads to the apology that follows. The apology strategy is an explicit one (A request for forgiveness) that goes with the people prostrating themselves in order to make it complete and conform to the tradition of the Yoruba people.

However, there may be instances where the king/chief is not angry at the interlocutor directly for an offence committed but just angry on account of a particular event or angry with a third party. In this situation, the apology may take different strategies which will still indicate status and power deferential. Consider the following excerpt.

ODEWALE: [TO PRIEST]. Do you know who that man was? [*Notices PRIEST slumped in seat, addresses CHIEFS*] Does anyone know that man? [*CHIEFS turn their back to him*] Wife, do you know who that man was? [*OJUOLA rises to her full height, turns round, her face a mask...*] People of Kutuje! Does anyone here know that messenger? A man who limps? Does anyone know who he was, or who he was working for? [*No answer. ODEWALE charges at OGUN PRIEST machete raised*]

OGUN PRIEST: [*Thoroughly scared*]. Gbonka, Gbonka!

ALAKA: Ahaa! That's correct. Gbonka. I remember now [*CHIEFS hustle him aside*]

OGUN PRIEST: [*pulling ODEWALE away*]. Have mercy, I pray you, ask no more. It is no use. (*The gods are not to blame*, pg. 64)

In the above, Odewale, the King of Kutuje has been making enquires about who his real father is. However, at a point, somebody gives a clue regarding a man who could assist in this direction. It is this man that Odewale is asking from his audience whether anybody knows him. First, he asks OGUN PRIEST who "slumped in seat"; he asks his wife who only stands up and moves away; he asks the people of the town who are in attendance, but no one answers. In anger, Odewale charges at Ogun Priests who immediately supplies the man's name. Ogun Priest, knowing full well that the king is angry over the delay in

answering his question apologises thus: “Have mercy, I pray you...” “Have mercy”, as used above, in our own opinion, is part of explicit apology deployed by subjects to seek forgiveness from traditional rulers-kings/chiefs. “Have mercy” is used above in order to create the impression that the person being addressed has much power which can be deployed to effect any punishment on him. In traditional Yoruba society, Kings and Chiefs wield tremendous power which makes their subjects to use the above apology strategy when they know that the king is really angry.

Under king-subject role relations, this paper also sheds light on the apology strategies that kings/chiefs use in apologising to people they think they have offended. In traditional Yoruba world view, kings are seen as very powerful individuals who in theory have absolute power: the reason Yoruba people say “*Ọba ba l’òrì ohun gbogbo* (the King has power and control over everything). Hence, it is believed that the king can do no wrong let alone offend anybody. However, occasionally, the actions and inactions of the king may not go down well with some powerful or influential people in the town which may make the king to find a way to apologise or appease such people in order to prevent unpalatable consequences because there are many ways in traditional Yoruba society that erring kings can be disciplined. So, a wise king will try to apologise to such influential individuals.

In our data, as it is in Yoruba land, apology by kings to notable individuals may take the form of appeasement and this may manifest in different ways discussed here.

ii: Appeasement Apology Strategy

This strategy is mainly used in one of the play texts for analysis which is *Kurunmi*. In the play text, *Kurunmi*, who is the ruler of *Ijaiye*, a Yoruba town in the South - western part of Nigeria, is a powerful warrior in the old Oyo Empire. He is given the military title of *generalissimo* by the overall head of the empire called *Alaafin* of Oyo. *Kurunmi* appoints his own lieutenants to assist him. At a point, these

lieutenants – Epo, Akiola, Fanyaka, Asegba and Amadu accuse him of arrogating too much power to himself. Consider the excerpt below:

KURUNMI: I have been betrayed. Areagoro and Ogunkoroju have this day deceived me. Mhmmm... so, ours now is a race of deceivers. My brothers, we are indeed progressing!

ASEGBE: By your grace and leadership

KURUNMI: I lead wrongly?

AMODU: You have become too powerful my lord.

FANYAKA: You lord it over everybody, over everything.

EPO: You are even the Chief Priest to all the gods; look at them, Sango, Ogun, Oya, Orunmila. All of them, the gods of our fathers are now your personal properties.

AKIOLA: Like clothing, you use them to your taste; tired of one, you pass it to your brother Popoola, who now owns the Egungun cult.

AMODU: You have grown too powerful, my lord

FANYAKA: Landed property

Kurunmi

The farms,

Kurunmi

The air we breathe

Kurunmi

The gods of our fathers,

Kurunmi

WARRIORS: Kurunmi,

Kurunmi

Kurunmi

Abah!

AMODU: Your power chokes us, my lord

KURUNMI: It is well; take the gods, take anything you like

AKIOLA: No, this not our complaint

ARAWOLE: So, what is it you want?

AMODU: His power chokes us

KURUNMI: It is my head you want then.

FANYAKA: The gods forbid

EPO: The land needs you still

ASEGBE: But no mouse fights for you unless you show regard.

ARAWOLE: And if he fails to obey your command, what then? Kill him?

EPO: We can do worse things

FANYAKA: Balogun Ogunkoroju will hurry to Ibadan and lead the soldiers of Ibadan and Oyo straight through the city gate to see your nakedness. How about that?

ARAWOLE: So, that is your plan (*Kurunmi*, p. 39-40)

From the above, the offence of Kurunmi is that he is too powerful and becoming tyrannical and the warriors make him know that they are not fools. Hence, contextually, the comments of ASEGBE and FANYAKA above that “But no mouse fights for you unless you show regard” and “Balogun Ogunkoroju will hurry to Ibadan and lead the soldiers of Ibadan and Oyo straight through the city gate to see your nakedness” respectively are indirect ways of demanding apology from Kurunmi. Kurunmi, although a generalissimo, knows that there is nothing he can do if his warriors especially his lieutenants, are against him. Hence, Kurunmi, without directly saying it apologises in four significant ways. First, he orders gifts to be brought to the warriors

KURUNMI: Sons of our fathers! True bravery this? Indeed, the blood and fire of our fathers have come to life again. Arawole, bring gifts for these bold sprigs of our fathers (pg. 40)

He gives gifts to the war lieutenants and the war commanders. After presenting the gifts to the man, the following dialogue ensues.

MEN [*prostrating themselves in gratitude*]. We thank our lord

KURUNMI: It is nothing. Only the beginning of greater trust between us. The cow... the cow steps on her calves – that does not mean she hates them (*servicing them drinks*) My brothers, I go to Abeokuta at dawn. I go to win the Egbas to our side. With your permission, that is, with your permission (*Kurunmi*, p. 42)

From the dialogue above, Kurunmi “apologises” to the war lords in two significant ways. First, he serves them drinks. In traditional Yoruba society, when there are disagreements between king and his chiefs or other influential citizens, and it is clear that the king seems to be the one on the wrong side, he may order drinks to be served as one of the strategies of apologising to the subjects in attendance. That is why the Yoruba people have a saying that “*Otín ní ńtán òrò* (wine settles disputes). Another subtle strategy of apology deployed by Kurunmi is using familiar vocatives and permission - seeking language. In the above, Kurunmi refers to the men as “My brother” which aims to close the wide traditional, military, and administrative gaps between them after which he makes it clear that he seeks their permission to collaborate with another king in the impending war between Ijaiye and Alaafin of Oyo.

The two strategies combined in Kurunmi’s turn above indicate his own ways of apologising for the accusation of arrogating too much power to himself levelled against him by his warriors. Another significant apology strategy deployed against the accusation levelled against him comes under offer repair/redress. This is evident in Kurunmi’s speech below:

KURUNMI: When an elder sees a mudskipper, he must not afterwards say it was a crocodile. My word is my word, and Ogun here bears me witness. From this day, I, Kurunmi, shall seek the Elders of Ijaiye for any counsel in any actions, I mean to take (*Bites Cutlass*). May the gods of our fathers join our hands together to put down the task we now bear (underlining ours).

MEN: [*In unison*]. It will be so. Nothing, nothing shall again separate us from oneness with you. Nothing (*Kurunmi*, pg. 42)

The apology strategy above is that of “offer repair/redress. None of the strategies deployed by Kurunmi is explicit in nature. This is simply because it is not part of African culture for kings to apologise explicitly to their subordinates because people will interpret it as a sign of weakness. However, whatever indirect apology strategies that are

used by traditional rulers in Yoruba cultural space, those in attendance will interpret them appropriately because of shared culture knowledge.

iii : Accepting the Blame Strategy

This is the last apology strategy deployed by Kurunmi, the generallisimo of Oyo Empire after he lost the battle with Alaafin; he not only lost the battle, but also lost all his sons. Because of the high number of casualties, Kurunmi has to apologise through accepting the blame strategy. Consider the excerpt below:

KURUNMI: When a leader of men has led his people to disaster and what remains of his present life is but a shadow of his proud past, then, it is time to be leader no more [*Drinks poison from calabash bowl*]. (Kurunmi, p. 93)

The above is what Kurunmi tells few of the lieutenants who are with him. The statement reveals Kurunmi's admission of blame that he has led his people to disaster because originally he should not have challenged the overall head of Oyo Empire which was the cause of the war.

B: Apology Strategies used in Husband – wife Role Relation.

Having examined the apology strategies normally employed in king – subject role relation, this section reveals the apology strategies deployed in husband – wife role relation as exemplified in our data. We shall first consider cases of wives apologising to their husbands. However, there are very limited cases of this in our data.

i: Explicit Apology with or without Non-Verbal Cues

It is discovered in our data that when women need to apologise to their husbands for one reason or the other, they usually make use of explicit apology. However, we saw in our data that while typical traditional Yoruba wife will kneel for her husband and equally make use of “my lord” to address her husband, a typical educated modern Yoruba wife may simply apologise without kneeling and will prefer to make use of

modern words of endearment like “dear”, “darling”, “honey” etc. The following excerpts illustrate the assertion.

A.

OJUOLA: At the place where three footpaths meet, one leading to Oshogbo, one leading to Iwo and Ibadan, and the third one going to Ile-Ife and -

ODEWALE: Enough! Will you give me time to think? What’s the matter with you all, anyway?

OJUOLA: [*kneeling*]. I beg of you, my lord, I did not mean to make you angry and -

(*The gods are not to blame*, p. 54)

B.

OBIOMA: Who knows? I’ll have to check! But I hope you’re not going to start reciting the national pledge too, because I wish to speak to you.

JUOKWU: Yes?

OBIOMA: You see my dear ... (*Going to him and taking a different tone completely*)... I don’t know how to say this, dear... But please forgive me for all that happened this morning. I was wrong. I am sorry.

JUOKWU: What’s this?

OBIOMA: Forgive me darling

JUOKWU: Hey, here we go again

OBIOMA: I am really sorry, believe me.

(*The Midnight Blackout*, p. 16)

In excerpt A above, Ojuola is a typical traditional Yoruba wife, hence, her choice of the traditional phrase of “my lord” to ask for forgiveness from her husband when she thinks that she has offended her husband. She accompanies this with kneeling for her husband in order to make it total in Yoruba world view. In excerpt B above, Obioma is a wife to Juokwu. When she feels that she has offended her husband, she apologises expressly to him but she does not kneel compared to Ojuola

in the first excerpt above. From the setting of both plays, we know that Ojuola, is a wife without formal education at all (hence, her total reverence for her husband when apologising while Obioma is an educated wife, hence, her choice of modern words of endearment like “my dear” and “my darling” when apologising, but no form of non-verbal cues.

Cases of Husbands Apologising to Wives

In two of our play texts, there are few cases of where husbands apologise to their wives. The strategies used are explained below.

ii: Explanation Strategy

A husband may want to use this strategy to calm down his wife. The aim of this strategy is to give a sort of background information relating to the source of the issue at hand. Consider the excerpt below.

LEJOKA BROWN:(*turning back to LIZA*)... And ... you're not...
angry?

LIZA: Angry! Why should I be?

[*LEJOKA-BROWN studies her briefly again, takes a deep breath and goes to sit beside her*]

LEJOKA BROWN:All right, 'Lizabeth. I'll explain everything from the beginning to the end, and get it over.

LIZA: [*feigning a smile*] No, never mind

LEJOKA BROWN:What?

LIZA: No need (*Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*, p. 36)

In the above, LIZA, who arrives from America discovers that her husband, LEJOKA BROWN, has two other wives at home already without her knowledge at all. LEJOKA BROWN tries to explain what really happens as a way of apologising, but LIZA will have none of it.

Combination of Strategies

Sometimes, depending on the situation at hand, an apologist may combine different apology strategies just to achieve results or solve

the problem at hand. Consider the excerpts below. From *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* by Ola Rotimi.

A.

LEJOKA BROWN: Liza! Listen [*Makes earnest plea*] Sit... sit down... [*Takes her arm in one hand and supporting her back with the other, he leads her towards settee*] Let's sit down like two real human beings, and I will explain every....

LIZA: [*spinning away from him*] No, not necessary

LEJOKA-BROWN: Aahh [*seizes her by the shoulder*] 'Lizabeth, you are angry, and I don't blame you. But listen... I beg you. I have enough headache with my politics as it is. Now if you do anything to cause trouble at home and give me double, double, double headache - chuu [*pauses, while LIZA considers*] You don't want my enemies to call me a bush pig, do you? "Bush pig Lejoka-Brown. He wants to be a national leader, yet his own house is *jagajaga* upside down" (p. 40-41).

The apologise above, Mr. Lejoka-Brown, is the husband of LIZA. She comes from America only to discover that Lejoka-Brown has two other wives at home whereupon she becomes so disappointed that she plans right away to leave LEJOKA BROWN and go back to America. In the excerpt above, Lejoka-Brown, through various apology strategies, attempts to pacify LIZA not to go back to America.

In Lejoka Brown's first turn above, the part in stage direction is a non-linguistic means used by Lejoka-Brown to apologise which is immediately followed by a linguistic apology in the form of appeal "let's sit down like two real human beings and I will explain every..." In essence, the apology in this context is a form of appeal. In Lejoka-Brown's second turn, above, two apology strategies are prominent. The first one is what we call "Justifying hearer's anger" strategy. That is when he says "Lizabeth, you are angry, and I don't blame you", it is an apology strategy deployed by Lejoka-Brown to make her calm down.

The apology strategy used in the last sentence of Lejoka-Brown's second turn above is what we call "consider the repercussion strategy." It is significant to note that Lejoka-Brown in the context of our data is contesting for the post of Presidency of the country, hence, he is informing Liza that if she travels back to America that his opponents will use it as a campaign strategy that he cannot manage his family, and hence, there is no way he can successfully administer a whole country. "Consider the repercussion strategy" simply means that the hearer should consider the likely implication on the apologiser or probably to the interlocutor or even both of them if the hearer refuses to be pacified.

B

OBIOMA: Listen, this game you've been playing for the past hour! You imagine for one second that you have fooled me, eh? That I don't know you were coming from your mistress?

JUOKWU: Me, Obi!

OBIOMA: No, me! I am the one who keeps mistresses! Listen, if you don't come out with the truth now, I am going straight to your club, and I am going to create such a scene there that by tomorrow morning, the whole town will know about the affair between you and Mrs Akubundu!

JUOKWU: No, you won't do that!

OBIOMA: We will see!

JUOKWU: But you'll ruin my whole career. Obi! And worse, you might get me killed... by matchet! Think of the danger to my life now, I beg you!

In the above, OBIOMA accuses Juokwu of having extramarital affairs with a woman called Mrs Akubundu. However, Juokwu denies this accusation whereupon Obioma threatens him that she will make the affairs public. Juokwu apologises to her through "consider the repercussion strategy." In this case, Juokwu asks Obioma to consider the repercussion on his career and even his life if she eventually makes

public the affair between him and Mrs Akubundu. (*The Midnight Black out*, p. 69).

Discussion of Findings

Apology is found in all cultures and societies and the linguistic expressions used to apologise may differ considerably depending on such variables such as status, role relation, pragmatic as well as sociolinguistic competence level of the users of the language. The current study centres on the apology strategies used in two role relations in our data; the data are specific to Yoruba cultural space. Studying the apology strategies in a particular culture is supported by Ugla and Abidin (2016, p. 33) when they write that “... since the concept of politeness varies across cultures, there appears a need for studying apology strategies and speech acts in specific cultures.”

In our analysis, it is discovered that subjects normally apologise explicitly to the king when they are the real offenders and the apology goes with prostrating for the king in order to make it culturally appropriate. This aspect of non-verbal apology is very important. This means that non-verbal act is a significant part of apology to kings or other powerful traditional title holders in Yorubaland. No matter how young a king may be and no matter how old an offender may be, he/she has to prostrate or kneel when apologising to kings in Yorubaland. The king may perceive the apology as insufficient without this cultural element of prostrating or kneeling which should accompany the linguistic expression of apology.

Sometimes, because of the perceived unlimited power of the king in traditional Yorubaland which is why kings are called *Kábiyèsí* (literally translated to “the person whose power and authority cannot be questioned), offenders normally apologise to the king by saying “Have mercy”. It appears as if the apology strategies discussed above have not been documented in the literature. The paper equally discusses the rare situations where kings need to apologise to their subjects. In our data, we see that kings (typified by Kurunmi) do not use explicit apology strategy in order to save face. Instead, kings may present

gifts and serve drinks to the offended, use familiar terms to close the social, traditional, and administrative distance between them and make promise to make amends concerning what he is accused of. In traditional Yoruba society, when there are issues between the king and some influential citizens and the king is found guilty and he is expected to tender an apology, one of the strategies he may use to apologise is by serving drinks. In Yoruba culture, there is a saying that *Otín ní òtán òrò* (wine settles disputes). When this is done, the people in attendance will take it as a form of apology from the king.

The apology strategies deployed by Kurunmi, the generalissimo of Ijaye have probably not been documented in the literature. Almuttali (2016, p. 11) write that “in form, apologies range from those which are quite *explicit* to those which are ambiguous and/or oblique (=indirect). Lakoff (2003, p. 203) accounts for why some people like kings go for indirect apologies by writing that “by making use of an ambiguous form, an apologiser looks virtuous while saving face...” That is, kings who make use of ambiguous apologies do so in order not to lose face. This simply means that the decision to use explicit or indirect apology in a discourse depends on the power differential or the social distance existing between the apologiser and the offended. These strategies of apology by Yoruba traditional rulers to some extent still agree with the view of Lazare (2004) that an apology is “an acknowledgement of an offense together with an expression of remorse.” The actions of Kurunmi above can equally be said to be in tune with the opinion of Taft (2000:156) that “if an apology is to be authentic, the offender must clearly admit his wrongdoing; he must truly repent if the apology is to be considered a moral act.”

In the husband-wife role relation apology strategies, it is discovered that educational level determines the apology strategy that wives adopt. In other words, a real traditional Yoruba wife such as Ojuola (she is without formal education) in our data will kneel for the husband and use an explicit apology strategy with the phrase “my lord” or its equivalent such as “the owner of my head” to apologise to her husband while educated wives such as OBIOMA will only use

expressions such as “darling” without kneeling for the husband to apologise. Another interesting fact about husband – wife role relation in term of apology is that a single apology strategy may not be sufficient to solve the situation at hand but rather a combination of strategies such as the one used by Lejoka Brown to appeal to Liza to change her mind. It is equally discovered in our data that two novel apology strategies are possible in discourse which are: “justifying the anger strategy” and “consider the repercussions strategy.”

The study has contributed to scholarship by shedding light on the apology strategies that are common in two role relations of king – subject and husband – wife with particular reference to the people of Yorubaland in South - western, Nigeria. In other words, the data for the study which are play texts really mirror the culture and the tradition of the people of Yoruba land on the topic of discussion. The research, thus, is of significance in cross-cultural study of apology strategies used during interaction.

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