FACE ACTS AND IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES IN OLUSEGUN OBASANJO'S 'BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE'

Moses Adebayo, Aremu & Prof. Sola T. Babatunde
Department of English, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *Unlike the earlier linguistic studies of political discourse which focused on the genres of campaign speeches, presidential inaugural addresses, interviews, political advertisements and newspaper advertorials, this study examines the face acts and impoliteness strategies in Obasanjo's appeal letter to former Nigerian President Jonathan; titled 'Before it is too late'' (i.e BITL). Simple percentage statistical tool was used to analyse the face acts and impoliteness strategies in it. Besides, Brown and Levinson's (1987) face acts, Culpeper's (1996), impoliteness and VanDijk's (1977) socio-cognitive theories serve as the eclectic theoretical framework for the study. The findings revealed that Obasanjo's BITL is characterised by FTA with redress, bald-on-record politeness and FSA . The text is equally characterised by bald-on-record impoliteness, mock impoliteness, as well as negative and positive impoliteness strategies. Also, Obasanjo used dysphemisms and expletives as tools to butt Goodluck Jonathan and to impose on his audience's face want. The author rides on participants' shared cognitive and situational knowledge to pract threatening, condemning warning, stating, praising and sympathising. It was also revealed that FSA was used by Obasanjo to exonerate himself from the alleged Jonathan's 'misrule'. The paper concludes that only the understanding of cognition, discourse and context interface could be used to infer the meaning construction and comprehension as well as the author's intention from the text of BITL.*

KEYNOTES: BITL, Nigerian politics, cognition, discourse, power.

INTRODUCTION

Political texts and talks are unique genres of human communication since they involve actors and participants that use language for manipulation, coercion, as well as exercising power domination and control over others (Van Dijk, 1993; Opeibi, 2005). Politics, according to Jones / Peccei (2004, p. 36) is power; and to secure power, it makes sense to persuade everyone else that what one wants is what they want. In achieving this, political actors often establish their individual and collective ideological needs in order to make people believe that what they say appear to be 'common sense', and thus make the audience to accept their dominant ideologies, (Ayoola, 2010, p. 2). Orwel (1946; cited in Jones / Peccei, 2004, p. 36) asserts that politics is concerned with power; the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people's behaviour and to control their values.

Different linguistic studies have been carried out in Europe, the USA and Nigeria in order to examine the features that characterise the language as well as the texts and talks of political actors and institutions. Studies on political discourse analysis have been focused on the sociolinguistic, pragmatic, stylistic, discourse and semantic approaches. The

linguistic features of political newspaper advertorials, political campaign speeches, presidential inaugural addresses, presidential interviews and newspaper political reports have been examined by scholars. For instance, Benoit (2006) studies the systemic functional theory of political campaign discourse, while Chilton and Shaffner (2002, p. 204-236) examine the analytical approaches to political text and talk. Also, Van Dijk (2002) does a linguistic study of political discourse and political cognition. Mullany (2002) examines the (im)politeness in political interview of two opposite sexes.

In Nigerian socio-cultural contest, different studies have been done on examining the linguistic features of Nigerian political actors and political institutions. For instance, Babatunde and Odepidan (2009) examine the pragma-rhetorical strategies in selected speeches of Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. Taiwo (2007) studies the satires of politics and public officers in Nigerian newspapers, while Taiwo (2010) examines the metaphors in Nigerian political discourse. Odebunmi (2009) examines the politeness and relational work in print media political interview in Nigeria, while Aremu (2014) does a critical discourse analysis of President Goodluck Jonathan's National Day Broadcast of April 21, 2011. Opeibi (2005) examines the political 'marketting' and political 'marchetting' in Nigerian political campaigns, while Ademilokun (2015) studies the discursive strategies in selected political rally campaign of 2011 elections in Southwestern Nigeria. Ayoola (2015) does the SFG analysis of political advertisements in selected Nigerian newspapers, while Abdullahi-Idiagbon (2010) utilises the CDA approach to examine the language use in selected Nigerian Presidential campaign speeches.

Different scholars have studied the features of political discourse. According to Beard (2000, p. 36), politics is conceived of as a struggle to gain and retain power among members of political institutions. On the other hand, political discourse is a wide and diverse set of discourses, genres or registers such as policy papers, ministerial speeches, government press releases or press conferences, etc (Bayley, 2006; cited in Taiwo, 2010, p., 220). According to Chilton and Shaffner (1999, p. 212), political discourse is any discourse whose linguistic or other actions involve power or resistance to power. In his own perception, Wilson (2001, p. 398) describes political discourse as language used in an informal and a formal political contexts with political media and political supporters operating in political environments with political goals (cf. Moremo, 2008, p. 34).

Since different studies on political discourse in Nigeria have been done on the analysis of language of political campaign speeches , presidential interviews, presidential addresses, political adverts and newspaper cartoons, there exists a research gap on the face acts and impoliteness in Olusegun Obasanjo's letter of appeal to former President Goodluck Jonathan titled ;'*Before it is too late'*. As a result, this study attempts to fill the existing vacuum in pragmatics and cognitive meaning by examining the face-acts and impoliteness in Obasanjo's '*Before it is too late*' through the eclectic theoretical foci of Brown and Levinson's (1987) face acts; Culpeper (1996) and Bousfield (2008) impoliteness and Van Dijk's (2006b) socio-cognitive theories.

The 'Terrain' of Politics in Nigeria
The First Republic in Nigeria (October 1,1960 to January 15,1966)was characterised by political violence which led to military take-over. The handing over power to civilian by Gen.Olusegun Obasanjo(Rtd) led to the inauguration of Alhaji Sheu Shagari as the Nigerian first executive president in October 1, 1979. The opulence of political office holders, moral and material decadence as well as the ethno-religious bigotry that characterised the Nigerian Second Republic led to the military coup and take-over in December 31, 1983. Besides, Buhari-Idiagbon regime was also short-lived since the then Nigerian government was too overbearingly harsh against the entire Nigerian citizenry through unjust arrest and incarceration without trials, denial of people's fundamental human rights, inconsistent foreign policy, as well as the devaluation of Naira. General Ibrahim Babangida's administration took over from Buhari through a blood-less coup in August 1985, and ruled for eight years. His government was characterised by inconsistent political policy, inconsistent economic programmes, press gagging and killing of innocent people. The dastardly killing of Dele Giwa (a reknown Nigerian Journalist) which Nigerian alleged to have been done by Babangida's administration and the inability of his government to hand-over to Late Bashorun M. K. O. Abiola, the acclaimed winner of June 12, 1993 presidential election, made Nigerians to allege Babangida's government to be too draconian and oppressive.

Chief Ernest Shonekan, a Nigerian industrialist became Nigerian unelected political leader of the National Interim Government which Babangida handed over power to after annulling June 12, 1993 election. Ernest Shonekan was overthrown after three months by late General Sanni Abacha whose administration was too oppressive, corrupt and autocratic. Abacha's death led to the coming – in of General Abdulsalami Abubakar who re-solved Nigerian socio-economic and socio-political problems by properly handing over to a civilian rule in May 29, 1999. President Olusegun Obasanjo became the second Nigerian executive president after General Abdulsalami and ruled till May 29, 2007. His administration was characterised by improved socio-economic and foreign policy for the nation as well as the improved value of the nation's currency, Naira. He was leading as a puritan to sanitise the nation's polity and economy. The only stigma of his administration was his attempt to rule for the third term against the nation's constitution. He handed over to another civilian regime under Alhaji Umar Musa Yar adua. His role in Nigerian polity symbolises that of a political 'father' since he also handed over to Shagari when he was a military leader.

President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, born at Otuoke in Bayelsa State was a former governor of his state before he became Nigerian vice-president in May 29, 2009. He became a governor in Bayelsa State when his boss, Chief Alamesiagba was impeached as a result of corruption and also became Nigerian president because of the untimely demise of President Umar Musa Yaradua. Goodluck Jonathan's administration as Nigerian president was characterised by corruption, opulence of the political office holders, poor socio-economic condition for the masses, insecurity of lives and properties, ethno-religious problems caused by 'Boko Haram', and oil pipeline vandalisation in the Niger-Delta zone of the country. The moral and social decadence among the political office holders as well as poor socio-economic condition of the masses were endemic in Jonathan's regime. This made Olusegun Obasanjo, Jonathan's political 'god-father' and Nigerian former president to

write a letter titled '*Before it is too late*' to appeal to President Jonathan to correct the nation's socio-political and economic problems. The text of this appeal letter serves as the data for our present pragmatic study.

Existing Linguistic Studies of Presidential Discourse
Different linguistic studies have been carried out on different genres of presidential discourse like presidential campaign speeches, presidential interviews, presidential inaugural speeches, presidential national broadcast and presidential television talks. For instance, Ayoola (2005) utilises the CDA tool in analysing President Olusegun Obasanjo's July 26, 2005 address to Nigerian National Assembly; while Adetunji (2009) studies the speech acts in inaugural addresses of Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and America's President George Bush. According to Adetunji (2009), the inaugural addresses of Presidents Obasanjo and George Bush were both characterised by more assertives and commissives. He also stated that directives had the least frequency in the inaugural addresses of these political leaders since these speakers were real democrats. Babatunde and Odepidan (2009) examine the pragma-rhetorical strategies in selected Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo through the theoretical base of Austin's (1969) and Searle's (1969) speech acts. They discovered ,through their study that assertives had the highest frequency in the illocutionary acts used in Obasanjo's speeches. This was followed by directives; while declaratives had the least frequency. Odebunmi and Oni (2012) study the lexical choices and cognition in President Olusegun Obasanjo's inaugural speeches by hinging on Van Dijk's cognitive semantics. According to them, President Obasanjo used his lexical choices to show his political cognition and ideologies as well as using his lexical patterns in condemning the nation's problems of leadership inefficiency, socio-economic devastation and the problem of unethical practices.

Also, Olaniyi (2010) does a pragmatic analysis of President Umar Yaradua's inaugural speech of May 29, 2007 through the theoretical framework of Searle's (1969) speech acts. According to him, President Yaradua's inaugural address had more commissives and few verdictives since that Nigerian political leaders had the socio-economic and political will and focus to help solve the nation's problems. Aremu (2014) does a critical discourse analysis of President Goodluck Jonathan's national broadcast of April 21, 2011. According to him, President Jonathan used directives, assertives, commissives and expressive in his broadcast. He continues that dysphemism and expletive were used by President Jonathan to ridicule the 'miscreants' that were causing political mayhem in Northern Nigeria. Besides, Opanachi (2009) does a discourse analysis of President Olusegun Obasanjo's national address on the Nigerian Labour Congress on 8th of October, 2003. He asserts that Obasanjo used words to appeal to NLC and also to frame them (NLC) as marketers of negation. Opanachi (2009) equally states that words were used by President Obasanjo to frame NLC as agent of destruction. It could be discovered from existing literature on the linguistics of political discourse in Nigeria that much work has been done on the language of political interview, political campaign speeches, presidential debates, presidential inaugural speeches, political cartoons, political adverts, and political manifestoes. However, scanty work exists on the linguistic analysis of ex-presidential letter to a serving president. This is the vacuum in pragmatics, political discourse analysis and cognitive meaning which this paper seeks to fill.

Statement of the Problem

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's '*Before it is too late*' was a letter that generated different arguments among Nigerian political actors and the masses. It was alleged among Nigerian populace that the letter culminated to the bulkanisation and fall of the then Nigerian ruling party, People's Democratic Party (PDP). Besides, many Nigerians' equally believed that the former President Olusegun Obasanjo wrote that letter as a face-saving device to exonerate himself from the alleged corrupt practices in Jonathan's government, the socio-economic problems of Nigeria, as well as the 'destruction' of PDP. As a result, our choice of the text of Obasanjo's '*Before it is too late'* for a pragmatic analysis is to examine how Obasanjo has used face acts and impoliteness to indirectly or directly indict and challenge Goodluck Jonathan for the socio-economic, political and ethno-religious problems in Nigeria and also to study how Obasanjo used face saving acts to exonerate himself from the cause of Nigerian socio-economic and political problems., Apart from the foregoing, since scanty linguistic study exists on this letter, it was selected for the present pragmatic analysis in order to discover how the writer had used face-acts and impoliteness to bring out his intention to the targeted readers (ex-President Goodluck Jonathan and Nigerian masses).

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in expanding the terrain of research on meaning exploration in presidential speeches and political discourse. It is equally significant in filling the existing gap in pragmatics as well as cognitive meaning. Since few studies exist on the linguistic analysis of President Olusegun Obasanjo's '*Before it is too late*', it was found imperative to examine the face-acts and impoliteness strategies in the text in order to fill the existing vacuum in political discourse analysis, pragmatics and cognitive semantics.

Research Questions

This study was carried out in order to proffer answers to the following research questions.

- What are the face acts used in Obasanjo's *'Before it is too late*?'
- What impoliteness strategies were used by Obasanjo against Goodluck Jonathan in the text?
- What cognitive and contextual meanings could be deduced from the text?
- What are the intentions of the writer of the text?
- Which generic and socially shared knowledge were instantiated in the text?

Theoretical Perspectives

The study was hinged on the eclectic theoretical framework of Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) Face management theory; Culpeper's) (1996) and Bousfield (2008)theory of impoliteness and Van Dijk's (2006b) socio-cognitive theory.

Brown and Levinson's (1987) Face Acts Concept

Politeness, according to Leech (1983) and Brown and Levinson (1978,1987) refers to series of strategies used by a speaker to maintain or promote harmonious relations between participants in a speech. Thomas (1995) states five types of politeness thus: politeness as a real-world goal, politeness as an utterance level phenomenon, politeness as a pragmatic phenomenon, register, and deference. Face management is one of the four approaches to

politeness (Thomas, 1995, p. 158) while others are conversational maxim view, conversational contract view (Frazer, 1990), and pragmatic scales' view (of Spencer-Oatey, 1992). Now we need to ask that, what is meant by 'face' management in language?

The concept of 'face' in language was proposed by Erving Goffman (1967) before becoming a full-blown politeness concept through Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Goffman (1967, p.5) defines face as 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for him/herself by the line others assume he or she has taken during a particular context.' It is also "an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes. Thomas (1995, p. 169) states that "within politeness theory, 'face;' is best understood as 'every individual's feeling of self-worth or self-image, which can be damaged, maintained or enhanced through interaction with others.' 'Face' has two aspects; (i) positive, and (ii) negative. An individual's positive face is shown in her or his desire to be liked, approved of, respected or appreciated by others. On the other hand, a person's negative face is shown in the desire not to be impeded, or put upon, to have freedom to act as one chooses.

Face Threatening Acts (FTA) is an illocutionary act which is liable to damage another person's face. When one insults 'H' or expresses a disapproval of what 'H' holds dear, the person has performed an FTA. There are four strategies of performing FTAs: (i) performing the FTA on record with redress, using positive politeness ,(ii) performing an FTA on – record with redress using negative politeness, (iii) performing the FTA on-record without redressive action (bald on-record),and (iv) performing an FTA, using off-record politeness. The other one is 'Non performance of FTA. 'Bald-on-record' politeness implies a way of directly speaking to someone who is lower in social status or age to the speaker without minding whose ox is gored. In this, time constraints, exigencies of situation and great power differentiation between participants will not give room for mitigating FTA. Also, FTA without redress is often used to condemn, criticise, or indict people's actions or inactions. Hence, directives and verdictives are often used in them. Secondly, Brown and Levinson (1987, p.101) state that when one speaks to someone, one may orient oneself towards the encoder's positive face and employ positive politeness which appeals to "H" desire to be liked or approved of. That is what they termed 'performing an FTA with redress'. Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 101 – 129) give fifteen positive politeness strategies which are close parallels to Levinsonian politeness principles: 'seek agreement,' 'avoid disagreement,' 'be optimistic', 'give sympathy' (Thomas, 1995, p. 17).

Besides, the FTA with redress (negative politeness) is oriented towards a hearer's 'face' which appeals to the hearer's desire to be impeded or put upon, to be left free to act as they chose. The strategies of invoking FTA with redress (using negative politeness), according to Thomas (1995, p.172-3) include: (i)'be conventionally indirect' (ii) 'use hedge' (ii) 'minimize imposition,' (iv) 'admit impingement and beg for forgiveness; (v) 'point of – view distancing' (vi) 'go on record as incurring a debt,' (vii) 'impersonalize 'S' and 'H' (do not be rude), and (viii) state FTA as a general rule.

Brown and Levinson (1987) also list the strategies for performing FTA, using off-record politeness. These include 'give hints', be ambiguous or vague,' 'use metaphors', 'be incomplete,' and 'use ellipsis'. These strategies are often used by speakers to perform FTA, using off-record politeness. Brown and Levinson's (1987) final strategy 'Do not perform

FTA' states that there are occasions when something is potentially so 'face-threatening' that one doesn't say it. According to Thomas (1995, p. 173), there are two types of 'non-performance of FTA' or 'saying nothing' which Tanaka (1993) called 'opting out choice(OOC)'.There are two types of OOC: (i)OOC-genuine and (ii)OOC-strategic.'OOC – genuine' is often used when a speaker doesn't perform speech act and genuinely intends the matter to remain closed. On the other hand, 'OOC – strategic' implies a situation in which speaker 'S' doesn't perform a speech act (SA) but expects the audience (A) to infer her or his wish to achieve the perlocutionary effect. It is essential to state that FTA is often performed in a dynamic context or situation.

Context, according to Van Dijk (1977, p.11), implies 'whatever we need to properly understand an event, action or discourse'. Context could be cognitive, social, linguistic, physical or psychological (Frazer, 20004, p. 35; cited from Odebunmi, 2016, p. 24). Context is not static but dynamic (Mey, 2001, p. 201). It is the 'cell' of meaning construction and interpretation; and is often used in the performance FTA and FSA. An FSA (face saving act) implies a politeness strategy used by a language users to 'safe' their own face or give hints that will make them protect their individual 'self-prestige' or 'self-image'. The FTAs and FSAs in Obasanjo's '*Before it is too late'* were examined in this study through Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Thomas' (1995) concept of 'face management' However, some scholars have criticized Brown and Levinson's (1987) face acts that (i) it cannot properly handle the distinction between what is polite and what is not polite, (ii) it cannot be aptly used in examining impoliteness and rudeness in language use and (ii) it cannot be properly used to examine utterances that are 'politic' in a discourse (Locher and Watt, 2002; Culpeper, 2009; Odebunmi, 2009). A 'politic' expression often looks like dysphemism or vituperation but their socio-cultural and situational contexts makes them not to be impolite. For example, a husband who shouts on his wife to avoid an accident "Mummy don't be stupid" (to stop the woman's careless driving) has used 'politic' and neither 'polite' nor 'impolite' expression since the statement was made for the benefit of both encoder and the decoder. That is, to make them avoid an accident (Mullany, 2002). Hence, Culpeper's (2009) concept of 'impoliteness' theory is relevant in examining Obasanjo's vituperation and dysphemisms against Jonathan in '*Before it is too late.'*

Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Theory
Impoliteness presupposes 'communication strategies designed to attack face, and thereby cause conflict and social disharmony (Culpeper, 2005, p. 38). It arises when a speaker 'communicates face attack intentionally or the hearer perceived and / or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking or combination of both. According to Terkourafi (1999, p. 7), impoliteness occurs when the expression used is not conventionally relative to the context of occurrence. There are five strategies of impoliteness: bold-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative Impoliteness, mock impoliteness, and withhold impoliteness. Bald-on-record impoliteness is performed when a speaker directly use language to attack an intended listener (Bousfield, 2008, p. 92). Positive impoliteness is often used to damage the hearer's positive face want, while the negative impoliteness is often used to attack the hearer's negative face want or desire to be free from imposition. Mock impoliteness implies the use of bitter and wounding ironic language against a person;

while withhold impoliteness refers to the non-performance of a politeness where it is supposed to be performed (Culpeper, 2011, p.10).

Culpeper (1996) also gives three types of impoliteness: affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness and entertaining impoliteness. Affective impoliteness arises when a speaker exposes her or his anger towards the hearer and this consequently generates a negative atmosphere between the participants. Coercive impoliteness is a means of getting power through language (Culpeper 2011, p. 252). It occurs where a speaker has a higher social status than the hearer. Entertaining impoliteness is often used to cause amusement (Culpeper, 2011, p. 252). Since the data for the study is a political text, Van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory is also useful to examine the triangular relations between discourse, cognition and context (or situation) in it and also to examine how this would help the participants to have shared cognitive and situational knowledge and embodiment in meaning constructions and interpretations.

Van Dijk's (2001) Socio-cognitive Theory
Socio-cognitive theory is a multidisciplinary approach to political discourse analysis. It explains the triangular relations of cognition, discourse and context or situational use of human communication. It explains that participants in text and talks, most especially in political discourse, often ride on the shared cognitive and socio-cultural knowledge in their meaning construction and interpretation. Socio-cognitive theory explains the interface in discourse, text and interpretation. It is based on what Van Dijk (2002, p. 2006) called 'mental and context models'. Van Dijk (2001) also states that human memory is structured into (i) working memory (WM) also called 'short term memory (STM) and long term memory (LTM). LTM features remembrances of act, 'autobiographical experiences' and knowledge , stored in the 'Episodic memory (EM). There is also the shared social knowledge (SSK) , attitudes, and ideologies in semantic memory (SM). Van Dijk (2001) also explains that our personal experiences, as processed in WM are represented as subjective unique individuals mental models stored in Episodic Memory (EM). Mental Models (MM) are multimodal and embodied. Van Dijk states that, apart from MM which are personal and unique, human beings also have various forms of shared cognitions. Hence, we have the generic and abstract knowledge of the world shared with other members of Epistemic Community (EC). As members of specific group, we may have shared attitudes or ideologies just like political, economic, religious, or medical ideologies (Van Dijk, 2001). Our personal experiences are interpreted, construed and represented as 'Mental Models' (MM), on the basis of various forms of 'socio-cognition. These features of human cognition allow participants' cooperation, interaction and communication through discourse.

Besides, political discourse is strategically processed and understood on the basis of cognitive structure. Words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and turns in a text (e.,g. political discourse) are sequentially processed in WM and represented and controlled by MMs, knowledge and ideologies in LTM. There are 2 types of Mental Models (MM): situational model and context model. The situation model represents the situation a discourse is about. Hence, it is also called 'semantic model.' Participants often use their

shared knowledge in interpreting meaning that are not explicitly expressed through their shared knowledge.

Context models represent the dynamically changing communicative situation or experience in which language are ongoingly involved (Van Dijk, 2001). These are called pragmatic models. According to Dijk (2001), the basis of cognition, thought, perception, understanding, action, interaction and discourse is the 'system of knowledge' acquired and shared by members of 'epistemic community.' This 'knowledge system is locally organised by hierarchical categories of concepts and schemas e.g. scripts of everyday episode, schemas of objects, persons or group of people (Dijk, 2001). Generic socially shared knowledge is 'instantiated' or applied in the construction of personal mental models that represent our individual experiences, perceptions and interpretations of events and situations. This knowledge could be acquired shared and extended by participants in a discourse . For instance, Obasanjo's generic socially shared knowledge about political and socio-economic situation during President Goodluck Jonathan's regime is shared through *'Before it is too late'*.

Also, Van Dijk (2001) states that 'the relations between knowledge and discourse are crucial for both'. Our non-experience based knowledge' is acquired by discourse, while the discourse construction and comprehension requires vast amount of SSK (Socially Shared Knowledge). Context models have special knowledge device (K-device) which 'calculates' what knowledge is shared by recipients. Hence, it is the common ground that may be presupposed and give which information needs to be asserted (Van Dijk, 2001). According to Van Dijk (2001),'power, power abuse, domination and manipulation…are rooted in social structure and relations between social groups. Hence, cognitive mediation explains how the complex structures influence the structures of texts and talks, most especially in political discourse'. Van Dijk (2001) concludes that discourse plays pivotal role in the exercise of power. It is a social action used to control the dominated groups. This study attempts to examine how Obasanjo has used the text of '*Before it is to late*' to dominate and control Nigerian political setting during the era of ex-President Goodluck Jonathan through the use of face acts and impoliteness strategies.Hence, Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Theory is a useful tool in studying face acts and impoliteness strategies in Obasanjo's '*Before it is too late'*

METHODOLOGY

The data for the study were gathered from Olusegun Obasanjo's '*Before it is too late*'(henceforth *BITL*); an appeal letter sent to a former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan. This letter was published in the Thursday, December 12, 2003 issue of the Punch newspaper. The text of *BITL* was downloaded from The Punch online for pragmatic analysis. The illocutions, face acts and impoliteness in the text were examined through the statistical tool of simple percentage. Also, Van Dijk's (1977,2001) socio-cognitive theory, Brown and Levinson's (1987) face acts and Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness theory serve as the eclectic theoretical framework for the study. The methods used by the author to present his political ideologies and cognitive dispositions to the audience, through face acts

and impoliteness strategies, were also critically examined. The choice of the text for a pragmatic study was as a result of its significance in the nation's polity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that Obasanjo's "*Before it is too late"(BITL)* has 231 sentences and 274 performatives. The frequency of illocutions and face acts in the text is shown below:

Table 1: Face Acts in the text

Face Acts	Frequency	Percentage
FSA	18	39.13
Bald-on-record	20	43.48
FTA with redress	08	17.39
Total	46	100

Table 2: Impoliteness Strategies in the text

S/N	Impoliteness Strategies	Practs	Frequency	Percentage
1	'Face Attacks' or Bald-on-record impoliteness	Warning	22	40.74
2	Negative impoliteness (e.g. ridiculing frightening)	Threatening	02	3.7
3	Mock impoliteness	Condemning	04	7.41
4	Withhold impoliteness	0	0	0
5	Positive impoliteness	Denying acceptance	26	48.15
6	Total	54	54	100

Table 3: Direct and Indirect Illocutions in the text

Illocutions	Frequencies	Percentage	Performatives
Commissives	06	2.19	Threatening
Expresives	11	4.01	Praising
Behabitives	15	5.47	Sympathising
Expositives	29	10.58	Arguing
Exeratives	102	37.23	Warning, condemning
Assertives	117	432.7	Stating
Total	274	100%	274

Obasanjo's '*BITL*' was used to pract warning, threatening, condemning, stating, praising, and sympathizing, 'Bald-on-record face acts' and 'bald-on-record impoliteness' were used to condemn Goodluck Jonathan for including corrupt people in his government and to control the affairs of People's Democratic Party (PDP). FSAs were used by the author of '*BITL'* to appeal and admonish Goodluck Jonathan to 'fix' the problems in PDP and also to settle the socio-economic , ethno-religious, political and security problems, in Nigeria. Also, FTAs were used to condemn the bad political actions and inactions of Goodluck Jonathan. FSA was used to map 'a leader as a father'. Olusegun Obasanjo's voice in the text of '*BITL*;' mapped 'a leader as a father;' and a leaders as a societal puritan'. Obasanjo used expletives and dysphemisms to describe Goodluck Jonathan's aides and political leaders. Expletives and dysphemisms served as the linguistic tools used in the 'bald-on-record face acts' and 'bald-on-record, impoliteness used in the text of '*BITL*'. 'Bald-on-record impoliteness had 20 frequencies (40.74%) in the text, negative impoliteness were 2 representing 3.7%, withhold impoliteness did not feature in the text, mock impoliteness were 4(7.41%), while positive impoliteness were 26(48.15%). Also, FSA in '*BITL*' were 18(39.13%), FTA without redress (Bald-on-record FTA) were 20(43.48%) while FTA with

redress featured 8 times in the text representing 17.39%. Commissives were used as FTAs by Obasanjo to threaten Goodluck Jonathan to accept his political ideologies and beliefs in '*BITL*'. Exercitives were used to warn Goodluck Jonathan to fix Nigerian economic and socio-political problems and also to condemn Goodluck Jonathan's alleged involvement in PDP leadership problems. Each of FTAs, FSA and impoliteness in the text is hereby explained.

Face Saving Acts (FSAs) in '*BITL*'
Obasanjo's use of FSA in '*BITL*' was to admonish and appeal to Goodluck Jonathan to stop some of the corrupt people from involving in his government. FSAs was used by Olusegun Obasanjo to pract appealing and also to map 'a leader as a father' and a 'political party as a family'. He used FSA to exonerate in 'BITL' himself from PDP leadership squabbles and also to advise President Jonathan as his political (god) father. Three out of 18 FSA in the text were randomly sampled for discussion.

EX. 1:   *"I wish to see no more bloodshed occasioned by politics in Nigeria.*
                  Mr. President, be mindful of that.
EX. 2:   "With common identity as Nigerians, there is more that binds us than separates us'.
EX. 3:   "There is a press report that Dr. Goodluck Jonathan has already taken a unique and unprecedented step of declaring that he would only want to be a one-term President. If so, whether you know it or not, that is a sacrifice and it is statemanly.'

FSA featured 18 times in BITL, representing 39.13% of the whole face acts in it. In Ex. 1, FSA is used to admonish President Goodluck Jonathan not to cause bloodshed by re-contesting and caused more problems in Nigeria. In 'BITL', Obasanjo used FSA (i) to appeal to Jonathan not to contest for second term, (i) to settle the leadership problem within PDP and to stop Boko Haram and security problems in the country. FSA was used in EX. 3 above to convince Jonathan not to contest. FSA was used in 'BITL' to map a political leader as 'a father' and a nation as a family. Olusegun Obasanjo's role as a political 'godfather' is implied in the text of 'BITL'. In Nigerian political history, the author of 'BITL' was a political (god)father to former President Goodluck Jonathan and Umar Yar Adua and some Nigerian former governors like Alao Akala of Oyo State. FSA is used in Ex. 2 above to advise Goodluck Jonathan to promote unity among the multi-ethnic Nigerian populace. FSA is also used to convince intended audience by the encoder of 'BITL' that 'If Jonathan, a candidate from Ijaw, a minority ethnic groups could become Nigerian president, if Yar adua could, everybody can." Obasanjo equally employed FSA to map 'a president as a conflict settler'. Obasanjo states in 'BITL' that Goodluck Jonathan should play the role of 'father of the nation who could settle and fix the nation's socio-political, religious, economic and security problems. Besides, FSA is also used to map 'a president as a symbol of power' in a nation. Obasanjo used FSA to advise Goodluck Jonathan to use his power as Nigerian president and PDP leader to 'fix' the problems within PDP and in Nigeria.

Bald-on-record FTAs in 'BITL
Twenty FTA without redress (i.e bald-on-record FTAS) were discovered in Obasanjo's 'BITL' representing 43.48% of the whole 46 face threatening acts in the text. In those bald-on-record FTA found in the text, it was discovered that commissives were used by

Obasanjo that he (Obasanjo) did not fear the attack of the allege 'snippers' which the butt (Goodluck Jonathan) was alleged to be trained 'where Abacha trained his own killers'. Also, exercitives were used in those FTA without redress to warn Jonathan against the shedding the blood of innocent Nigerians as a result of second term ambition and also to condemn Jonathan's use of alleged, 'criminals'' like Buruji Kasamu who Obasanjo alleged to have a case in the US and UK as his political aides and leaders of PDP (in the Southwestern Nigeria). For out of 20 bald-on-record FTAS found in the text of Obasanjo's 'BITL' are hereby discussed.

EX. 5: *If you as leader of the party cannot be loyal to PDP... and interests of   party candidates ....sacrificed on the altar of your personal interest, then goodluck to the party... and goodluck to Goodluck.*

EX. 6*: "If on the altar of the party you go for broke, the party may broke beyond   repairs. And when in a dispute between two sides they both stubbornly   decide to fight to the last drop of blood, no one knows whose blood would the last to drop.'*

EX. 7: *"Nigeria is bleeding and the hemorrhage must be stopped.*

EX. 8: *"Presidential assistance for a murderer to evade justice, and presidential   delegation to welcome him home can only be in bad taste generally.."*

EX. 9: *'Mr. President, **I have passed the stage of being flattered, intimidated, threatened, induced or bought**... Death is the end of all human beings and may it come when God wills it...'*

In 'EX. 5 – EX. 9, above, Obasanjo used FTA without redress to butt, attack, ridicule his butt (Goodluck Jonathan for his alleged support for non- PDP candidates in the elections, training of 'snippers' to kill or threaten his political opponents and giving political assistance to criminals and murderers. In 'EX. 8', there is an indirect illocutionary act in the category of condemning. In EX. 8 the writer rode on participants shared cognitive and situational knowledge to pract warning and condemning. There is a cataphonic reference to Al-Mustapha who was alleged to involve in the killing of some innocent Nigerians like Dr. Kudirat Abiola. Obasanjo used bald-on-record FTA to attack and butt Jonathan in EX. 8 for giving Presidential pardon to Al-Mustapha. In EX. 5, there is an implicit cataphonic reference to the alleged bond between Senator Tinubu and Jonathan to deliver Lagos state for Goodluck Jonathan and on the sacrifice of PDP senatorial candidate like Musiliu Obanikoro. Obasanjo also used EX. 7 to condemn the alleged Jonathan's 'double-game' in politics in dis-favour of PDP candidates. In EX. 8, Obasanjo used bald-on-record FTA to condemn Jonathan's alleged shedding of blood of innocent Nigerians. Obasanjo equally used bald-on-record FTA to condemn Jonathan's foot-dragging attitude to curb insecurity caused to Nigerians by Boko Haram, Niger-Delta Avengers, and so on.

FTA (with redress) in 'BITL'
Eight FTA (with redress) were discovered in Obasanjo's 'BITL'. Hedges were used as a linguistic tool to used FTA (with redress) to warn Goodluck Jonathan against his poor disposition to 'fix' Nigerian socio-economic and political problems. Examples are in 'EX. 10' and 'EX. 12' below:

EX. 10: *'Your latter-day conversion to National Conference is fraught with danger of disunity, confusion and chaos; if not well handled.*

EX. 11: *'I want nothing from you, except that **you should run the affairs of Nigeria** not only to make it good, but to make it great...'*

EX. 12: *'May it never be the wish of majority of Nigerians that Goodluck Jonathan and his omission or commission, would be the last president to come from Ijaw."*

In "EX 10' above, FTA with redress was used to warn Jonathan about the danger of holding a National Conference when the general election is very near. The phrase 'If not well handled.' Is a hedge used as a redressive act in the expression. In 'EX. 11', the expression "except that .... make it great..." serves as a hedge used to pract warning. In 'EX. 11', FTA with redress was used to inform Jonathan to properly run the affairs of Nigeria, as the nation's president. EX. 12 equally has FTA with redress used to warn Jonathan not to allow other tribes who elected him as Nigerian president hate the future presidential candidates that may come from Ijaw; Jonathan's tribe.

Impoliteness strategies in 'BITL'
Impoliteness strategies (Culpeper, 1996) found in the text of Obasanjo's 'BITL' are in the categories of 'bald-on-record impoliteness, 'negative impoliteness', 'positive impoliteness', and 'mock impoliteness. There is no withhold impoliteness in the text since the data is a written discourse (an appeal letter). Frequency of impoliteness strategies in BITL showed that there were 22 bald-on-record impoliteness, representing 40.7% of the whole 54 impoliteness strategies in it.

There were 2(3.7%) negative impoliteness strategies, 4 (7.41%) mock impoliteness strategies and 26(48.15%) positive impoliteness in 'BITL'. Bald-on-record impoliteness was used in 'BITL' to pract warning and condemning, negative impoliteness was used to pract threatening. Goodluck Jonathan's positive-face want was threatened through negative impoliteness used in the text of 'BITL'. Mock impoliteness used in BITL was used to pract condemning, while positive impoliteness used in it was used to pract denying. Each of these are hereby discussed.

Bald-on-record Impoliteness in BITL
Bald-on-record impoliteness is often used to launch direct attacks against a butt with a deliberate intention of the speaker (or writer) to hurt the person (Culpeper,2005; Bousfield, 2008, p., 92). Obasanjo used this to hurt Goodluck Jonathan. Examples of this are in the following "EX. 13' to 'EX. 16.

EX. 13: *"When the guard becomes the thief, nothing is safe, secure nor protected in house."*
EX. 14: *"Assisting criminal to evade justice cannot be the part of the job of the presidency.*
EX. 15: *"Putting a **certified unashamed criminal** wanted abroad to face justice... on a high profile of politics as you and your aides have done... is the height of dis-service to this country and height of insult to the people of Southwest.*
EX. 16: *"If everything fails and the party cannot be retrieved from the hands of criminals and commercial jobbers and discredited touts, men and women of honour ...must step aside to rethink.*

In EX. 13: -- EX. 16, bald-on-record impoliteness were sued to condemn and ridicule Goodluck Jonathan and his aides. In 'EX. 14' there is a cataphoric reference to Al-

Mustapha who Goodluck Jonathan, gave presidential pardon while in 'EX. 15' is used to make reference to Senator Buruji Kasamu who was alleged to be a wanted criminal in the UK and US. 'Bald-on-record impoliteness found in the text were 22, representing 40.74% of the whole 54 impoliteness strategies in the text.

Positive Impoliteness in 'BITL'

Twenty-six positive impoliteness found in the text were used to pract denying acceptance. Obasanjo used positive impoliteness to butt Goodluck Jonathan and to explain to him that his actions as the political leader and president of Nigeria would lead to his rejection by the electorates. Positive Impoliteness often used by speakers to damage the hearer's positive face want (e.g. her or his desire to be accepted). Obasanjo in EX. 16, rode on the participants' shared cognitive and situational knowledge to pract threatening , rejecting and warning. Damning epithets were used to address Jonathan's political aides. Since positive impoliteness strategies had the highest frequency, 26(48.15%) out of 54 impoliteness strategies in the text of 'BITL', it could be inferred that the intention of the author (Olusegun Obasanjo) was not only to state his total rejection of his political ideologies and policies but also to indirectly declare his intention to reject PDP under Jonathan control.

Mock Impoliteness in BITL

Mock impoliteness strategy refers to the use of bitter or wounding ironic language in an interaction. Four (7.41%) were discovered from 54 impoliteness strategies in BITL. In these, the author rode on participants' shared cognitive and situational knowledge to pract condemning. Let us examine EX. 17 below**:**

EX. 17: "Move away from culture of denials, cover-ups an d proxies and deal honestly, sincerely and transparently with Nigerians to regain their trust and confidence. <u>Nigerians are no fools; they can see, they can talk among</u> <u>themselves</u>."

EX. 17 above is an mock impoliteness strategy which Obasanjo used to butt or launch attack on Goodluck Jonathan. It is a sarcasm or mock impoliteness used by the speaker to show that Jonathan was being troubled by delusion for taking Nigerians for granted through his action s and inactions.

Negative Impoliteness Strategy in 'BITL'

Two negative impoliteness strategies we discovered in the text of Obasanjo's 'BITL' representing 3.7% of the whole 54 impoliteness strategies in the text. Hinging on the cognitive and situational contextual knowledge, the author of the text practed threatening, ridiculing and scorning. Negative impoliteness were used in the text by Obasanjo to impose on Jonathan's freedom. Examples of such is in Ex. 18 below:

EX. 18: "My last piece of advice, Mr. President, is that you should learn the <u>lesson of history</u> and please, <u>do not take</u> <u>Nigeria and Nigerians</u> for granted."

In EX. 18, Obasanjo used negative impoliteness strategy to impose on Jonathan's desire to be free. The statement has the cognitive metaphor of 'Nigeria as a lorry' in which the 'driver (President Jonathan) was not given the freedom by Olusegun Obasanjo to direct or control as he wished. Obasanjo's use of impoliteness strategies in the text to pract ridiculing, condemning and threatening. The writer butted or attacked the encoder's (Jonathan's) face want through negative impoliteness Strategies in 'BITL'. Linguistic tools

used in impoliteness strategies in 'BITL' were dysphemisms and explatives. These are hereby explained.

Dysphemisms in 'BITL'

Dysphemisms refers to a firm of overstatement employed as a weapon in a political struggle (Yusuf 2002; Aremu, 2010, p. 13). These abound in the text of Olusegun Obasanjo's 'BITL'. Obasanjo used dysphemisms as exaggerated comments and evidences against the alleged Jonathan's misrule of Nigeria and PDP. Examples are the following:

EX. 19: 'If ... the party cannot be retrieved from the hands of criminals, and   commercial jobbers and discredited touts.**..**

EX. 20: "When the guard becomes the thief; nothing is safe, secure nor   protected....

In EX. 19' and 'EX. 20' above, dysphemisms were used by Obasanjo for exaggerating the corrupt practices of political actors under President Jonathan in order to discredit Jonathan's administration.

Use of Expletives in BITL

Expletive presupposes damning epithets often used by political activists and political actors and political leaders to address their opponents. (Ayoola, 2007, p. 12). In the text of 'BITL' expletives like '*self-serving politicians*,' '*wanted criminals*', '*certified and unashamed thief*' and '*supplanter*' were used by the writer (Olusegun Obasanjo) to condemn Jonathan's political aides like Senator Buruji Kasamu; while Al-Mustapha, the alleged killer of Dr. Doyin Abiola was indirectly referred to as '*a murderer*' in Obasanjo's 'BITL' Expletives like '*guard that has become a thief*', *trainer of snippers*'**,** '*discredited touts*' and '*commercial jobbers*' were used to butt Jonathan's and his political aides by Obasanjo in 'BITL'. These expletives helped made the text to be 'garnished' with bald-on-record FTAs and impolite expressions.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this study showed that the text of Obasanjo's '*BITL*' is characterised by FTAs in the categories of FTA with and without redressive actions, as well as FSAs. Besides, the text is also characterised by impoliteness strategies in the categories of balk-on-record impoliteness, mock impoliteness, positive and negative impoliteness. The findings also revealed that expletives and dysphemisms were used as linguistic tools to butt Goodluck Jonathan through FTAs and impoliteness strategies. Obasanjo rode on the shared cognitive and situational contexts that exist between him and his intended audience (Goodluck Jonathan and all Nigerians) to impose his political ideologies on Goodluck Jonathan. FSAs used in the text were employed by Obasanjo to convince Jonathan to accept his political dominance and power and to exonerate himself from Jonathan's alleged administrative and political lapses. For readers to understand the intention of the writer in *BITL* they must understand the generic and socially shared knowledge instantiated by participants in meaning construction and negotiation in the text.

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About the authors

Moses Adebayo Aremu is a Ph.D student in Department of English, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. He is also a lecturer in The College of Education, Lanlate, Oyo State, Nigeria. His research interests are in Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis and Applied Linguistics.

Sola Timothy Babatunde is a Professor of Applied Linguistics in Department of English, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. He is the current president of Nigeria English Scholars Association. His research interests are in Pragmatics, Semantics, Discourse Analysis and Applied Linguistics.