

Language Styles and Politeness Strategies in Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*

Esther Olajumoke Adeagbo, PhD^{1*}; Stephen Adetunji Ogungbe²

Department of English Ajayi Crowther University, oyo

*Corresponding Author: Esther Olajumoke Adeagbo, PhD

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17449508>

Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	
Received: 12-10-2025	
Accepted: 23-10-2025	
Published: 25-10-2025	
Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.	
Citation: Esther Olajumoke Adeagbo, PhD; Stephen Adetunji Ogungbe. (2025). Language Styles and Politeness Strategies in Ola Rotimi's <i>Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again</i> . UKR Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (UKRJMS), Volume 1(issue 8), 21-32.	<i>Literary discourse encompasses the language and conversations related to literature. Several studies have been conducted on literary discourse from linguistic and ideological perspectives with little attention paid to Ola Rotimi's OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN, especially from pragmatic and Stylistic perspectives. Therefore, this study investigated a pragma-stylistic analysis of Ola Rotimi's OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN with a view to identifying the language styles and politeness strategies deployed in the text. Martin Joos Language Style Approach in collaboration with Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's Politeness Theory served as theoretical framework for this study. Data comprising one text, two acts, seven scenes purposely extracted from the selected text of Ola Rotimi. The study employs qualitative methods to analyze the data. The secondary source of data collection was used. Data were subjected to pragmatic and Stylistic analyses. This study showed that language styles such as formal style and intimate style were used by Ola Rotimi to inform a wider audience, the domineering spirit of some ex-service men in Nigerian politics. The study found that formal style and intimate style were used to show how these ex-service men dominate the political landscape of post-independent era in Nigeria. The findings further projected that the major politeness strategies deployed in the data includes face threatening act and face-saving act. The study found that these politeness strategies were used to address social (marital) and political violence in the data. Literary discourse is an important tool that can be employed in addressing social and political issues in Nigeria. Therefore, contributing to the understanding of how literary text can serve as a tool for social and political change. This necessitates further studies to account for social and political issues in other genres of literary texts by other Nigerian writers.</i> Keywords: Pragma-stylistics, Language styles, Politeness strategies, Drama text, Literary discourse.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Language has been defined in different ways by many scholars. According to Crystal (1974), language is human vocal noise or the graphic representation of this noise in writing, used systematically and conventionally by a community for the purpose of communication. In simple terms, language can be seen as an act of communication involving the transmission of information from one person to another. Dada (2004) explains that language can be studied from several perspectives depending on the purpose of the enquiry. Some scholars view it mainly as a means of

communication, while others see it as a unique human attribute peculiar to mankind. The complexity of language in both its form and function has made it one of the most distinctive human characteristics. Some scholars therefore describe humans as *Homo loquens*, meaning the speaking being, rather than identifying them by other qualities such as the use of tools. Because of its many sides, it is difficult to give one single and complete definition of language, but any useful one must take into account both its structure and its function. In essence, language is a human phenomenon used to communicate meaning. It is an arbitrary and

systematic vocal system of communication shared among members of a speech community. Literary discourse refers to the language and conversation surrounding literary texts and their interpretation. It stresses the importance of understanding and appreciating written works, while promoting thoughtful engagement with literature. Literary discourse encourages readers and writers to explore how meaning is created, interpreted, and shared through texts. Through such interaction, it deepens the appreciation of literature as a social and cultural act. Johnson (2002) notes that literary discourse also involves exchanges shaped by religious, cultural, and ideological influences. It reflects how authoritative voices and narratives shape human understanding and belief within a particular cultural setting.

Ola Rotimi, one of Nigeria's most celebrated playwrights, was born in Sapele to Samuel Gladstone Enitan Rotimi, a Yoruba steam-launch engineer, and Dorcas Adolae Oruene Addo, an Ijaw drama enthusiast. The richness of Nigeria's cultural diversity often appeared as a recurring theme in his works. He attended St. Cyprian's School in Port Harcourt from 1945 to 1949, St. Jude's School in Lagos from 1951 to 1952, and Methodist Boys' High School in Lagos before travelling to the United States in 1959 to study at Boston University, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts. In 1962, he married Hazel Mae Guadreau. Four years later, in 1966, he completed a Master's degree in Playwriting and Dramatic Literature at the Yale School of Drama, where he was recognised as a Rockefeller Foundation scholar.

Rotimi's play *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* tells the story of Lejoka Brown, a former military major who enters politics in postcolonial Africa. His political ambition is driven more by vanity than patriotism, and his lack of understanding of political realities leads to several comic outcomes. His domestic life also becomes complicated when his first wife returns from abroad and discovers that he has secretly married two other women. Through these humorous situations, Rotimi presents a powerful social and political satire that exposes themes such as greed, ambition, hypocrisy, and the absurdity of political leadership in contemporary Nigeria. This study uses Martin Joos's Language Style Approach together with Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's Politeness Theory to examine how the characters in the play use language to express their intentions, show power relations, and reveal the corruption that forms the central idea of the play. The study also shows how language functions as a tool for manipulation and persuasion within the social and cultural setting of the play.

The way people use language is often guided by cultural, social, and situational norms in their community. This makes the study of pragmatics important in understanding how language works in real communication. Mey (2001)

defines pragmatics as the study of how language is used in human communication as shaped by social conditions. It is concerned with how meaning is created and interpreted within particular social, cultural, and cognitive situations. Pragmatic study assumes that speakers do not depend solely on the language system itself but also on their cultural knowledge, shared experiences, and the specific context of the communication to understand one another effectively.

Stylistics is the linguistic study of style. It focuses on how a writer uses language to express both aesthetic beauty and information. Ufot (2006) explains that the aim of stylistics is to understand the writer's intention through the analysis of semantic patterns, sound features, and discourse strategies. Stylistics pays close attention to the function of language choices and how these choices help to create meaning, mood, and artistic impact. The combination of pragmatics and stylistics has given rise to what is known as pragma-stylistics. It studies how language works effectively and how stylistic choices support communication. Pragma-stylistics examines how writers use language in context to achieve their goals and how readers actively interpret meanings rather than passively receive them. Black (2006) explains that pragma-stylistics applies pragmatic theories to the study of literature by considering the role of both the text and its context in shaping interpretation. In this way, pragma-stylistics provides a broader understanding of how language use, context, and style work together to create characterisation, express themes, and reveal deeper meanings in literary works.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Previous studies have examined literary and non-literary texts at different linguistic levels to reveal how language functions as a tool for addressing social and cultural issues. For instance, Joseph (2014) conducted a linguistic analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Trial of Brother Jero*, while Odoemenam (2011) carried out a linguistic stylistic study of Soyinka's *Night and Death in the Dawn*. Bamgbose (2019) explored the pragmatic strategies of verbal humour in Nigerian hip-hop, and Onyema (2021) conducted a pragmatic stylistic analysis of selected presidential speeches delivered during the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic by both African and non-African leaders. Similarly, Uguola (2021) examined the semiotic elements embedded in selected coronavirus-themed cartoons, whereas Oshin (2022) analysed the semiotic features of selected COVID-19 posters produced by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control. In a related study, Oyawale (2024) conducted a discourse-pragmatic investigation into social and cultural representations in selected songs by Omah Lay.

While these studies have made significant contributions to linguistic and semiotic scholarship, they have paid little attention to the use of politeness strategies—particularly face-saving and face-threatening acts—as discursive tools for engaging socio-political realities in Nigerian literary texts. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by examining, from a pragma-stylistic perspective, the language styles and politeness strategies employed in Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to carry out a pragma-stylistics study of Ola Rotimi's *OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN*.

The objective of this study includes:

- i. To identify the language styles deployed in the text;
- ii. To discuss functions of language styles used in the text; and
- iii. To explore politeness Strategies evident in the text.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the language styles deployed in the text?
- ii. What are the functions of language styles used in the text?
- iii. What are the politeness strategies used in the text?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study lies in its exploration of a pragma-stylistics analysis of the language styles and politeness strategies evident in *OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN*, which addresses a critical gap in literary discourse research. By investigating the uses of language styles and politeness strategies deployed in *OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN* this study contributes to our understanding of how literary discourse and politeness strategies are used to address social and political issues in post-independent era in Nigeria and creates different ideological constructs. This study is also very important to the existing body of literature on literary discourse because it helps to bridge the gap that exists in the literature on pragma-stylistics analysis of Ola Rotimi's selected text. Thus, this study provides a clear and scholarly account of the language styles and politeness strategies deployed in Ola Rotimi's selected texts, which helps to portray his point of view on socio-political issues in Nigeria.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This paper focus on 2 Acts and seven scenes; Act 1: 3 scenes and Act 2: 4 sences of *OLA ROTIMI'S OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN*. No attention is paid to oother text by Ola Rotimi. This study is limited to the language styles and politeness strategies eveident in Ola Rotimi's selected text. This study is guided by Micheal

Halliday's functional stylistics Theory in conjunction with Penelop Brown and Stephen Levison's politeness Theory. This paper is limited to aforementioned theories.

LITERATURE REVIEW OF RELEVANT STUDIES

Odoemenam (2017) conducted a lexico-semantic explication of J. P. Clark's *Night Rain*. The study sought to interpret the poem from a stylistic perspective and to render its meaning explicit through the application of linguistic tools. To achieve this, the researcher employed M. A. K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar as the analytical framework. *Night Rain* stands out as a remarkable literary piece by J. P. Clark, portraying not only the vivid experience of a rainstorm in a rural village but also the harsh realities of poverty and deprivation among the downtrodden in society. The study shares some similarity with the present research in its concern for language use; however, it differs in its objectives. While Odoemenam (2017) focuses on interpreting the poem from a stylistic perspective, the present study investigates the language styles employed by Ola Rotimi in addressing socio-political issues in Nigeria.

Similarly, Joseph (2014) undertook a linguistic analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Trial of Brother Jero*, exploring how the playwright's manipulation of language reflects moral decay, hypocrisy, and religious satire within Nigerian society. The study applied stylistic tools to show how Soyinka uses dialogue, characterisation, and humour as linguistic instruments for social criticism. While Joseph's study demonstrates the potency of language as a vehicle for ideological expression, it differs from the present research, which examines the pragmatic and politeness strategies embedded in Rotimi's dramatic discourse.

In the same vein, Bamgbose (2019) investigated the pragmatic strategies of verbal humour in selected Nigerian plays, focusing on how comic dialogues encode social critique and expose socio-political contradictions. Using insights from Speech Act Theory, the study revealed how linguistic forms are manipulated to achieve humour, satire, and irony, which in turn reflect the playwrights' ideological positions. Although Bamgbose's study aligns with the present one in its exploration of pragmatic elements in dramatic discourse, it differs in scope and theoretical orientation. The present research adopts both Halliday's Functional Stylistics and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory to explore how politeness strategies and language styles convey social meaning.

Furthermore, Onyema (2021) carried out a pragmatic stylistic study of selected African plays to investigate how language use in dramatic texts embodies power relations, ideology, and social structure. The study examined selected speeches of characters in Soyinka's *Death and the King's*

Horseman and Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*, using insights from Austin's Speech Act Theory. Findings revealed that linguistic choices, context, and interactional cues serve to project authority, resistance, and social hierarchy. The point of departure between Onyema (2021) and the present research lies in the theoretical models adopted and the textual focus, as the current study integrates politeness strategies with stylistic tools to analyse *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. Also, Uguola (2021) explored the semiotic and linguistic elements in selected African literary works to reveal how writers combine verbal and non-verbal modes to construct meaning. The study applied Kress and van Leeuwen's Multimodality Theory to examine how symbolic representations and contextual features enhance narrative meaning and ideological expression. The findings highlighted that linguistic and visual elements in literary texts are often used to expose corruption, gender inequality, and social decay. However, this differs from the present study, which focuses on politeness and stylistic strategies rather than visual semiotics.

Collectively, these studies demonstrate the relevance of linguistic and stylistic tools in interpreting literary texts and their embedded ideologies. Nonetheless, there remains a noticeable gap in scholarship regarding Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. To the best of current knowledge, little attention has been given to examining the play through a combined framework of Halliday's Functional Stylistics and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory. Consequently, this study aims to fill that scholarly gap by analysing the language styles and politeness strategies Rotimi employs to critique socio-political issues in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A collaboration of Martin Joos Language Style Approach and Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's politeness theory has been adopted as the theoretical framework of this study.

MARTINS JOOS (1967) LANGUAGE STYLE APPROACH

Martins Joos was an American linguist and professor of German. He spent most of his career at the University of Wisconsin -Madison, and also served at the University of Toronto and as a visiting scholar at the University of Alberta, the University of Belgrade and the University of Edinburgh. Martin Joos categorized language styles into five categories depending on their formality level. These styles include frozen, formal, consultative, casual and intimate. Each style has significant differences where each of them has distinctive features and code-label. According to Martin, language style is the choice of words used by a specific group of people when speak in a place and in one

condition. It is the distinct characteristics and techniques used by speaker to convey meaning and engage the audience effectively.

Categories of Language Style

Frozen Style

This style is utilized in public speaking in front of large audience. It is the most formal style used in formal situations and ceremonies such as in palace, church, speech at state ceremony, and some other occasions. The style is more elaborated than the other styles. The sequences of the sentence are complicatedly related. This style requires high skill and almost used exclusively by specialist, professionals, actors, lawyers and preachers.

Example;

MR TUSHMAN: The final award this morning is the Henry ward Beecher medal to honor students who have been notable or exemplary in certain areas throughout the school year. Henry word Beecher was, of course, the nineteenth century fiery sermonizer for human rights.

Based On the conversation above, Mr. Tushman utterance indicates to frozen style because, this conversation occurs in a very formal situation. Mr. Tushman speech in front of the teachers, students and parents uses formal words and he speaks in a formal ceremony, Henry ward Beecher Award at the school auditorium. (Dinda, 2019)

Formal Style

This is defined as language style that is used for important or serious situation. It is also used in addressing audience between medium to large. It may also be used by older persons and professionals. Speakers must frame whole sentences ahead before they are delivered. This style is devoid of slang and terminologies and the language is comparatively rigid with a well-documented vocabulary. Formal style can be used in schools, lessons, court of law, a corporate meeting and at a swearing - in ceremonies.

Examples;

JACK ROTH: Jack ROTH, Georgetown admissions Good to meet you. Please take a seat.

Rob: uh before we begin, allow me to apologize for the shorts,

Some of my classmates thought it might be amusing if uh

JACK ROTH: Bullies. What was then weapon of choice?

ROB: A piss- filled water gun, direct hit.

The conversation above belongs to formal style which can be seen by the utterance "please take a seat" uttered by Jack Roth, here he asks that Rob to be seated after shaking hands with Jack Roth politely, moreover, the language used is formal language to maintain good manners between the

interviewer and the interviewee. The conversation occurs in an interview session (Pandey, 2024)

Consultative Style

Consultative style is used in semi-formal communication. It is imperative to highlight that consultative is the systems focal point because it is primarily concerned with language style. It is a certain form of language that all speakers must be able to communicate in. You use a consultative style of language when talking to a doctor, lawyer, engineer, counselor and other professionals who you think can help you with your need of information, advice, or opinion. This style requires more formality in terms of language Manner of speaking and gestures. It is observed when a doctor or her patient or when a lawyer is advising his or her client.

Intimate Style

Joos (1967:29) states that the utterance excludes public information, it can be said that intimate style avoids providing information to the addressee from outside the speaker's skin. Usually, the intimate group is pair, the labels are; dear, darling, honey, and even mom, dad or other wickedness might be used in this situation. It is often used as private style high pointed to the people, which have a relationship to the speaker.

Example;

Rob's Mother: It's like he's regressing right before our eyes!

Rob's Father: He has a big day, probably just needed to relieve some tension.

Rob's Mother: That was slot of tension! Our son is turning into this pervert!

Rob's Father: When I was that age, I could fill a bucket.

The conversation above belongs to intimate style which can be seen on the utterances by Rob's Mother "Our son is turning into this pervert!" which she states this intimacy signal by uttered 'son' that is, child. This utterance occurred after Rob's Mother opens the Rob's room, then she was shocked because she saw the sheets were wet along with Rob's panties, which she then thought Rob was masturbating, even thought what was happening her is Rob was having a wet dream. Then she talked with her husband about Rob's condition. Here, the reason that utterances contain intimate style because this conversation occurred in private situation which is in their house and the word "son" shows the close relationship to Rob Grabbed. In the other hand, this utterance excludes the public information by saying 'son' which makes the word private. (Pande, 2024).

Casual Style

According to Martin Joos (1967:23) casual style is for friends, acquaintance, insiders: addressed to a stranger, it serves to make him an insider simply by treating him as

insider when an informal atmosphere is appropriate. It is used outside the classroom where students have a chat. It is usually used in conversation with friends which occurred in informal situation.

Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's Politeness Theory (1970s)

This is a set of rules that help people communicate politely and maintain friendly relations. Politeness principle is based on the idea that people are cooperative communicators. Politeness principle is a branch of pragmatics developed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson in the 1970s. The theory draws heavily upon Erving Goffman's concept of face theory and has advanced this concept with a particular focus on how and why we are polite to others. There are two faces positive face and negative face. Positive face is an individual desire to be liked and appreciated by others. Think of this as a person's self-esteem. Negative face is an individual's desire to protect their personal rights, such as, their freedom of speech and action.

Brown and Levinson suggest that when we are rude to people or impede their personal freedom, we commit face-threatening acts (these are directed at the person we are talking to). When we apologize for our shortcomings, we commit face-threatening acts (which are directed at ourselves). They also suggest that cooperation is needed between speakers during social interaction. This is to maintain the face of both your own and of the person you are speaking to. When we are appealing to someone's positive face, we want to increase their self esteem and make them feel good about themselves. For example, we might compliment someone's outfit, congratulate someone on their achievement or agree with something they say. When we wish to protect someone's positive face, we avoid criticism, insult and disagreement. Example: "You always wear such lovely clothes! I would love to borrow something one day". Here, the speaker makes the listener feel good. Furthermore, the politeness principles, like the cooperative principle, may be formulated as series of maxims which people assume are being followed in the utterance of others (cook 1989). As with the cooperative principle, any flouting of these maxims will take on meaning, provided it is perceived for what it is. The linguist, Robin Lakoff (1973), has formulated these maxims as follows:

1. Don't impose.
2. Give options.
3. Make your receiver feel good.

These maxims of the politeness principle explain many of these frequent utterances in which no new information is communicated. My neighbor said 'I'm sorry. I saw you were home in an attempt to mitigate the imposition she was making. In English we often give orders, and make requests and pleas (directives) in the form of elaborate questions

(Would you mind...? Could you possibly...?) Which give the option of refusal; we apologize for imposing ('I'm sorry to bother you) and add in praise to make our hearer feel good (You know much more about car engine than I do...). Clearly, the politeness principle and the cooperative principles are often in conflict with each other.

PUBLIC SELF-IMAGE

In politeness theory, "public self-image" is also known as "Face". It refers to the individual's desire to be respected, appreciated, and viewed positively by others. It is how individuals want to be perceived and treated in social interactions or enhance someone's public self-image (face). Public self-image is that emotional and social sense of self that everyone has, and expects everyone to recognize. In simple sense, face means public self-image of a person. When interlocutors A and B are interacting, is A aware of the FACE of B? Is B conscious of the FACE of A? When there is mutual awareness. POLITENESS emerges politeness in an utterance is the means employed to show respect to other person's public self-image. When a student is conscious of public self-image of his/her teacher, politeness is demonstrated in the interaction.

In any integrative situation there could be social distance or closeness. Participants in any interactive situation take time to determine the relative social distance between them. They want to determine each other's face want. Everybody want his public self-image or his face want to be respected. This is why there is the cautious determination of social distance or closeness between interactive situations (Wale Osisanwo 2008:102)

POLITENESS STRATEGIES DEPLOYED IN THE TEXT.

Face – Threatening Act

According to Wale Osisanwo (2008), the world would be odd or absurd if everybody behave the same way. If every domestic, Social or official interaction went on smoothly, peacefully without argument, abuse or even or even insults once in a while, human development would not have advanced to the present level. Hence, it is normal to have 'attacks' once in a while on one's public self-image, even though everybody want his public self-image to be respected.

In a discourse, one of the participants can say something that threatens the other person's expectations regarding his public self-image. Such a threat is regarded as a FACE THREATENING ACT. It is also possible for the 'attacker' to realize that what he has said amounts to an attack on the public self-image of his interlocutor, and may wish to retract his action or apologize, Whatever he then says to lessen the possible threat amounts to FACE SAVING ACT.

Just as there are many ways of carrying out face threatening act, so also there are many ways of performing face saving acts. Let us look at the following for example.

An inconsiderate landlord is travelling out very early, and at about 4:00 a.m. he wakes up to warm his trucks engine in readiness for the journey. He is so pleased with the work of the truck engine that he keeps on reliving it. He does this so noisily that he wakes up every occupants this so noisily that he wakes up every occupants of the house. Here are some of the reactions to his action.

Tenant A: Hi, hello Mr Landlord! Do you think you are the only one in this house? Please behave! Nonsense!

Tenant B: Hello, Baba Landlord. We would appreciate it if you could just lower the sound of your truck engine. Thank you.

There is no doubt that tenant A has produced a face-threatening act while tenant B has produced a face-saving act. Note that Mr. Landlord, the owner of the truck in response can produce another face-threatening act, especially in response to tenant A and a face-saving act especially to tenant B.

Face-threatening acts May threaten either the speaker's or Lister's face (that is, positive and negative face). According to leech (1996:62), a person's positive face is the need to be accepted, even liked, by others, to be treated as a member of the same group, and to know that his or her wants are shared by others. On the other hand, a person's negative face is the need to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be imposed on by others.

Simply put, negative face is the need to be independent while positive face is the need to be connected. (Osisanwo 2008)

Act On Record

This strategy is used to address other person or hearer to express the speaker's needs. It is a direct way of communication without neglecting imposition. Here, the speaker is not making any effort in minimizing the threats to the bearer's face. However, according to Brown Levinson, there are different reasons why the act on-record is used for various circumstances. With this strategy, the speaker will most likely embarrass or make the hearer uncomfortable due to addressing them directly. Someone may use this strategy for various reasons such as the following:

*Out of desperation or urgency.

*Non-occurrence of threat minimization in certain instances.

* Conversations where there seem to be the need for excellent efficiency.

* Doing tasks.

Act Off-Record

This is a politeness strategy that relies upon implications. This strategy is very indirect and involves the breaking of Conversational norms to imply a particular recommended course of action. Here, the speaker is relying upon the bearer's ability to decipher and interpret the speaker's intended meaning, although it is indirectly suggested. OFF-RECORD politeness strategy is accomplished in a couple of ways with several strategies for each. First, the speaker can invite Conversational implicature. Strategy, here is to give hints, give clues of association, presupposes and use rhetorical questions. The main goal of this strategy is to reduce the pressure on the speaker.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The analysis of the data is divided into two parts. The first part of the analysis explores the language styles used in the selected texts; frozen styles and intimate styles. The second part explicates the politeness strategies evident in Ola Rotimi's **OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN**. The chapter identifies face threatening act and face-saving act used by the author address socio-political issues in post-independent era in Nigeria.

LANGUAGE STYLES

Language Style is defined by Martin Joos as the choice of words used by a specific group of people or person when speaking in a place and in certain condition. It is very important for people to express their ideas people's use of style depends on whom they speak with and when they are speaking. Language style is also the distinct characteristic and techniques used by an author or speakers to convey meaning and engage the audience effectively. Language encompasses the choice of words, sentence structure and linguistic devices.

INTIMATE STYLE

The intimate style is usually used by person who are close or very familiar with each other. In this style, the language used may be both formal and informal depending on the situation and the matter being talked about. Terms of endearment (e.g. mahal, babe for husband and wife) and terms that show respect (e.g. mom, dad e.t.c.) are often used in this speech style. Therefore, private or sensitive matters are usually talked about (e.g. family finances, friendship matters, etc) using this style. Let us examine the following excerpts for illustrations:

Excerpt 1: Excerpt from **OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN**. (Act 1, Scene 1, Pages 3 & 4)

LEJOKA-BROWN: Ah lef, ah lef, ah lef vai ah lef compa-na-a-, go!

LEJOKA-BROWN AND OKONKWO: (approaching)

Ai remembah when ai was a soljar,

Ai remembah when ai was a soljar,

Ai remembah when ai was a soljar,

Ai remembah when ai was a soljar,

(LEJOKA-BROWN AND OKONKWO march into the living-room)

Hippy ya ya, hippy hippy ya-ya,

Hippy ya ya, hippy hippy ya-ya,

Hippy ya ya, hippy hippy ya-ya,

Hippy ya ya, hippy hippy ya-ya,

(SIKIRA kneels in greeting). The MAJOR responds with quick

side glance, then changes the marching tune).

Leave your wife and join di army

One more rivah to cross:

One more rivah,

One more rivah,

One more rivah,

To cross.

Based on the excerpt I above, Ola Rotimi deployed intimate style to inform his audience and nature of LEJOKA-BROWN and OKONKWO'S JOHN. The excerpt expose to the audience the ruggedly of soldiers and their ways and pronouncing some English words. The author brings to the notice of his audience the soldiers' attitude towards their loved ones especially whenever they are on duty. Ola Rotimi tries to reveal to the audience that LEJOKA-BROWN and OKONKWO are long time friends.

Excerpt 2: Excerpt from **OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN**, Act 1, Scene 1, pages 6 & 7.

LEJOKA-BROWN: Don't come empty o! Woman I want two beers!

SIKIRA: (Still shouting from offstage) I've heard you, my Lord.

LEJOKA-BROWN: I'm directing the campaigns.....

Are you there? Stout beer, woman-stout beer. Two

(To OKONKWO) Stout beer is good for the heart!

Dem say. Now, I'm directing my party campaign myself. How?

POLYCARP: (off stage) Major!

LEJOKA-BROWN: I am using army tactics surprise and attack!

OKONKWO: Surprise and wh-a-at?

LEJOKA-BROWN: Surprise and attack

As seen in excerpt 2 above, the playwright tries to announce to his audience that LEJOKA-BROWN as joined politics with military tactics. Here, the author tries to project to his audience, the adventure of ex-military men in Nigerian politics and their domineering spirit. The idea of calling civilians 'bloody' still metamorphoses in their political manipulation. These ex-service men want to occupy every political space after independence. Here, the author has been able to reveal the secret of some politicians who do not only deceive citizen but attack any perceived opponents

FORMAL STYLE

This is defined as the style of language that is used for importance our serious situation. It is used in addressing audience usually large. The forms are not polished as those in oratorical style. It may also be used in single-hearers-strangers, professionals, etc. speakers must frame the whole sentence before they are delivered. This style is devoid of slangs and the language is comparatively rigid. Example include: meeting speeches, school lessons, a corporate meeting, swearing in ceremony and others. Let us look at the excerpts below for illustration.

Excerpt 3: Excerpt from **OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN**. Act 2, scene II, page 50 & 51

OSAGIE: *The Executive Committee of the National Liberation party meeting under the chairmanship of Mr. Rahman Lejoka-Brown will now begin its deliberations.*
(Bow to LEJOKA BROWN)
Mr. Chairman....
(sits and starts taking notes in the minutes file)
LEJOKA-BROWN: Gentlemen, election campaign plans must follow a pattern of military strategy known as surprise and attack. Now, that is surprise and attack?
Surprise and attack. Gentleman, is "to catch the enemy off-guard, and wipe out his power before he can mobilize enough force to launch a counter-attack". Are you ...
.. now, how do we apply this strategy to our campaign?
Now listen.... we shall concentrate our early campaigns on the outskirts....
(Indicates on map with a cone)

In the villages..... in the fishing suburb..... and so on. Like a very busy husband who cannot afford a direct clash with a difficult wife, at the money, we must must steer clear of a face to face meeting with our political enemies in the big towns.... we keep our hands off the cities. For the time being mark you. For the time being. On rat at a time; you chase two, you miss both.
(Mumbling... whispering, reactions by other members)
ONE MEMBER: S-i-l-e-n-c-e!
(Quiet prevail again)
LEJOKA-BROWN: Now then. About one month before Election Day, we launch a sudden two-pronged drive from the small towns and villages right into the big town and cities.
Our political enemies are.... SURPRISED
(Clean his throat)
Then the ATTACK.....

As seen in excerpt 3 above, the author deployed formal style of language to reveal what happen in any political meetings in Nigeria alt that time Ola Rotimi used this excerpt to expose his audience to the militarization of political meeting by LEJOKA-BROWN (Ex-service

MAN). During Post-Independent era in Nigeria the Ex-Service men dominate the political landscape of most African Countries, especially Nigerian and dictate the political tune of the country. They masterminded the campaigns and select their fellow ex-service men to content the elections which most of them fraudulently won. During their campaigns, they terrorize towns and citites with higher voting capacities so that, they won't have the affronting to come out on the election day to exercise their franchise. They continue in this act until well-meaning Nigerians rose up to them and change the narratives.

Excerpt 4: Excerpt from **OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN** Act 2, Scene iv, Page 62.

NEWSMEN: (Together) Mr. Lejoka-Brown.....
Mr. Lejoka-Brown.....
Mr. President.....
Sir...
LEJOKA-BROWN: Turn by turn, Gentlemen, turn by turn o! Daily Herald man, you talk.
LOCAL REPORTER 1: Mr. Lejoka-Brown with only five month before elections, and in the light of widespread rumors of a rift within your party, what are your chance of victory at the forthcoming elections?
LEJOKA-BROWN: Thank you?
Well, Gentlemen of the press, you have come and you have seen for yourselves.
Not only are all members of my party at peace with one another, we have never....
(His voice rising with rhetorical fervor)
I repeat, never: never before have all members of my party been more united,
and never have me felt more confident of victory at the polls them now!..... Polls
- P-o-l-e-s.
REPORTERS: Beg your pardon.
LEJOKA-BROWN: I said P-o-l-e-s, Polls
BBC CORRESPONDENT: It's p-o-l-l-s, Mr. President
LEJOKA-BROWN: I see..... anyhow, polls in poles. Next question BBC man, your turn.

In excerpts 4 above, Ola Rotimi deployed formal style to create an impression in his audience about the tactics employed by these politicians to cover up disagreement within their political party by organizing press conference to deceive the citizenry lejoka-Brown is a typical example of these politicians. They gather the party men and instruct them to keep their grievances away from public domain for the sake of an election. The author also used this excerpt to expose the literacy level of some o these political leaders who may not spell word correctly or may not even sing the National Anthem correctly. This goes beyond spelling mistake. It shows some of them are ignorant of their responsibilities as public servants if they eventually won the election.

Excerpt 5: Excerpt from OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN, Act 2, Scene v, Pages 65 & 66.

LEJOKA-BROWN: is notably absent.

BMALLAM GASKIYA: Be seated, Ladies and Gentlemen!

A MEMBER: Silence!

MALLAM GASKIYA: The Emergency committee of the National Liberation Party will now resume its deliberations.

OSAGIE: Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Lejoka-Brown's disgraceful behavior at the new conference this evening has further demonstrated his outright contempt for, and gross callousness toward the feelings and dignity of members of our beloved party!

(Applause)

MALLAM GASKIYA: *(striking a gavel for silence).*
The house will now give the floor to the Honourable President of the National Market Women's Union. Ladies and Gentlemen – Madam Bambina Uchenna Ajanaku.

Based on excerpt 5 above Ola Rotimi deployed formal style to sensitize his audience the needs for every citizens to resist the authoritarian leadership of some of our politicians as seen in the data above. Party member did not only condemn Lejoka-Brown leadership style but rejected him as their leader and standard bearer in the forth-coming election. The presence of Sikira (Lejoka-Brown's wife) and her mother tells the audience the kind of the person Lejoka-Brown is even with his immediate family members.

FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE STYLES USED IN THE TEXT

Language style as proposed by Martin Joos serves as a guide to language users in adapting to various social contexts, listeners, and communicative purposes to ensure purposeful communication and enhancing relationships by equating linguistic choices to situational demands. The main function of these language styles is to project a framework for choosing the most appropriate communication method by using different degree of formality and how language is being used. The overall functions of Martin Joos's language styles include the following.

Contextual Adaptation: Joos's Language styles assist the author to select the most effective language for specific contexts by putting the listeners into consideration and the main reason for communication. This is evident in Ola Rotimi's text as the author deployed formal style to preserve the Language for important occasions like political gathering. Here, the language used is precise and expressive. Also, language styles provide an enabling environment for the author to deploy formal style to convey crucial messages to large, unfamiliar listeners where there is need for instructive language. This style is adequate for public speeches and any other important or serious

situations. The expressions "Mr Chairman" "Gentlemen, election campaign plans must follow a pattern of military strategy known as surprise and attack". "Turn by turn, Gentlemen, turn by turn O! Herald man you talk", further illustrates the importance of language style in the text. Ola Rotimi used formal style to create an impression in his audience how ex-service men in politics turn it to a battle field.

Clarity and Effectiveness: By integrating language style to the situation at hand, the speaker's can enhance the clarity of his information and attain more purposeful communication. This has assisted Ola Rotimi as he deployed different language styles proposed by Martin Joos to have his targeted messages pass across to his audiences. The formal style deployed by the author helped to project information in a one-way transmission to a large audience. Let us consider the following conversations for illustration. "Be seated, Ladies and Gentlemen". "The Emergency meeting of the National Liberation Party will now resume its deliberations." The author deployed formal style in the above conversation to reveal to his audience the resolution of the National Liberation Party members to get Major Rahman Lejoka-Brown out of their party.

Relationship Building: Language styles help to build a stronger relationship through the effective use of language in a way that is appropriate to the social contexts of the conversation. The deployment of Joos's Language styles has helped the author to create an impression in his audience, the kind of strong relationships that exist among the characters in the text. This style (intimate) helps to facilitate communication among extremely closed individuals in the text. These characters used informal language both verbal and non-verbal style. Intimate style enhances the effective use of language to achieve the author's targeted messages to the audience. The conversation below shows the kind of relationship that exists between participants. "Don't come empty O! Woman I want two beers!" "Are you there" "Stout beers, woman-stout beer". This style has enabled Ola Rotimi to sensitize his readers about the kind of relationship that exists between Major Rahman Lejoka-Brown and Okonkwo in the text.

POLITENESS STRATEGIES DEPLOYED IN THE TEXT.

Face-Threatening Act

Face Threatening Act is used when a speaker attacks one's public self-image/face, even though everybody wants his/her face to be respected. In an interactive situation, one of the participants can say something that threatens the other person's expectations regarding his face; such a threat is regarded as **FACE THREATENING ACT**. Let us examine the following excerpts for illustration.

Excerpt 6: Excerpt from OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN, Act 1, Scene II, Page 15.

MAMA RASHIDA: *It is your duty, just as it is my duty, to make sure that when the woman steps into this house, she has no doubt that it is real human beings who live in, and not bush pigs!*

SIKIRA: *don't care what she thinks.*

MAMA RASHIDA: *Unless you have no shame, you ought to care!*

SIKIRA: *Shame! My spit!*

In this house? Ha! A slave, that's what I am. Did he marry me because he loves me, or because of his crazy politics?

What do I care whether he wins politics or not? Shame indeed. (almost in tears).

You already have two children by this brother so your heart is peaceful.

MAMA RASHIDA: *It is nobody's fault that your baby didn't come out to see world. Things like that happen....*

In the excerpt 6 above, Ola Rotimi used face threatening act to inform his audience the kind of unrest about to happen in Lejoka-Brown's home. The playwright deployed this politeness strategy to reveal to his audience the real reasons why some of these politicians marry many wives. The expression "Did he marry me because he love me, or because of his crazy politics?" Shows Lejoka-Brown married Sikira to win his election. Sikira's face was threatened by mama Rashida's too much house chores assign to her.

Excerpt 7: Excerpt from OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN, Act 1, Scene II, Page 18.

MAMA RASHIDA: *(Incensed, to SIKIRA). Awful! Awful! Woman, awful!*

POLYCARP: *Mama Rashida!*

MAMA RASHIDA: *Shame on you! Such rudeness-right in the presence of an Elders!*

Excerpt 8: Excerpt from OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN, Act 1, Scene III, Page 24.

LIZA: *Someone ought to have told you, my dear girl, that it isn't proper for a housemaid to go peeping into the bedroom of her master at night or at any other.....*

SIKIRA: *Housemaid! (incensed to MAMA RASHIDA)*

Did you hear that grasshopper? I told you she would come and kick everybody round and round.....

LIZA: *What did you say!*

SIKIRA: *Oohhoo!*

(Girds her wrappers tightly, ready for a fight)

Come on? You say you are a doctor? I will show you who I am!

From excerpt Above, Ola Rotimi tries to show his audience how unruly Sikira has become after she realizes her husband married her not for love sake but or political gains.

Mama Rashida is playing the role peace broker in the family which is on fire. In excerpt 8, the playwright continue to project to his audience the marital violence some of these politicians keep away from public domain. They escape this violence most time because they abscond home for political engagements. Ola Rotimi also deployed this strategy to reveal the disharmony in Lejoka-Brown's marriage.

Excerpt 9: Excerpt from OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN, Act 2, Scene III, Page 56

SIKIRA: *I'm going home to my mother!*

MAMA RASHIDA: *Wait! Answer me..... what the matter?*

SIKIRA: *(Leaving) Our Husband has gone mad again.*

Excerpt 10: Excerpt from OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN Act

Liza: *You've now become depraved, no-good scoundrel with the tastes of a pig, obsessed with the putrescent values of a maggot! Now.....*

(Roughly gathers her clothes together)

.... get out of my life!

(Bulldozes her way past him)

Base on excerpt 9 and 10 above, Ola Rotimi tries to show his audience that awful end of Lejoka-Brown. He lost his home and political career due to his unfaithfulness to both Liza and Political associates. The author deployed this strategy to show Lejoka-Brown rejection by his wives.

FACE-SAVING ACT

Face Saving Acts occur when the speaker realizes that what he or she has said amounts to a threat or an attack on the face of his or her hearer, and may wish to retract the statement. Whatever he then says to reduce the possible threat amount to **FACE-SAVING ACT**. If we wish to protect someone's face, we avoid destructive criticism, insult, and disagreement. We can make the hearer feel good about themselves by complimenting them. (Osisanwo 2008).

Let us examine these excerpts for illustrations.

Excerpt 11: Excerpt from OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN, Act 1, Scene 1, Page 12.

OKONKWO: *All right, Major... I'm Sorry....*

(empties his glass and goes to LEJOKA-BROWN)

Shake hands, mate – I've got to go!

In the excerpt II above, the author deployed face- Saving act in the data to show his audience that some of these Politicians can be provoked at times.

OKONKWO's Suggestion threatened lejoka- Brown's face having realized this, Okonkwo quickly apologized and left him.

Excerpt 12: Excerpt from OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN, Act 1, Scene II, Pages 24 & 25.

LIZA: *May be I'm.....getting everybody.....confused or something. Is this Mr Lejoka-Brown's*

house? By that I mean: the house of Mr Rahman Lejoka-Brown?

From excerpt 12 above, Ola Rotimi tries to inform his audience that Lejoka-Brown has been keeping sikira and mama Rashida away from Liza.

Here, the author reveals what some politician's do. The keep their wife and children abroad while they keep the local wives in Nigeria so that people will not suspect they are not really for them. They take the big slice of National cake and send it to their family abroad.

Findings and Conclusion

This paper carried out a pragma- stylistics analysis of Ola Rotimi's **OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN**. To achieve the objectives set out for this study. Martin Joos's Language Style Approach in collaboration with Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's (1970s) politeness Theory were used to identify language styles, functions of language styles used in the text and politeness strategies evident on Ola Rotimi's **OUR HUSBAND HAS GONE MAD AGAIN**. Single text (77 pages) was purposively selected to serve as data for this paper. The data were analyzed and it was discovered that the language style used are intimate style and formal style. The functions of language styles used in the text include contextual adaptation and relationship building. Also, the politeness strategies evident in the data include; Face threatening act and face-saving act. Ola Rotimi is able to communicate his audience through these language style and politeness strategies. These are used by the author to convey crucial message to his audience and evoke their emotions toward the high-handiness of ex-service men in Nigerian politics. The author brings to notice of his audience the marital violence suffered by the main actor in the text, Major Rahman Lejoka-Brown. The author also tries to spell out the repercussions of Lejoka-Brown military tactics in politics. This study concludes that Literary discourse is an important tool that can be employed in addressing social and political issues in Nigeria. Therefore, contributing to the understanding of how literary text can serve as a tool for social and political change. This necessitates further studies to account for social and political issues in other genres of literary texts by other Nigerian writers.

REFERENCES

1. Bamgbose, T. (2019). *Pragmatic strategies of verbal humour in Nigerian hip-hop*. [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Ibadan.
2. Black, E. (2006). *Pragmatics and stylistics*. Edinburgh University Press.
3. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Cook, G. (1989). *Discourse*. Oxford University Press.
5. Crystal, D. (1974). *The Cambridge encyclopaedia of language*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Dada, S. A. (2004). *Introduction to general linguistics*. Shalom Publishers.
7. Dinda, A. (2019). *Language style in Wonder movie script by Stephen Chbosky*. [Undergraduate thesis]. University of Lampung.
8. Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Edward Arnold.
9. Johnson, M. (2002). *Literary discourse and cultural ideology*. Routledge.
10. Joos, M. (1967). *The five clocks*. Harcourt, Brace & World.
11. Joseph, A. (2014). A linguistic analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Trial of Brother Jero*. *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 6(2), 45–58.
12. Lakoff, R. (1973). The logic of politeness; or, minding your P's and Q's. In C. Corum, T. Cedric, & S. Charles (Eds.), *Papers from the Ninth Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society* (pp. 292–305). University of Chicago Press.
13. Leech, G. N. (1996). *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman.
14. Mey, J. L. (2001). *Pragmatics: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.
15. Odoemenam, C. (2011). *A linguistic stylistic study of Wole Soyinka's Night and Death in the Dawn*. [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Nigeria.
16. Odoemenam, C. (2017). A lexico-semantic explication of J. P. Clark's *Night Rain*. *Journal of Linguistics and Literary Studies*, 9(1), 112–128.
17. Onyema, E. (2021). A pragmatic stylistic analysis of selected presidential speeches during the COVID-19 pandemic. *African Journal of Linguistics and Discourse Studies*, 4(3), 21–39.
18. Osisanwo, W. (2008). *Introduction to discourse analysis and pragmatics*. Femolus-Fetop Publishers.
19. Oshin, R. (2022). *Semiotic features of selected COVID-19 posters by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control*. *Nigerian Journal of Semiotic Studies*, 3(1), 55–72.
20. Oyawale, A. (2024). A discourse-pragmatic investigation of social and cultural representations in selected songs by Omah Lay. *Journal of Discourse and Society*, 8(2), 89–107.
21. Pandey, R. (2024). *Language styles in modern English conversation: A pragmatic review*. *International*

- Journal of Linguistics and Communication Studies*, 12(1), 34–49.
22. Rotimi, O. (1977). *Our husband has gone mad again*. Oxford University Press.
 23. Ufot, B. (2006). *Stylistics: Theories and practice*. Spectrum Books.
 24. Uguola, S. (2021). *Semiotic and linguistic elements in selected African literary works*. *Multimodal Communication Journal*, 5(2), 74–92.
 25. Wale Osisanwo. (2008). *Introduction to discourse analysis and pragmatics*. Femolus-Fetop Publishers.