

Negative Politeness Strategies in Jordan Arabic Novel and Southern Nigeria Novel: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study explores Negative Politeness Strategies in two culturally distinct novels: the Jordanian Arabic *"The Notebook of Al-Warraq"* by Jalal Burjis and the Southern Nigerian *"The Fishermen"* by Chigozie Obioma. Negative politeness, which respects a listener's autonomy and freedom from imposition, is analyzed through the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. The research uses mixed methods, combining quantitative analysis to assess the frequency of sub-strategies and qualitative analysis to classify their usage within the novels. The findings reveal that *The Notebooks of Al-Warraq* employs four out of ten negative politeness subcategories, with "Be Indirect" dominating at 66%, while *The Fishermen* utilizes six subcategories, with "Be Indirect" also being the most frequent at 52%. The differences in strategy usage reflect variations in character relationships and power dynamics. Both novels exhibit the absence of several subcategories, highlighting unique cultural influences on linguistic interactions. The study provides valuable insights into the interplay between politeness strategies, social relationships, and cultural norms, contributing to literary studies and intercultural communication by illustrating how linguistic strategies reveal societal structures and issues. This comparative analysis underscores the role of culture in shaping communication styles in literary contexts.

Keywords: Negative Politeness, Strategies, Novel

Introduction

Background of the Study

Politeness is a key aspect of communication, heavily influenced by cultural and social norms. The concept of etiquette as a social rule dates to ancient times, with each era having its own standards of decency. Every society has its own customs and characteristics. However, it wasn't until the 1970s that distinct linguistic interpretations of what is known as "the appearance of politeness" began to emerge.

Early studies often claim the universality of the principles underlying the appearance of Politeness (Grice,1975; Leech,1973, 1983; Brown & Levinson,1978,1987; Fraser,1990). However, in subsequent years, scholars from diverse cultural backgrounds began to challenge this universal perspective, presenting evidence from their own languages and traditions (Culpeper& Kadar,2017; Larina, 2008; Leech, 2005; Leech & Larina,2014; Marquez,1999; Sifianou, 1999).

This has sparked a broad debate in the literature on Politeness, with researchers and analysts presenting diverse opinions and viewpoints. However, there is general agreement that Politeness is a concept deeply rooted in culture, a view supported by many theorists. The analysis of actual Politeness across different language and cultures reflects the social dynamics of the speakers. It raises questions such as: What do speakers do when they communicate with each other? What is the value of Politeness in their community? For instance, Huang (2008) noted that Politeness influences how different cultures represent and understand Politeness and the principles that govern behavior.

The ways in which Politeness is handled vary between cultures, and these differences stem from fundamental understanding of Politeness within diverse cultural contexts. These cultural differences lead to variations in opinions about values and standards, which heighten the level of discipline and create distinctions in multiple fields. Generally, most of these studies have focused on comparing linguistic Politeness with the social behavior used to avoid conflict in communication, primarily focusing on verbal communication in face-to-face interactions. Therefore, Politeness strategies are a crucial aspect of communication, as they aim to maintain social relationships, prevent conflicts, and preserving face. Moreover, according to Watts (2003) Politeness as a communication strategy not only helps to avoid conflicts or disagreements within society, but also fosters positive relationships among its members. Several theories have been developed to analyse the strategies through which politeness is expressed, each with its own strengths and weaknesses, making them more suitable for some cultures than others. As a result, different theories have emerged to explain how politeness influences communication processes. Among the most widely used are Lakoff's theory (Lakoff, 1973), Leech's theories (Leech, 1983, 2005), and Brown and Levinson's theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978), along with its revised version (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The second set of theories highlights different perspectives related to politeness, including the works of Arundale (2006), Culpeper (2011), Eelen (2001), Haugh (2010), Inagaki (2007), Locher and Watts (2005), and Mills (2011).

Furthermore, the study of politeness extended beyond verbal communication to include written communication, particularly after the publication of Myers' (1989) book, *Practice of*

Politeness in Scientific Articles, where he applied politeness theory to research articles written by geneticists. At that point, the study of etiquette expanded beyond verbal or oral communication to encompass written texts as well. Myers (1989) noted that politeness strategies could be employed in written communication to facilitate smooth interaction between readers and writers.

Consequently, the innovation in studying politeness within written texts, such as literary works, has enabled researchers to apply politeness theory to analyse the interactions of literary characters and explore various politeness strategies in their dialogues. For example, studies by Bouchara (2009), Buck and Autin (1995), Chun and Yun (2010), Ermida (2006), and Rossen-Knill (1995, 2011) have examined these strategies in literary contexts. Politeness theories have also been applied to the analysis of commercial messages and scientific texts, as seen in the work of Getkham (2017), Gil-Salom and Soler-Monreal (2009), Falahati (2007), Maier (1992), Martinez (2001), Pilegaard (1997), and Vassileva (2001).

The study of politeness strategies uncovers how cultures communicate and maintain social norms, reflecting cultural values and social hierarchies through literature. By analyzing politeness in novels like *The Warraq Notebooks* and *The Fishermen*, similarities and differences emerge, such as the use of indirect strategies and face-threatening acts, shaped by cultural traits like individualism or collectivism.

Understanding politeness strategies is essential for effective intercultural communication, as differing cultural expectations can lead to misunderstandings. Examining how characters in diverse cultural contexts employ these strategies helps identify potential miscommunication and develop frameworks to enhance intercultural interactions.

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness is regarded as a foundational framework in sociolinguistics, focusing on how individuals manage social interactions to maintain "face" or self-respect during communication. This theory categorizes politeness strategies into four main types: Bald on record politeness, Positive politeness, Negative politeness, and Off Record politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Among these strategies, the Negative politeness strategies stand out, as the aim to protect the interlocutor's negative face, focusing on respecting privacy, individual freedom, and avoiding the imposition of opinions or pressure. In this context, Brown and Levinson introduced their influential theory. The current study seeks to identify Negative politeness strategies by contributing to the growing body of comparative research across cultures, particularly in the literary field, using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987).

Several studies have previously explored the topic of negative politeness strategies. For instance, Yolanda et al. (2022) analysed the negative politeness strategies used in the 2019 movie *Charlie's Angels*. They applied qualitative and descriptive methods based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theories, identifying ten negative politeness strategies, with characters frequently employing understatement in their dialogues. Another study by Suyono and Andriyanti (2021) examined negative politeness strategies in the TV show *What Would You Do?* They collected 106 data points from 39 episodes, using a descriptive qualitative methodology that emphasized the frequency of data occurrences. This research also utilized the theoretical framework proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Additionally, Ambalegin

and Sijabat (2020) researched both positive and negative politeness strategies in the novel *The Final Song*. Their findings indicated that all politeness strategies were present, except for the ten negative politeness strategies outlined by Brown and Levinson.

Both the previous study and the current study employed Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory. However, they differ in terms of the data sources used. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to investigate negative politeness strategies in two novels across different cultures. Due to varying cultural and social contexts, readers from different backgrounds may interpret the literary strategies employed by the author in diverse ways. Readers might also struggle to grasp the linguistic style accurately, making it difficult to fully understand the author's intended message. Additionally, negative politeness strategies often involve subtle and indirect language, such as abbreviated phrases or hints instead of direct requests. This can lead to confusion or misinterpretation, especially for readers unfamiliar with these nuances, making it harder to appreciate the intended politeness.

This study aims to explore the negative politeness strategies in two novels: *The Notebook of Al-Waraq* by Jordanian writer Jalal Burgis and *The Fishermen* by Nigerian author Chigozie Obioma. It seeks to compare and identify the factors that influenced the main characters in employing negative politeness strategies, using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). The research addresses the following questions:

- 1- What types of negative politeness strategies are used in *The Notebook of Al-Waraq* novel by Jordanian writer Jalal Burgis and *The Fishermen* novel by Nigerian author Chigozie Obioma?
- 2- What factors influence the characters' use of the Negative politeness strategies in *The Notebook of Al-Waraq* and *The Fishermen* novels?
- 3- What are the similarities and differences in the use of negative politeness strategies between *The Notebook of Al-Waraq* and *The Fishermen*?

Definition of the Novels

1- *The Notebook of Al- Warraq* by Jalal Burjas, which won the 2021 Booker Prize, is a 368-page novel (Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing edition) structured into seven chapters. Set in Amman, it spans the years 1947 to 2019, following the lives of characters who are mostly orphans, having lost their parents to death or suicide. These characters are marked by deep emotional wounds—feelings of emptiness, loss, and insecurity. Without parental or familial support, they are left to navigate life on their own, wandering through the city and beyond, seeking solace in a world where they have no place to call home. The novel explores themes of loss, abandonment, and survival in a world where the characters, mostly orphans, grapple with the absence of familial support. Their struggles reflect the deeper societal issues of disconnection and the need for belonging, making the novel a poignant reflection on human vulnerability in the face of loss. The backdrop of Amman and the novel's time span add layers of historical and cultural depth to the characters' journeys.

2- *The Fishermen* by Chigozie Obioma is a 304-page novel that won the FT/Oppenheimer Award for Fiction, the NAACP Image Award for First Literary Work, and was a finalist for the 2015 Booker Prize. Set in Akure, Nigeria, during the 1990s, the novel explores the culture of the Igbo tribe and address's themes of family, brotherhood, superstition, and traditional beliefs in a changing society. The story follows four brothers who, after their father moves

away for work, begin fishing in a forbidden river. Their encounter with a madman and his unsettling prophecies about the eldest brother, Ikenna, sparks a series of tragic events that alter their relationships and shape their family's destiny. Through a blend of Nigerian myths and legends, the novel blurs the line between reality and fiction. Chigozie Obioma masterfully constructs *The Fishermen* as an intricate metaphor for contemporary Nigerian history, particularly in the aftermath of colonialism. The novel's interwoven stories serve as an artistic reflection of a nation fractured by internal conflict, much like brothers fighting, with the subsequent spread of corruption. The madman Apollo's prophecy is a pivotal element in the author's critique of Nigeria's political landscape from the 1990s to the present.

Theoretical Review

Negative politeness involves showing deference to others while refraining from intruding upon them. It refers to actions that address the addressee's negative face, respecting their desire for freedom of action and avoiding interference with their attention (Brown and Levinson, 1978). At its core, negative politeness is centred on respectful conduct, in contrast to positive politeness, which revolves around familiarity and humour. The effect of negative politeness typically reinforces social distance, rather than minimizing it like positive politeness. It maintains a respectful distance while still acknowledging the recipient's dignity. Negative politeness strategies are often employed when a speaker wishes to apply a form of social restraint to the interaction (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 1: Be Conveniently Indirect

In this strategy, the speaker navigates a balance between two conflicting desires: providing the addressee with an "out" by being indirect and making their intention clear by speaking on record. When the speaker uses phrases or sentences that, within the context, have an unambiguous meaning, they are going on record. On the other hand, conveying a message indirectly allows the speaker to imply a desire to go off record (Brown and Levinson, 1987). To soften the directness of an utterance, the speaker should modify it using specific words or hedges, making it appear less overtly direct.

Strategy 2: Questions Hedge

This strategy stems from the desire to avoid making assumptions and not to impose on the listener. Hedges often take the form of adverbs attached to performative verbs, such as *may*, *perhaps*, or *maybe*. Frequently, 'if' clauses are also used to introduce hedges. According to Heringer (1972), felicity conditions can be bypassed by embedding these expressions in 'if' clauses. Another way to indicate hedges is by referencing Grice's Maxims, which can imply that the speaker is not fully committed to the truth of their statement. Phrases like *I think*, *I assume*, *As I recall*, *as you know*, etc., emphasize these hedges (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 3: Be pessimistic

This approach addresses the addressee's negative face by openly conveying uncertainty about whether the conditions for the speaker's request or statement are met. Keyways to implement this strategy include using negation (often with a tag), employing the subjunctive mood, and incorporating markers of remote possibility. Intonation also plays a significant role in signalling a pessimistic tone (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 4: Minimize the Imposition

This strategy aims to lessen the perceived burden on the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Indirectly, it shows respect and deference to the listener. Power dynamics remain a potential underlying factor in this interaction (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The need to clarify the primary factor influencing the seriousness of the request explains why such expressions are considered polite, despite potentially being interpreted as impolite initially due to the Favor being requested Brown and Levinson, (1987).

Strategy 5: Give Deference

Deference can be expressed in two ways. First, the speaker lowers or humbles themselves. Second, the speaker elevates the listener by acknowledging their positive face in a way that fulfills the listener's desire to be regarded as superior. In both instances, the message conveyed is that the listener holds a higher social status than the speaker (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 6: Apologize

When apologizing, the speaker acknowledges concern about potentially infringing on the listener's negative face, thus acting with care and consideration. This approach is often used as an introduction before presenting a viewpoint, frequently employed to offer opinions about others' actions. Apologies serve as a way for the speaker to express regret for intruding on someone else's affairs (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 7: Impersonalizing the Speaker and Hearer

This strategy involves presenting face-threatening acts as if the agent responsible is someone other than the speaker, or at least not solely the speaker. Similarly, the addressee is framed as someone other than the direct recipient, or only partly inclusive of them. This technique helps avoid using personal pronouns like "I" and "you." Three common methods include using performatives, imperatives, and impersonal verbs (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 8: State the FTA as a Rule

To distance both the speaker and the addressee from the specific imposition of the face-threatening act, the speaker can frame it as an example of a broader social rule, regulation, or obligation. This conveys that the speaker is not personally imposing but is instead compelled by external circumstances (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 9: Nominalization

The more an expression is turned into a noun phrase, the more distanced the actor becomes from performing, feeling, or being involved in the action. Instead of attributing the action directly to the actor, the actor is made an attribute of the action itself. This process of nominalization increases the formality of the sentence (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Strategy 10: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebted Hearer

The speaker can mitigate a face-threatening act by openly acknowledging a debt to the addressee or, conversely, by explicitly stating that the addressee incurs no obligation. This helps soften the imposition or reinforces that no Favor is being requested (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Realizations of Negative Politeness Strategies

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, negative politeness strategies consist of five key realizations. These include:

1. Be Direct: According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness involves both performing an act directly (on record) and simultaneously mitigating the force of a face-threatening act (FTA). This approach can be understood as a blend of on-record strategies and efforts to minimize the threat to the interlocutor's negative face. This strategy is evident when the speaker conveys their intention explicitly but in an indirect manner, commonly referred to as the strategy of being conventionally indirect.

2. Don't Presume: This strategy is characterized by avoiding any presumptions or assumptions that the interlocutor automatically shares the same beliefs or views regarding the threat. In other words, the speaker must maintain a certain degree of distance from the interlocutor during the conversation to effectively implement this strategy. It is often realized using questions and hedging, allowing the speaker to communicate cautiously and indirectly.

3. Don't Coerce Hearer: There are five strategies that represent the realization of avoiding coercion of the interlocutor. These strategies include being conventionally indirect, using questions or hedges, expressing pessimism, minimizing the imposition, and showing deference. In this approach, the speaker provides the interlocutor with the option not to comply, ensuring they are not pressured. In other words, the speaker refrains from assuming that the interlocutor is automatically willing to fulfill the speaker's request.

4. Communicate Speaker's wanting to not impinge on Hearer: Brown and Levinson (1987) outline four strategies that a speaker can use to convey their intention while avoiding an infringement on the interlocutor's negative face. These strategies include apologizing, impersonalizing both the speaker and the hearer, explicitly stating the face-threatening act (FTA), and nominalizing. However, these strategies do not exclusively represent this realization, as each can serve as distinct realizations of negative politeness in different contexts.

5. Redress other Want of Hearer: The final realization of negative politeness is the strategy of redressing the other wants of the hearer derived from their negative face. Since negative face reflects the interlocutor's desire to be respected and maintain autonomy, the speaker must mitigate the face-threatening act by addressing the interlocutor's other needs or desires. This can be achieved by showing deference to the interlocutor and explicitly acknowledging a sense of indebtedness toward them, thereby minimizing the imposition.

In this Paper, the analysis of negative politeness is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory. The study applies the realizations outlined in this theory to examine negative politeness strategies. This approach is appropriate because each strategy corresponds to a specific realization of politeness. Consequently, the framework provided by Brown and Levinson (1987) enhances the analysis, as it establishes a clear connection between each strategy and its respective realization.

Factors Influencing the choice of Politeness Strategies

Brown and Levinson (1987) identify two key factors that influence a speaker's choice of politeness strategy: **Payoffs** and **Relevant circumstances**.

1- Payoff

Payoffs refer to the benefits or advantages that a speaker may gain by using a particular politeness strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), each strategy offers certain advantages to the speaker:

- **Bald on record:** When a speaker chooses to go on record, they present themselves as honest and trustworthy, ensuring the hearer understands their intentions clearly. This approach reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings because the speaker is explicit and does not need to minimize the face-threatening act (FTA).
- **Positive politeness:** By employing positive politeness, the speaker appeals to the hearer's positive face, fostering a sense of camaraderie or belonging. This strategy reduces the impact of the FTA by demonstrating that the speaker and the hearer are part of the same social group or share common ground. It can also be used to soften requests or offers, making them seem less imposing.
- **Negative politeness:** A speaker who chooses negative politeness aims to satisfy the hearer's negative face, showing respect for their autonomy and desire not to be imposed upon. The benefits of this strategy include avoiding future obligations, showing consideration for the hearer, and maintaining social distance.
- **Off record:** When a speaker goes Off record, they hint at their intentions rather than stating them directly, which allows them to avoid responsibility for any negative consequences of the FTA. The speaker may also be praised for being tactful and considerate.

In summary, the choice of a politeness strategy is largely determined by the payoffs, or the expected benefits, that the speaker aims to achieve. Each strategy offers specific advantages, enabling the speaker to handle face-threatening acts in a way that aligns with their communicative goals.

2- Relevant Circumstances

In addition to payoffs, the choice of a specific politeness strategy is influenced by relevant circumstances. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), three key factors determine how a speaker chooses politeness strategies in relation to the severity of a face-threatening act (FTA). These circumstances are **social distance**, **Relative power**, and **Rank of imposition**.

Social distance: Brown and Levinson (1987) define social distance as a symmetric relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor. It refers to the degree of familiarity or closeness between the two parties. Social distance is shaped by several social attributes, with the following being the most prominent: Gender, Age, Intimacy.

Relative Power: Relative power refers to the unequal relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor, where one person holds more authority or influence than the other. A person's role in society is often shaped by their power. Relative power significantly affects the choice of politeness strategies. A person with more power might opt for direct communication, as they are less concerned with mitigating face-threatening acts (FTAs). In contrast, a person with less power is likely to use more negative politeness strategies, showing deference and respect, and avoiding imposing on the interlocutor. Thus, power dynamics play a crucial role in determining how politeness is managed in communication.

Rank Imposition: According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the rank of imposition refers to the level of burden or interference that a face-threatening act (FTA) imposes on the interlocutor in a specific situation. The degree of imposition is culturally dependent and relates to how much the FTA impacts the interlocutor's positive or negative face. For example, in the context of making a request, a **large rank of imposition** occurs when the speaker asks for a significant Favor, which places a greater demand on the interlocutor. Conversely, a **small rank of imposition** arises when the request is minor and places minimal burden on the hearer. When choosing a particular negative politeness strategy, multiple factors may influence the speaker's decision in each situation. Often, more than one factor contributes to the choice of strategy. A speaker might select a specific strategy based on the combined influence of factors such as payoffs and relevant circumstances.

For example, a speaker may use the strategy of **giving deference** when addressing an interlocutor of higher status in a formal setting. In this case, the strategy is influenced both by the **relative power** of the interlocutor and the **formal nature** of the situation. The speaker's goal is to show respect and avoid imposing on the interlocutor's negative face. Therefore, the interplay of these factors guides the speaker in selecting an appropriate politeness strategy to maintain social harmony and respect.

Research Method

The researchers adopted a qualitative research design, utilizing the Overall Relative Frequency Percentage (ORFP) technique to calculate the percentage of each type of negative politeness strategy used by the main characters in a Jordanian Arabic novel and a Southern Nigerian novel. Data were collected and analysed from 10 dialogues in each novel to identify most frequently strategies. The study also explored the sub-strategies of negative politeness and examined how various factors influenced the choice of these strategies in both novels. A purposive sampling method was employed, with data gathered through careful observation of character interactions and the context in which negative politeness strategies were used in their conversations.

Research Finding and Discussion

Based on the process of collecting and analysing the data, there are 66 instances of negative politeness strategies employed by the main characters in *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq* and *The Fishermen Novels*. The results are organized and displayed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

Finding on Negative Politeness in THE NOTEBOOK OF AL-WARRAQ Novel

| No | Negative Politeness Strategies | Frequency | Percentage % | Realization of Negative Politeness | | | | | Factors | | | | | |
|-------|---|-----------|--------------|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | | | | Be Direct | Don' t presume | Don' t coerce | Communicate | Redress other want of | Pay Off | Percentage % | Circumstances | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | Social Distance | Relative Power | Rank Imposition | Percentage % |
| 1 | Be Conveniently Indirect | 19 | 72% | 10 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 50% | 2 | 0 | 0 | 33% |
| 2 | Question, Hedge | 3 | 12% | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 50% | 0 | 2 | 0 | 33% |
| 3 | Be pessimistic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 4 | Minimize the imposition | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 5 | Give Deference | 1 | 4% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17% |
| 6 | Apologize | 3 | 12% | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17% |
| 7 | Impersonalizing the Speaker and Hearer | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 8 | State the FTA as a Rule | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 9 | Nominalization | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 10 | Go on record as incurring a debt | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| TOTAL | | 26 | 100 % | 10 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 100 % | 2 | 2 | 2 | 100 % |

Table 1 presents the data related to negative politeness strategies, realizations and factors affecting the main character in *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq Novel*. The data reveal 72 % of 26 occurrences employing **Be Conveniently Indirect** strategy as the dominant strategy carried out by the main characters. It discloses the realization consisting of 10 occurrences of Be Direct and 7 occurrences of not presuming. Further, Circumstances is the most dominant factor affecting the main Characters to choose certain strategy which appears 6 times out of 8 occurrences.

Table 2

Finding on Negative Politeness in THE FISHERMEN Novel

| No | Negative Politeness Strategies | Frequency | Percentage % | Realization of Negative Politeness | | | | | Factors | | | | | |
|-------|--|-----------|--------------|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | | | | Be Direct | Don't presume | Don't coerce | Communicate | Redress other want of | Pay Off | Percentage % | Circumstances | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | Social Distance | Relative Power | Rank Imposition | Percentage % |
| 1 | Be Conveniently Indirect | 21 | 52% | 12 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 50% | 6 | 0 | 3 | 53% |
| 2 | Question, Hedge | 7 | 17% | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 3 | 0 | 17% |
| 3 | Be pessimistic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 4 | Minimize the imposition | 3 | 7% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 50% | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6% |
| 5 | Give Deference | 5 | 13% | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0% | 2 | 0 | 0 | 12% |
| 6 | Apologize | 3 | 8% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6% |
| 7 | Impersonalizing the Speaker and Hearer | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 8 | State the FTA as a Rule | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 9 | Nominalization | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 10 | Go on record as incurring a debt | 1 | 3% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 | 1 | 6% |
| TOTAL | | 40 | 100 % | 13 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 100 % | 8 | 3 | 6 | 100 % |

According to **Table 2**, which presents data related to negative politeness strategies, their realizations, and the factors influencing the main character in *The Notebook of Al-warraq* novel, 52% of the 40 recorded instances involve the use of the "Being Conventionally Indirect" strategy, making it the most frequently employed strategy by the main characters. The data also reveal 13 occurrences of the "Be Direct" strategy and 11 instances of the "Redress Other Wants of Hearer" strategy. Additionally, "Circumstances" emerges as the most dominant factor influencing the main characters' choice of strategy, appearing 17 times out of 19 instances.

As shown in Table 1 and Table 2, there are 62 occurrences of negative politeness strategies in these two Novels, *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq* and *The Fishermen*. The findings indicate a similarity between both Novels concerning the dominant realization and the factors

influencing the speakers' choice of strategies. In particular, the dominant strategies of negative politeness in both novels are "Being **Conveniently Indirect**" and "hedging"

In *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq*, "Being Conveniently Indirect" is the most frequent strategy due to the significant social distance present in many interactions. This prompts the main character to reduce tension by using indirectness to navigate sensitive situations. Similarly, in *The Fishermen*, "Being Conveniently Indirect" is also the dominant strategy, aligning with the story's focus on the main characters' lives before their tragic fate. This strategy reflects the uncertainty they experience, especially during their encounter with Abulu, the madman, where indirectness serves to cope with the ominous prophecies and tense circumstances they face.

According to the second objective of the research, the factors influencing the speaker's choice of a specific type of negative politeness strategy are "payoff" and "relevant circumstances." The payoff gained from using negative politeness strategies includes benefits such as satisfying the interlocutor's negative face. This involves avoiding the threat of a face-threatening act, showing respect to the interlocutor, and maintaining social distance between the speaker and interlocutor. Relevant circumstances, on the other hand, consist of three key elements: social distance, relative power, and rank of imposition. These elements collectively shape the speaker's decision to use strategies based on the context of the interaction.

As indicated in the analysis, Circumstances is the most influential factor affecting the main character's choice of negative politeness strategies in *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq*, and *The Fishermen Novels*. In *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq* the main character primarily employs negative politeness strategies based on the Circumstances, which occurs 6 times out of 8 instances, highlighting the importance of obtaining benefits like maintaining social distance and avoiding face-threatening acts. Consequently, social distance plays a lesser role in influencing their strategic choices. Similarly, in *The Fishermen*, Circumstances is also the dominant factor influencing the speaker's selection of strategies, appearing 17 times out of 19 occurrences. In contrast, Social Distance is identified as the least influential element among the relevant circumstances affecting the speaker's strategic decisions.

Related to the Third objective of the research, The two novels, *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq* and *The Fishermen*, share similarities and differences in their use of negative politeness strategies. Both employ negative politeness when the speaker and listener are close, and there is a sense of equality in power and social distance (marked as -D, -P). In this context, negative politeness serves to avoid face-threatening acts (FTAs) and maintain a balanced interaction. Additionally, there are differences between these two novels in how they use negative politeness strategies to manage interaction. *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq* focuses more on power asymmetry, with the speaker having less power, while *The Fishermen* emphasizes the speaker's equal or greater power in various contexts

Discussion

In this section, selective examples of negative politeness strategies from the both *The Notebook of Al-Warraaq* novel and *The Fishermen* novel are provided, along with the illocutionary forces these strategies convey within their respective contexts. Each example demonstrates how negative politeness functions to preserve the characters' social distance,

minimize face-threatening acts (FTAs), and maintain interpersonal respect. By examining these instances, the illocutionary force underlying each strategy becomes evident, as the characters navigate delicate situations while mitigating potential threats to the interlocutors' negative face. A detailed explanation of each negative politeness used in the two Novels; will be explained below.

1- Be Conventionally Indirect

The first negative politeness strategy is being conventionally indirect, where the speaker expresses an utterance indirectly but with a clear meaning. In *The Notebook Al-Warraq*, the main character frequently employs this strategy. Notably, there are 19 occurrences of this strategy, accounting for 72% of the instances. Below is an example of finding the conventionally indirect strategy as observed in *The Notebook of Al-Warraq*.

Ibrahim's Conversation with the Psychiatrist – In the Psychiatrist's Office

Ibrahim: I want you to help me commit suicide.

Doctor: Excuse me!

Ibrahim: Yes, I want you to help me with that.

Doctor: I wasn't alarmed by your initial attempt.

Ibrahim: If you reflect on it, you should consider either Freud's view of the individual or society's perspective on youth. Both might help you understand what I'm saying.

Doctor: Are you trying to relay something you read in the newspaper or heard from someone else?

Context: Ibrahim's interview with the psychiatrist continued in the doctor's office when he visited to tell him about his problem. Ibrahim was worried about his bloated stomach and hearing a voice that spoke to him and gave him harmful instructions. However, before he could explain his problem to the doctor, he began asking for his help in committing an act of self-harm.

Analysis

When Ibrahim expresses his unconventional and alarming request for assistance in committing a murder, this request violates societal norms and ethical boundaries. This prompts the speaker (the doctor) to respond with confusion and shock, saying: "Excuse me?" This response can be considered an example of **negative politeness strategy 1**, as it indirectly conveys rejection, maintains professional boundaries, and reflects the speaker's (doctor's) astonishment while preserving a level of respect in the conversation.

Additionally, the response aims to request clarification, indicating that the speaker is giving the listener (Ibrahim) an opportunity to reconsider or clarify his statement appropriately. By using the expression "Excuse me," the doctor attempts to handle the potentially dangerous and sensitive situation tactfully.

When Ibrahim insisted on his request, the doctor replied, "I wasn't alarmed by your initial attempt" (P. 37). In this statement, the speaker (the doctor) attempts to maintain Ibrahim's positive face by using the phrase "**I wasn't alarmed by your initial attempt**" Through this, the doctor seeks to soften the intensity of the discussion about murder—a topic that threatens reputation—while also showing concern for Ibrahim's well-being. The doctor indirectly expresses his discomfort or disapproval of Ibrahim's request, thereby mitigating the threat to

Ibrahim's face. This aligns with **negative politeness strategy 1**, as the doctor indirectly refuses Ibrahim's request in a way that minimizes conflict and maintains a level of respect.

In *The Fishermen novel*, the main speakers employ the strategy of being conventionally indirect on there are 21 occurrences of this strategy, representing **52%** of the total identified politeness strategies. These occurrences highlight the speakers' use of indirectness to navigate sensitive or complex interactions, reflecting the cultural and interpersonal dynamics depicted in the novel. This strategy underscores the nuanced communication styles influenced by the characters' relationships, contexts, and cultural traditions. Below is an example of finding the conventionally indirect strategy as observed in *The Fishermen*.

Ikenna's Mother: You don't deserve to eat anything in this house, Go and eat the fish you caught from that dangerous river and be stuffed by it.

I will tell Eme what you have done. I'm certain that if he hears it, he'll leave everything else and return here. I know him, I know Eme. You. Will. See....

You think I would have ceased to exist if something bad had happened to you or if one of you had drowned in that river? I will not cease to live because you chose to harm yourselves. No.

Context: The conversation took place at home after Ikenna, his brothers, and their mother argued over their secret fishing trips to a forbidden and dangerous river. The brothers had hidden their small catches under a bunk bed, causing a smell of dead fish, which they later disposed of secretly. Their secret was revealed when a neighbor, Mama Iyabo, saw them at the river and informed their mother. Enraged, their mother punished them by withholding dinner and locking the kitchen to block access to food.

Analysis: After their mother decided to lock the kitchen, she confronted them by saying: "*You don't deserve to eat anything in this house. Go and eat the fish you caught from that dangerous river and fill yourselves with it*" (p. 24). In this statement, their mother expresses her disapproval and disappointment indirectly. She could have accused or scolded them directly for fishing in a dangerous place, but instead, she chose a more indirect and polite approach.

By using the phrase "*You don't deserve to eat anything in this house,*" she conveys her disapproval in an indirect manner, avoiding direct confrontation or blame. This approach aligns with **negative politeness strategies**, which help her handle the situation while maintaining social harmony and avoiding a direct threat to her children's face. This specific instance can be categorized as **negative politeness strategy 1**, reflecting a conventionally indirect approach.

Similarly, in her statement "*Go and eat the fish you caught from that dangerous river,*" she expresses her disapproval without explicitly accusing them. The mention of "*that dangerous river*" subtly highlights her concern for their safety in an indirect manner, without overtly criticizing their actions. This further exemplifies **negative politeness strategy 1**, as it demonstrates a tactful way of addressing the issue while maintaining respect and consideration for the children's feelings.

Their mother continued angrily, saying: "*I will tell Eme what you've done. I am certain that if he hears about this, he will drop everything and come back. I know him, I know Eme. Just*

wait... and you will... see" (p. 25). In this statement, the mother conveys her concern about her children's actions while hinting at a potential threat by involving Eme (their father) in the situation. This indirect threat serves as a form of **negative politeness**, allowing her to avoid issuing a direct command while maintaining balance in the discourse. Phrases like "*I know him, I know Eme*" and "*Just wait... and you will... see*" reinforce her confidence and certainty about the consequences, subtly implying a warning to the listeners. This can be classified as **negative politeness strategy 1**, employing a conventionally indirect approach.

She then added: "*Do you think I would die if something bad happened to you, or if you drowned in that river? I won't die because you chose to harm yourselves*" (p. 25). This statement reflects her deep emotional connection to her children and her concern for their safety, though expressed in an indirect manner. By saying, "*I won't die because you chose to harm yourselves,*" she uses a rhetorical question to express her anxiety without directly accusing or blaming them. This approach reveals her care for addressing the matter sensitively, preserving her children's feelings while reducing any direct threat to their self-esteem. This statement, too, can be categorized under **negative politeness strategy 1**, as it adopts an indirect and tactful approach

2. Question, Hedge

Hedging is a politeness strategy where the speaker demonstrates reluctance or softens their statements to minimize the impact of a Face-Threatening Act (FTA). In *The Notebook of Al-Warraq* novel, hedging is one of the strategies used by the main characters, accounting for 12% of the politeness strategies with 3 occurrences. Here is an example of hedging.

Ibrahim's Conversation with the Psychiatrist

Ibrahim: "*You should have taken my request seriously, whether you consider Freud's view of the personal unconscious or Jung's view of the collective unconscious. Either could lead you to reflect on what I said.*"

Doctor: "*Are you flaunting information you read in a newspaper or heard from someone?*"

Context: This is a continuation of Ibrahim's meeting with the psychiatrist in the doctor's office. Ibrahim visited him to discuss his problem because he was worried about his stomach bloating and hearing a voice speaking to him, giving him harmful instructions. However, before explaining his problem to the doctor, he began requesting the doctor's help in committing a murder.

Analysis: When the doctor asks, "Are you presenting to me information you read in a newspaper or heard from someone?" in this discussion between the speaker (the doctor) and Ibrahim, negative politeness strategies are used to handle a sensitive and potentially harmful situation. The speaker employs an indirect approach by asking if Ibrahim is sharing information he read in a newspaper or heard from someone, instead of directly confronting his statements about committing murder. This indirect strategy allows the doctor to address the issue without directly accusing Ibrahim. It becomes clear that the doctor used hedging to indirectly question the validity of Ibrahim's statement without explicitly accusing him of lying or being delusional. This is characteristic of negative politeness strategy number 2: the use of hedged questions.

Conversation between Ikenna's Father and Ikenna (The Fishermen)

Ikenna's Father: I believe you all heard what your mother told me. Is that true?

Ikenna: That's true, Sir.

Ikenna's Father: So, it is true?

Context: The dialogue occurs at home between Ikenna's father, Ikenna, and his brothers, focusing on their fishing trips to the dangerous Omi-Ala River and the consequences. After learning from his wife, via a neighbor, that the children had been fishing in the forbidden river after school, Ikenna's father was initially shocked. He questioned his wife to verify the claim and, once convinced of its truth, summoned the boys for interrogation. Upon confirming their activities, he expressed his anger and decided to discipline them by ordering them to remove their clothes and lie down, preparing to punish them with a beating.

Analysis: The father ordered his children to come to him before he counted to three. Once they gathered before him, he said, I believe you have all heard what your mother told me. Is that true? (p. 32). In this situation, the speaker (Ikenna's father) approaches the subject indirectly by saying, I believe you have all heard what your mother told me. This allows the children to admit to the matter without being directly accused. This indirect approach serves to mitigate the face-threatening act of confronting them about their misbehaviour.

The use of "I believe" and framing the statement as a question adds a layer of politeness by giving the children an opportunity to respond and explain themselves without feeling immediately attacked. This reflects a form of **Negative Politeness Strategies 2**, as it indirectly acknowledges that the children may already be aware of the situation.

The speaker's use of indirect questions, such as "Is that true?" Instead of directly accusing the children, allows the listener (Ikenna) to save face and maintain their autonomy. According to Brown and Levinson's framework, this strategy involves being indirect and employing "hedging" questions, providing the listener with a clear choice to respond. Ikenna's father asked, "So is it true?" (p. 32). By framing the question in this way— "So is it true?"—rather than resorting to direct accusations or reprimands, Ikenna's father provides his children with the opportunity to confirm the truth without feeling overly threatened or attacked.

Be Pessimistic

Tables 1 and 2 in the study results indicate that the third sub-strategy of negative politeness was not used in either novel. The researcher did not find any type of this strategy in the dialogues of the selected main characters from the two novels.

Communicate Speaker's Wanting to not Impinge on Hearer

Table 1 shows that the main characters in *The Warraq Notebooks* did not use the fourth sub-strategy of negative politeness. Meanwhile, Table 2 indicates that this strategy accounted for 12% of the politeness strategies, with three occurrences in *The Fishermen*. An example of its use is as follows:

At the police station. (*The Fishermen*)

Police Officer: I'm sorry, sir! but we will be conducting a brief search on you before you go in. (He ran his hand over Ikenna's father's body, moving up to the pockets of his pants, inspecting them.) Then he said: Everything is fine.

Context: This discussion took place at the Nigerian police station between Ikenna's father, a police officer, an assistant, and a detective's associate. It occurred when Ikenna's father visited them to inquire about any information regarding the disappearance of his son Boja, who went missing on the day his brother Ikenna's body was discovered.

Analysis: Then another police officer said to Ikenna's father: "*I'm sorry, sir! But we will conduct a brief search before you enter.*" (He ran his hand over Ikenna's father's body, moving up to the trouser pockets, inspecting.) "*Everything is fine.*" (p. 133). In this situation, the police officer's statement demonstrates elements of **negative politeness**. By starting the sentence with "*I'm sorry, sir*", the officer acknowledges that the act of conducting a search could be perceived as an imposition or intrusion on the listener's (Ikenna's father) privacy. This reflects an attempt to respect the listener's autonomy and minimize the discomfort associated with the situation. Additionally, it helps ensure positive social relations, reducing any negative feelings that might arise from the necessary inspection. The use of the word "*brief*" further mitigates the request, making it appear less burdensome. This approach exemplifies a form of negative politeness strategy by employing respectful terms of address, offering an apology, and using cues to minimize the imposition during the interaction.

Give Deference

Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate that both books employ the fifth sub-strategy of negative politeness. Table 1 further indicates that the main characters in the novel *The Warraq Notebooks* used this strategy, accounting for 4% of the overall politeness strategies, with a single occurrence. An example is as follows:

Dialogue between Ibrahim and the Hotel Employee (*The Notebook Al-Warraqs*)

Employee: What is her name?

Ibrahim: I only know the first letter of her name: *Noon*.

Employee: Sir, unfortunately for you, there are several female guests in the hotel whose names start with the letter *Noon*.

Context: This conversation took place at the Beach Hotel between Ibrahim and the hotel employee, as Ibrahim was searching for the fisherwoman Noon and any information that might help him locate her. Through his discussion with the employee, he discovered that Ms. Noon had checked out of the hotel and left. The employee did not provide him with any details about Ms. Noon, stating that such information is considered confidential between the hotel and its guests.

Analysis: When Ibrahim approached the hotel employee, he was looking for a guest staying at the hotel. The employee asked for the guest's name, but he did not know it. Instead, he described her appearance and the clothes she was wearing. The employee responded: "*Sir, unfortunately for you, there are several female guests at the hotel whose names start with the letter Noon.*" (p. 104). In this instance, the speaker (the hotel employee) began her

statement with “*Sir*” to show respect and honor towards the listener. This reflects politeness in her speech. She refrained from disclosing specific details about Ms. Noon, such as her full name or room number, to protect her privacy. This demonstrates respect for the confidentiality and privacy of the guest. In this scenario, the hotel employee used an indirect approach to convey information about Ms. Noon without explicitly revealing her identity. This indirectness can be seen to mitigate the potential negative impact of the message.

This approach aligns with negative politeness strategies **1** (be indirect) and **5** (use honorifics), as the employee utilized indirect language and respectful terms of address to communicate with the listener.

Meanwhile, **Table 2** shows that the main characters in *The Fishermen* used this strategy, accounting for 13% of the overall politeness strategies, with five occurrences. An example is as follows:

Dialogue between Ikenna’s Father and Ikenna and His Brothers (*The Fishermen*)

Ikenna’s Father: Ikenna, Ikenna!

Ikenna: Sir!

Ikenna’s Father: Come here! Before I count to three, I want to see all of you here now! I believe you all heard what your mother told me. Is that correct?

Ikenna: Yes, sir.

Context

This discussion took place at home between Ikenna’s father, Ikenna, and his brothers regarding the crime they were accused of committing. When their father confirmed that they had been going fishing at the forbidden Omi-Ala River, he ordered them to strip off their clothes and lie down in preparation for the consequences of their actions, as he intended to punish them by beating them.

Analysis: Ikenna’s father called out, “Ikenna! Ikenna!” (p. 31). In this instance, after Ikenna’s mother informed her husband about the children’s misbehavior, Ikenna’s father responded loudly, calling out, “Ikenna! Ikenna!” This indicates a level of authority and urgency, showing that the matter is serious and demands immediate attention. The use of the exclamation mark and the repetition of the child’s name can be interpreted to convey concern and urgency, rather than necessarily diminishing the authority of the husband.

Ikenna replied, “Sir” (p. 31). In this situation, addressing his father as “Sir” is an example of Negative Politeness Strategy No. 5, which involves using honorifics when addressing the listener. By using the term “Sir,” Ikenna demonstrates respect and consideration for his father and acknowledges his authority. This can be seen to mitigate the impact of hiding from his parents before facing punishment, adding a layer of politeness and respect to the communication.

Ikenna then said, “Yes, Sir” (p. 32). This statement aligns with politeness strategies, specifically Negative Politeness Strategy No. 5, as defined in Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory. Negative politeness involves the use of honorifics to address the listener, minimizing imposition, and respecting others’ freedom to act. Here, Ikenna shows respect and acknowledges his father’s authority, employing a negative politeness strategy aimed at maintaining the father’s positive face.

Apologize

Tables 1 and 2 indicate that both novels employed the sixth sub-strategy of negative politeness. **Table 1** shows that the main characters in *The Notebook of Al-Warraq* used this strategy, accounting for 13% of the overall politeness strategies, with three occurrences. An example is as follows:

Dialogue between Ibrahim and Sitt Al-Noon on the Beach (*The Warraq Notebooks*)

Sayyadatu Noon: It seems I've forgotten my lighter. Do you happen to have one?

Ibrahim: Sorry, I don't smoke.

Sayyadatu Noon: Why did you take a picture of me?

Ibrahim: How did you know?

Context

This is part of a dialogue that took place between Ibrahim and Sayyadatu Noon on the beach. Sayyadatu Noon had agreed to Ibrahim's suggestion to sit and talk with him for a while. However, she eventually left the place without telling Ibrahim her name, despite his request for it.

Analysis

Ibrahim responded by saying: "Sorry, I don't smoke" (p. 90). In this situation, the speaker (Ibrahim) indirectly expresses that he does not have a cigarette lighter. Instead of explicitly stating that he does not have the lighter, he simply says, "I don't smoke." By starting his response with the word "Sorry," Ibrahim demonstrates his consideration for the listener's (Sayyadatu Noon's) request, reducing the likelihood of appearing as though he is refusing to help her. This phrase reflects the speaker's use of negative politeness strategy number 6, which is "apologizing." Ibrahim conveys that he does not have a lighter without stating it directly. By beginning with an apology, he aims to protect the listener's face and minimize the potential threat Sayyadatu Noon might feel.

Meanwhile, **Table 2** shows that the main characters in *The Fishermen* used this strategy, accounting for 8% of the overall politeness strategies, with three occurrences. An example is as follows:

Discussion in the Nigerian Police Station, between Ikenna's Father and the Policeman in *The Fishermen*:

Policeman: So, you are the father of those boys? he asked reflexively. Then, as if suddenly realizing what he'd said, "Sorry for that, sir. Please wait, sir."

Policeman: I'm sorry, sir, but we will be conducting a brief search on you before you go in, (He passed his hand over Father's body, up to his trouser pockets, frisking) Then he said: All correct, sir!

Police Officer: (After sitting) Erm, Mr Agwu, I regret to say that we are yet to have a word on the location of your son." He adjusted himself in his chair, unclasped his hands and quickly put in, "But we have been making progress. We questioned someone in your neighbourhood who confirmed she saw the boy somewhere across the street that afternoon; the description she gave matched yours—the boy she saw wore blood-stained clothes."

Context

The conversation occurred at a Nigerian police station, where Ikenna's father sought updates about his missing son, Boja, who disappeared the day Ikenna's body was discovered. Boja and

Ikenna had fought in their parents' absence, witnessed by their younger siblings, Benjamin and Obembe, who sought help from a neighbor. By the time the neighbor arrived, the brothers were gone, but blood was found at the scene. While Ikenna's body was later discovered, Boja's location remained unknown. Following Ikenna's burial, the father visited the police station, where investigators indicated they needed his cooperation to advance the case.

Analysis: When the police officer heard this, he said to him: "Ah, so you're the father of those boys? I'm sorry, sir! Please wait." (p. 133). The phrase "*Ah, so you're the father of those boys*" reflects politeness because it shows interest in the identity of the person and acknowledges his role as a parent. This can be seen as an act of face-saving, allowing the father to maintain his positive face by recognizing his status as a parent and expressing understanding of his situation.

The use of the phrase "*I'm sorry, sir!*" demonstrates negative politeness by offering an apology and showing respect to the listener (Ikenna's father) and his position. Additionally, the use of "*Please wait*" can be interpreted to mitigate the request for the listener (Ikenna's father) to wait, showing respect for his time and situation. This approach illustrates a form of negative politeness strategy using honorifics, apologizing, and mitigating imposition.

Later, another police officer said to Ikenna's father: "*I'm sorry, sir! But we need to conduct a brief search before you enter.*" (He passed his hands over Ikenna's father's body, moving up to the pockets of his trousers, inspecting) "*All correct Sir.*" (p. 133). In this situation, the police officer's statement demonstrates elements of negative politeness. By starting with "*I'm sorry, sir,*" the officer acknowledges that the search might be perceived as an imposition or an intrusion on the listener's (Ikenna's father's) privacy. This shows an attempt to respect the listener's autonomy and to minimize the discomfort associated with the situation. It also helps maintain positive social relations, reducing any negative feelings that might arise from the necessary search. Additionally, the use of the word "*brief*" helps to mitigate the request and make it appear less burdensome. This approach showcases a type of negative politeness strategy using honorifics, apologies, and signals that reduce imposition during communication.

When Ikenna's father entered the police officer's office, the officer welcomed him and, after sitting, said: "*Erm, Mr Agwu, I regret to say that we are yet to have a word on the location of your son.*" He adjusted himself in his chair, unclasped his hands and quickly put in, "*But we have been making progress. We questioned someone in your neighbourhood who confirmed she saw the boy somewhere across the street that afternoon; the description she gave matched yours—the boy she saw wore blood-stained clothes.*" (p. 134). In the dialogue between Ikenna's father and the police officer, the speaker (the police officer) used a negative politeness strategy characterized by expressions of regret or sympathy to deliver the news about the lack of information regarding his son's location. By expressing an apology, the officer demonstrates concern and attempts to soften the negative impact of the news on the listener (Ikenna's father). This strategy helps maintain a respectful and empathetic tone, mitigating the emotional weight of the situation.

Impersonalizing the Speaker and Hearer

State the FTA as a Rule

Nominalization

Tables 1 and 2 show that the seventh, eighth, and ninth sub-strategies of negative politeness were not used in either novel. The researcher did not find any examples of these methods in the dialogues of the selected main characters from the two novels.

Go on Record as Incurring a Debt, or as not Indebting HEARER

Table 1 shows that the tenth sub-strategy of negative politeness was not used in the novel "*The Notebook of Al- Warraq*". However, Table 2 indicates that the main characters in the novel "*The Fishermen*" used this strategy once. For example:

Dialogue between Ikenna's Father and the Policeman (*The Fishermen*):

Policeman: Oga, will you do us well? the man said. "You know say na you be, oga.

Ikenna's Father: I don't have time for this; my Child is missing!

Context

This discussion took place at a Nigerian police station between Ikenna's father and the policeman when Ikenna's father visited the station to inquire about any updates regarding the disappearance of his son, Boja, who had been missing since the day Ikenna's body was discovered. It was revealed that Ikenna's father visited the station to check on the progress of the investigation. The evidence suggests that the police require Ikenna's father's cooperation to proceed further with the investigation.

Analysis:

Ikenna's father said, "I don't have time for this. My son is missing." (p. 133). In this situation, the speaker (Ikenna's father) employed the 10th sub-strategy of negative politeness, which involves mitigating face-threatening acts from the speaker when the listener makes a request. Ikenna's father used this strategy to avoid directly rejecting the policeman's demand for money. By emphasizing the severity of his situation and his genuine desire to find his missing son, he implicitly declined the policeman's request by highlighting his dire circumstances.

Factors Influencing the Use of Negative Politeness Strategies in both *The Notebook of Al- Warraq* and *The Fishermen*.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), two primary factors influence the main characters' use of negative politeness strategies: **payoff** and **relevant circumstances**. The relevant circumstances are further broken down into **social distance**, **relative power**, and **rank of imposition**. Both novels demonstrate a shared use of negative politeness strategies when the speaker and listener are close in social distance and have equal power (-D, -P). This approach is consistently employed to minimize face-threatening acts, maintain harmony, and avoid conflict during interactions. Then in *The Notebook of Al- Warraq* Negative politeness is used in two scenarios: When the speaker is familiar with the listener and holds less power (-D, -P). And when the speaker is unfamiliar with the listener and holds less power (+D, -P). These patterns emphasize the influence of power imbalance, where characters often prioritize politeness to navigate either familiar or unfamiliar contexts. In *The Fishermen*: Negative politeness shifts to reflect different power dynamics. When the speaker is familiar with the listener and equal in power (D, P). And when the speaker is unfamiliar with the listener and

holds greater power (+D, +P). This demonstrates a broader application of negative politeness in situations involving both equal relationships and hierarchical power structures, highlighting the significance of authority in shaping politeness strategies.

Conclusion

The study reveals that only four of the ten subcategories of Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategies were employed by the main characters in *The Notebooks of Al-Warraq*. The most frequently used strategy was "Be Indirect," accounting for 66%, followed by "Use Hedging Questions" (10%), "Apologies" (10%), and "Use Honorifics for the Listener" (4%). The remaining six subcategories were not utilized in the novel. In contrast, the main characters in *The Fishermen* employed six out of the ten subcategories of negative politeness strategies. The most prominent strategy was "Be Indirect," which constituted 52% of their usage. This was followed by "Hedge Questions" (17%), "Use Honorifics for the Listener" (13%), "Apologies" (8%), "Minimize Imposition" (7%), and "Redress Face-Threatening Acts to Answer a Debt Question" (3%). The other four subcategories did not appear in the novel.

The findings also highlight that both novels use negative politeness strategies in distinct ways, shaped by the social dynamics between characters and the cultural contexts of their respective stories. Negative politeness strategies were more frequently observed in *The Fishermen* (43%) than in *The Notebooks of Al-Warraq* (25.3%). This suggests that the characters in *The Fishermen* tend to exhibit greater caution and respect in their interactions, likely reflecting higher social distance or a more pronounced power imbalance among characters.

Despite these differences, both novels employ negative politeness to navigate interpersonal dynamics, particularly in close relationships characterized by equal power. However, their approaches to power dynamics differ significantly. *The Notebooks of Al-Warraq* often emphasizes scenarios where the speaker holds less power, whereas *The Fishermen* encompasses a broader spectrum of relationships, including those with equal or higher power dynamics. This underscores the influence of authority on the choice of politeness strategies in *The Fishermen*.

The analysis of *The Notebook of Al-Warraq* and *The Fishermen* reveals how shifts in politeness strategies impact character portrayal and cultural representation. It highlights differences in indirectness and face-threatening acts, demonstrating their influence on readers' understanding. By employing frameworks like Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, the study enhances the precision of cultural comparisons and provides valuable insights into the application of politeness strategies across diverse cultural contexts, contributing to improved intercultural communication. The findings significantly contribute to literary studies and intercultural communication by exploring how linguistic politeness strategies structure social issues in Nigerian and Arabic literature. They deepen the understanding of cultural complexity in literary texts and enhance the ability to analyze works from diverse cultural backgrounds. The study recommends: Conducting in-depth research on politeness strategies across linguistic and cultural contexts to explore their similarities, differences, and impact on intercultural communication norms. Integrate politeness strategies with other theories to perform comparative analyses of their implementation in different cultural settings, highlighting cultural influences. Considering contextual factors beyond listener power

relations to achieve more accurate and reliable research results, as real-world behaviors are shaped by various influence.

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