FACE THREATENING ACTS AND THEIR MITIGATION STRATEGIES IN RELATION TO TRANSLATION

BY

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DECLARATION

This is my original work and it has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

TO MY MUM AND DAD
FRACIAH WAMUYU JOSEPH
JOSEPH MWANGI GITAU
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First is to my mum Fraciah Wamuyu and dad Joseph Mwangi for your financial and moral support. You backed me up when I had no stable source of income. May God keep you in good health and live to see fruits of your labour.

Second is to my lecturers who instilled knowledge to be able to write this thesis. I single out my supervisors professor John Habwe and Dr. Catherine Agoya who devoted their time and effort to ensure I complete this project. To the coordinator of translation and Interpretation department University of Nairobi professor Jane Mutiga for support and motivation.

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Above all I thank the almighty God for making this vision come true.
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ABSTRACT

This study deals with face threatening acts and their mitigation strategies in relation to translation. It focuses on threats to positive face and threats to negative face in English context and how they can be successfully transferred to Kiswahili context.

Chapter one has stated the research problem together with objectives and hypothesis. The scope and limitations of the study have been highlighted together with rationale and a comprehensive description of face theory. Literature reviewed has been stated together with research methodology used in the study.

Chapter two has dealt with definition of terms related to face threatening acts (FTA’S). It has also explained in detail classification of face threatening acts (FTA’S) and the factors affecting weightiness of an FTA.

Chapter three has explained in details, the face threatening acts to both positive face and negative face in English context and their mitigation strategies citing examples from Merchant of Venice and First Corinthians. It has also explained the face threatening acts to both positive and negative face in Kiswahili context citing examples from Mabepari wa Venisi and Wakorintho wa Kwanza.

Chapter four has dealt with Face threatening acts (FTA’S) and translation, difficulties in translating face threatening acts from English to Kiswahili context and also impact of politeness system of a language on FTA’S and their mitigation strategies.

Chapter five has the summary of research findings, remark on hypothesis, conclusion and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Study

Every member of the society wants his goals aspirations and possessions to be desirable to others. In every day interaction, people strive to save, maintain and even enhance their desirability especially that which is relevant to particular goals.

Brown and Levinson (1987:60) defined face threatening acts (FTA’S) as acts which intrinsically threaten face. Face is something that can be lost maintained or enhanced. Every person has positive and negative face. There are FTA’S to positive face and FTA’S to negative face.

According to Scollon and Scollon (2001:48) there is no faceless communication and any communication is a risk to face. To grant just the right level of independence and involvement is an interactional achievement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study deals with threats on negative face and threats on positive face together with strategies to deal with them in relation to translation. According to Brown and Levinson’s face theory, everyone has a face which is the positive social value one claims for himself depending on the line others assume he has taken on a particular contact. As partners in social interaction, people are more or less dependent on each other to co-operate in maintaining the fragile balance of respect and consideration.
According to Fraser (1990:232): “The status, the power, the role of each speaker and the nature of circumstances are the relevant parameters for calculating the initial set of rights and obligations. They play a crucial role in determining what messages may be expected both in terms of form and content. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:61) content of face will differ in different cultures. It is therefore necessary that a scientific study is carried out in order to establish the relationship between face threatening acts and strategies to deal with these threats.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Objectives of this study are:

1. To establish how face threatening acts in English context relate to face threatening acts in Kiswahili context.

2. To investigate how strategies to mitigate face threatening acts in English context relate to those in Kiswahili context.

3. To determine transferability of face threatening acts and mitigation strategies from English context to Kiswahili context.

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

In this study we hypothesize that:

1. Face threatening acts in English context are different from those in Kiswahili context.
2. Strategies to mitigate face threatening acts are the same in both English and Kiswahili context.

3. Face threatening acts (FTA’S) are not transferrable from English to Kiswahili context.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The source of data for this study is from William Shakespeare’s play “merchant of Venice “which has been translated in Kiswahili by Julius Nyerere Mabepari wa Venisi together with Paul’s first epistle to Corinthians in the new testament of the bible.

*Merchant of Venice* significant since it is an English play with many actors who encounter both positive and negative face threatening threatening acts (FTA’S). On the other hand the epistle of *first Corinthians* is significant in the study due to many FTA’S to the Corinthians as Paul criticizes, disapproves and corrects men and women in the church. The study shall explore how the use of both on record and off record strategies has been used to mitigate FTA’S and their pay offs.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

There have been concerns in the field of translation on whether it is possible to maintain the balance between faithfulness to the source culture and acceptability in target culture especially while translating extra linguistic features such as face threatening acts. The significance of this study is to point out face threatening acts in literary texts showing relationship in mitigation strategies between the two languages and the effectiveness of the strategies.
1.7 Theoretical Framework

The phenomenon of politeness is hard to define even to researchers. A comprehensive theory of politeness applicable in every situation should account for different forms of behavior. Different researchers have come up with different views on politeness. Leech (1983) came up with conversational maxim rule, Brown and Levinson formulated face saving view in (1978) and enhanced it in (1987). Fraser (1990) came up with conversational contract view. This study shall be based on Brown and Levinson face theory which is based on aspect of face.

Face theory by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson

This theory is based on the following concepts:

1.7.1 Face

This is the positive social value one claims for himself depending on the line other people assume he has taken on a particular contact. Brown and Levinson (1978: 61) define face as something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced. It must be constantly attended to in an interaction. In any interaction, individuals are careful not to lose their faces.

1.7.2 Positive face

This is the desire for one to be appreciated and his self image to be approved by others. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:63) it is the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others. Persons want their goals, possessions and
achievements to be thought desirable by some particular others especially relevant to the particular goals. A student has a desire that his assignment shall please his teacher; a husband has a desire that his flowers shall please his fiancée; an employee has a desire that his services shall please his employer and so on. Every interaction has a motivation behind it to both the speaker and the hearer. The speaker is motivated by expectation shall acknowledge his face and approve it and likewise the hearer. Both risk losing their faces during the interaction and shall employ different strategies to mitigate the threat.

1.7.3 Negative face

This is the desire for an individual not to be imposed upon. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:62) it is the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others. Whenever any other member tries to interfere with this freedom, the individual falls threatened thus encountering an FTA. Many cultures have softeners and hedges to avoid imposing on others. These include words like please, do you mind, kindly and if you don’t mind are just few among many in English culture. In Kiswahili there are words like Kwa hisani yako (For your kindness), tafadhali (please) Nakusihi (I urge you).

1.7.4 Positive politeness

It asserts approval and appreciation to meet ‘positive face’.
1.7.5 Negative politeness

This is any attempt to meet ‘negative face’.

1.7.6 Face threatening acts

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:68) in context of mutual vulnerability of face, any rational agent will seek to avoid FTA’S or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat. Brown and Levinson (1978:70) in positive politeness the potential face threats of an act is minimized by an assurance that in general the speaker wants at least some of hearer’s wants. The broadcaster is happy to note that the listener is interested in his programs, the author is happy when he gets feedback from readers that they are happy with his publication. The speaker considers the hearer to be important in some respect. Thus both are keen to maintain each others face and if possible enhance it. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:70) in negative politeness, face threatening acts are redressed with apologies for interfering or transgressing with hedges and other softening mechanisms. Brown and Levinson (1978:69 -70) outline five strategies for mitigating face threatening acts:

1.7.6.1 On-record strategies without redressive action

It’s also called bald on record strategy. This strategy provides no effort to minimize threats to the hearer. This is evident in statements which do not put in consideration the positive social value the hearer claims for himself. The intention is unambiguously clear to all participants. There is no fear of attribution from the addressee. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:71) the strategy has the following payoffs:
1) It enlists public pressure against the addressee or in support of himself.

2) The speaker gets credit for outspokenness.

3) The speaker avoids danger of being seen as manipulator.

4) The speaker gets credit for honesty

5) The speaker avoids the danger of being misunderstood

6) The speaker can have an opportunity to pay back in face what he potentially takes away by FTA.

1.7.6.2 On record strategy with redressive action

This is where the speaker expresses an utterance while trying to counteract possible face damage to the hearer. He does this with help of:

Positive politeness: involves appreciating positive self image of the interact ants to maintain friendship and avoid face threatening acts.

Negative politeness: The strategy attempt to mitigate face threatening acts by not imposing upon the hearer. According to Brown and Levinson, the degree of imposition determines the social distance between the interact ants.

1.7.6.3 Off-record indirect strategies

The main purpose of this strategy is to take some of the presence off the hearer. This is by not directly imposing on the speaker thus mitigating the face threatening acts (FTA’S). It assumes that the addressee is able to infer the intended meaning from the statement of
the speaker. Brown and Levinson (1978:72-73) outlines the following as pay offs of use of off record strategies to the speaker:

a) He gets credit for being tactful

b) He gets credit for being non-coercive

c) He runs less risk of his act getting in ‘gossip biography’

d) He avoids responsibility for potentially face damaging interpretation

e) He can give (non-overtly) the addressee an opportunity to be seen to care for the speaker.

Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson came up with other techniques to mitigate face threatening acts. They include:

A hedge is a mitigating device to lessen the impact of an utterance. It is one of the devices used in both English and Kiswahili. Without the hedge, a statement tends to threaten the face of the hearer but the hedge lessens the threatening impact.

In first Corinthians Paul uses negation do you not know to mitigate the impact of his statements.

Examples

1 Corinthians 3: 16 “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s spirit dwells in you?”

1 Corinthians 6:9 “Do you not know that wrong doers will not inherit the kingdom of God?”
1 Corinthians 6: 16 “Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her?”

Paul has also used other hedges like:

1 Cor 7:40 “But in my judgment she is more blessed if she remains as she is.”

1 Cor 11: 13 “Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled?”

A polite lie is a statement known to be untrue by both the speaker and the hearer but both accepts it to meet the standard of politeness. Greetings in both English and Kiswahili culture possess aspect of phatic communion.

Examples

How are you? Fine

How are you doing? Fine

The respondent cannot respond that he is not fine without being considered rude even if he may not be fine.

In Kiswahili we have greetings such as:

_Hujambo?_ (Do you have any news?) _Sijambo_ (I don’t have any news)

_U hali gani?_ (How is your condition?) _Njema_ (Good)

In Kiswahili culture, one is expected to welcome visitors by saying “_karibu nyumbani_” (welcome home) or “_karibu chakula_” (welcome food) even if the visitor had no appointment and the food may not even be ready or enough.

In _Merchant of Venice_, act two scene 7 Portia refers to Prince of Morocco as ‘noble Prince’ thus appearing polite and good mannered as expected of a gentle lady. However at
the end of the scene we learn that she has deep seated hatred to him and the people of his complexion. In the same act scene 9, she refers to prince of Arragon as ‘noble Prince’. After leaving, she talks of him as a deliberate fool whose reasoning only gives enough wisdom to make the wrong choice.

**Euphemism** is the indirect use of language. It is a common strategy in Kiswahili culture where topics such as human reproduction are never discussed in public. Indirect use of language includes use of symbolism and metaphors in order to meet politeness standards of the language.

**Examples**

1 Cor 7:1 “It is well for a man not to touch a woman.” “Touch” is used instead of ‘have sex’ which could threaten the positive face of the speaker. The target audience is expected to deduce the intended message from the context.

1 Cor 7: 5a “Do not deprive one another.” ‘Deprive’ is used to mean ‘deny sex’ which if used could threaten the face of the speaker.

In *Merchant of Venice* Act five scene one, Gratiano tells Portia:

“Gratiano: Why, this is like mending of highways in summer where the ways are fair enough!”

The intended meaning is that just as roads should not need mending in summer, so wives should not need go to bed with other men when they have new faithful and eager husbands willing to satisfy them.

In Act one scene two Portia describes Neapolitan Prince as a colt. In this context she is indirectly referring to him as a young and foolish suitor lacking in grace.
In act five scene one, Portia uses a proverb “A light wife makes a heavy husband.” The deep meaning of the proverb is that an unfaithful wife makes a miserable husband.

**Preferring tag questions** is common in English culture as a way of mitigating face threatening acts. There are four main types of tags:

**Modal tags** request information of which speaker is uncertain trying as much as possible to avoid imposing upon speaker’s right to be independent.

Example

You have passed the exam, haven’t you?

In the above statement, even if the respondent has not passed the exam, the statement does not compel him to reveal his dismal performance.

**Effective tags** indicate concern for the listener. This way, he feels appreciated and his image approved. This fulfills condition of politeness as Wehmeir (2000) puts it as to show respect for others.

Example

“You have lost the appetite, haven’t you?”

**Softeners** reduce the force of what would be a command. They meet negative face wants by not imposing upon the respondent. In 1 Corinthians Paul uses the following softeners:

1 Cor 7:6 “This I say by way of concession not of command.”

1 Cor 5:6 “Your boasting is not a good thing”
**Facilitative tags** invite the addressee to comment on the request being made. This is by acknowledging listener’s achievement or condition.

Example

“You are really a champion, aren’t you?”

In the above statement, the speaker meets the listener’s positive wants.

According to Mills, politeness is the expression of the speaker’s intention to mitigate face threatening acts (FTA’S) towards another. Leech asserts that polite behavior is on a cost benefit scale. Speaker tries to minimize cost for the hearer and maximize cost to him. At the same time he tries to maximize benefit for the hearer and minimize benefit to himself. One of his maxims is tact maxim necessary for the preservation of face. (Brown & Levinson 1978). Tact plays key role in contextual choice of honorific terms.

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:74) the assessment of the seriousness of an FTA involves the following factors in many cultures:

a) Social distance (D) of speaker to the hearer

b) The relative power of the speaker to the hearer

c) The absolute ranking of imposition of the act in particular culture.

Power (P) refers to the higher status accorded to the hearer over the speaker. It is an assymetrical social dimension of relative power. It’s the degree to which the hearer can impose his own plans and his own self evaluation (face) at expense of speaker’s plans.
and self evaluation. The source of power could be material control over economic
distribution and physical force or metaphysical control.

Distance (D) refers to social distance between the speaker and the hearer. It is a
symmetrical social dimension of similarity or difference within which speaker and hearer
stand. It’s based on assessment of frequency of interaction and kinds of material and
non material goods exchanged between the speaker and the hearer. It’s usually based on
distance is expressed between one party and the other, there is a feeling of disunity and
hence impoliteness. Any attempt by the speaker to show he is collectively part of the
audience is interpreted as polite behavior.”

Rank refers to ranking of the imposition of the act. Different acts have different degrees
of imposition. It’s a cultural and situational defined ranking of impositions by degree to
which they are considered to interfere with agent’s wants of self determination or
approval. Brown and Levinson(1978:77) rank negative face imposition for a particular
domain of FTA’S in particular culture to involve complex description like:

Rank order of imposition requiring services.
Services like an old man asking a young man to stand for him to sit down may not be
ranked as an FTA in African culture unlike a young man approaching a strange girl for a
hand in marriage.

Rank order of imposition requiring goods
An employee approaching his boss for a loan may rank higher as an FTA than asking the same from a colleague at the same level.

For FTA’S against positive face, there will be cultural ranking of aspects to positive face which can be ranked differently. Aspects like success, niceness, beauty, wealth, honesty and goodness can be ranked differently in particular circumstance.

1.8 Literature Review

According to Brown and Levinson (1987:60) it is in both the speaker’s and the addressee’s interest to maintain each other’s face but there are acts which intrinsically threaten the face. They call these acts face threatening acts (FTA’S). There are acts which threaten hearer’s negative face such as orders. Other acts threaten hearer’s positive wants such as disapprovals while others threaten speakers own face wants such as apologies.

According to Scollon and Scollon (2011:46-48) interact ants will always assess both aspects of face. Strategies for doing so are involvement versus independence, solidarity versus deference or positive versus negative politeness. There is no faceless communication and any communication is a risk to face. To grant just the right level of independence and involvement is an interactional achievement.

Sifianou (1992:86) defines politeness as the set of social values which instructs interact ants to consider each other by satisfying shared expectations. Both the speaker and the hearer have expectations which should be met during their interaction. Both have a face which they risk losing if those expectations are not met.
According to Locher A (2004:91), politeness utterance for the speaker is the speaker’s intended, marked and appropriate behavior which displays face concern. Polite utterance for the addressee is the one which is perceived as marked and appropriate with an intention to show positive concern for him and the one with speaker’s intention to protect his or her face needs.

According to Omboga (1986:95) the role of a translator is not only to translate language but also different situational features which assist him transfer themes to the target culture. Situational features are the extra linguistic features which are deeply rooted in culture. In any culture, people depend on social politeness to be able to interact with others. Coulmas (1981) calls them conversational routines which enable social co-ordination and sustain communication.

According to Holmes (1995:21) (Im)politeness is always “context dependent.” Tact maxim is a common politeness strategy in many cultures. Socially inappropriate behavior is a threat to people’s faces. Holmes (1995:5) defines politeness as the behavior which actively expresses positive concern for others as well as non imposing behavior. However, different cultures define socially inappropriate behavior differently. Whereas it’s socially inappropriate to discuss human reproduction directly in Kiswahili, it’s socially acceptable in English culture. Waswahili use terms like “kujifungua” (open herself) instead of “kuzaa” (give birth), “mjamzito” (heavy) instead of “ana mimba” (pregnant) and “fanya mapenzi” (make love) instead of “fanya ngono (have sex).
Blum Kulka and Olshtain (1987) found that situational factors such as social status, familiarity or gender considerably influenced people’s politeness strategies. Power, rank and distance determine relationships in all societies. Positive politeness is used to maintain social distance. According to Habwe (2011:126) Kiswahili has special honorific markers for occupational, age, familial and homily relationships. By virtue of being in the national assembly, a member of parliament is referred to as *mheshimiwa* (honorable) irrespective of his level of education or age. A teacher is always referred to as “mwalimu” irrespective of whether he is still teaching or not.

According to Habwe (2011:132) “Kiswahili honorifics appear to be easily learned during language acquisition. Most speakers use honorifics a lot more easily than other strategies which need high level of communicative competence.” On the contrary English has no complex system of honorifics, expressions such as would you….may I…. and polite addresser forms fulfill similar functions.

Politeness is conceived as a matter of social adequacy. It covers a variety of phenomena ranging from social deixis to indirect speech acts, from conventional formulae to conversational strategies, from tact to friendliness. Different cultures present radical differences in their politeness systems.

According to Habwe (2011:126): In Africa politeness is preferred. It defines and sustains social hierarchies which are used to show respect and esteem. There are special honorific markers for homily, age, familial and occupational relationships. This changes in English
culture where such markers are absent. A translator from English to Kiswahili faces a challenge in transferring referential honorific terms for status, power and social roles. Omboga (1986:93) asserts that politeness of a language can be a challenge in translation. Context will often indicate where politeness is being shown. Bowing down before someone superior is considered to be a sign of politeness. An utterance which lacks politeness is considered to be insulting. Sometimes the authority of the speaker in relation to the hearer is clarified by use of the verb such as “beg” or “command”.

According to Voinov (2002:211) the action of the leper falling on his face at Jesus’ feet in (Luke 17:16 )in the bible is an indication of politeness. Also the act of Abigail falling before David on her face and bowing to the ground in (1 Samuel 25:23-24) is another indication of politeness. Voinov goes on to say that use of titles of politeness such as “lord” (2sam 9:11) or “King” (Acts 26:2) in the bible are all indications of politeness.

Linguistically different languages mark politeness differently. In English and other Romance languages, the most obvious is use of distinct pronouns. Third person or plural pronouns are used for second person singular as a sign of increased politeness. Some people consider English to be a very democratic language since it uses “you” for everybody irrespective of age or status. In English we say “my friend and I” and not “I and my friend.” This is in accordance with generosity maxim in politeness principle by Geoffrey Leech indicating use of language on cost-benefit scale.
Watts et al (2003) suggests that we should make a distinction between first order and second order politeness. First order politeness is the various ways in which polite behavior is perceived and talked about by members of socio-cultural groups. It is common sense notions of politeness. According to Watts et al (2003) second order politeness is a ‘theoretical construct’. Politeness theorists have come up with different theories to describe politeness.

Community members have forms of behavior which are dominant. There are unwritten rules and norms which define what is polite and what is impolite. In Kiswahili and other African cultures one is deemed to be impolite if he refers to a woman as having given birth. There are euphemisms which are considered polite to express the action of giving birth. In Kiswahili the euphemism is *kujifungua* (opening oneself).

However as Mills (2003:4) argues, the boundaries of linguistic communities are not clearly demarcated and there is certain fluidity in what is considered by each member to be appropriate. This is evident in Africa where there is noticeable distinction between the old conservatives and liberal youths. Old people hold on to cultural ‘social politeness’ while young people are more open to western culture. As Mills (2003:4) records, communities of practice are in a constant process of change brought about by individual members in relation to perceptions of group norms. In this era of globalization, its becoming more difficult to define a cultural community.
1.9 Research Methodology

The study shall depend entirely on secondary data. A literary text: *Merchant of Venice* and the Bible: Paul’s *first epistle to Corinthians*. The direction of translation and analysis is from English to Kiswahili.

The researcher shall extract data from the two texts where there are Face threatening acts (FTA’S) on positive face and list them chronologically by page on which they are written together with the mitigation strategies employed. The data where there are Face threatening acts on negative face shall then be listed together with mitigation strategies employed by the speaker. Their respective translations will be posted. The researcher will compare to identify the relationship between the FTA’S and the mitigation strategies in both languages.

1.10 Significance of the Study

According to Guenthner (1978:32) “Probably the most significant contribution to human knowledge that a meaning assignment can make is to facilitate the explanation of the activities or behavior of the language users.” This study is a valuable resource to both English and Kiswahili speakers and translators as it points out common face threatening acts to both positive and negative faces and their mitigation strategies in relation to translation. It’s aimed at pointing out the relationship between ranking of face threatening acts in Kiswahili culture and those in English culture.
Conclusion

This chapter has stated the problem of the study together with objectives and hypothesis. The scope and limitations of the study have been highlighted together with rationale and a comprehensive description of face theory. Literature reviewed has been stated together with research methodology to be used in the study.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with definition of terms related to face threatening acts (FTA’S). It also explains in detail classification of face threatening acts (FTA’S). Lastly the factors affecting weightiness of an FTA are discussed.

2.1 Definition of Terms

2.1.1 Face

According to Boucharia (2002) face is a central concept in Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory. It is defined as the positive social value a person claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a specific contact. Hickey (1998:57) explains Brown and Levinson face theory as a both biological and psychological theory in that it both distinguishes and identifies the language user as an individual and as a member of a group. According to the theory there are two faces:

2.1.2 Positive face

This is the positive consistent ‘personality’ claimed by interact ants which include the desire that others appreciate and approve this ‘personality’. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:62), it is the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others.
2.1.3 Negative face
This is the right of the speaker to be independent by not being imposed upon by his social world. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:62) it is the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others. Any attempt by one of the interactants to restrict the freedom of the other is regarded as an FTA.

2.2 Face Threatening Acts (FTA’S) To Speaker’s Positive Face

2.2.1 Apology
An apology is an expression of remorse for something one has done wrong. It is to admit that one is not as upright as the addressee assumes. When the speaker apologizes, he or she risks losing his or her positive consistent ‘personality’. This is by accepting to be in the wrong thus falling short of the personality he or she claims to possess. The emotional investment the hearer had in the speaker risks being lost.

According to Brown and Levinson (1978:63) it is the want of every member that his wants be thought desirable. Apology does not contribute to enhancing desirability of face.

2.2.2 Self humiliation
Self humiliation is one depriving him or herself self esteem. It is an act of one lowering his or her pride, self respect or dignity. When this happens in an interaction, the desire that his or her wants be desirable to the speaker is put at risk.
If during the interaction, the speaker humiliates him or herself through contradiction, violent emotions or otherwise, he loses the positive image he had to the hearer. The desirability which acted as a motivation to the interaction is lost.

2.2.3 Confession

A confession is a statement made by a person or a group of people acknowledging some personal fact that the person or group would prefer to keep hidden. By admitting to be in the wrong, the speaker loses the positive image he or she claimed from the hearer. The desirability of the speaker by the hearer is from assumption that he or she is right and if he or she falls short of this assumption, there is risk of losing his or her face.

2.3 FTA’S to the Hearer’s Positive Face

2.3.1 Disapproval
Disapproval is the condemnation or censure of the other interactant. It is the belief that someone is bad or is wrong. According to Boucharia (2002) face is the positive social value a person claims for himself or herself by the line others assume he has taken during a specific contact. When the speaker disapproves the actions of the hearer, he puts his or her positive social value at risk. The hearer feels that the desirability by the speaker which motivated their interaction has been lost.

2.3.2 Criticism
Criticism is the practice of judging the merits and faults of something or someone. When the speaker judges the hearer’s attributes and actions with disapproval citing his or her demerits and faults, he or she puts the hearer’s positive face at risk. As Brown and
Levinson (1978:61) records, face is something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in an interaction. By criticizing the hearer, the speaker takes away the emotional investment.

2.3.3 Complaint

A complaint is a grievance. By raising a grievance against the hearer, the speaker fails to acknowledge the aspects of hearer’s face which according to Brown and Levinson (1978:62) are basic and in interest of every member to satisfy. Complaints do not motivate the hearer in the interaction but puts the desirability of his or her positive social value at risk.

2.3.4 Accusation

Accusation is a claim by one interactant that the other is guilty. When the speaker claims that the hearer has done something wrong or is guilt of an offence, he or she takes away the assurance that he or she wants at least some of the hearer’s wants. This makes the positive image of the hearer more vulnerable to both the speaker and to those listening to the conversation. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:68), in context of mutual vulnerability of face, any rational agent will seek to avoid FTA’S or employ certain strategies to mitigate the threats. Accusations escalate the vulnerability of hearer’s face.

2.3.5 Contradiction

When the speaker’s assertions are contrary to those of the hearer, the positive face of the hearer is at risk of being lost. Brown and Levinson (1978:62) define positive face as the
wants of every member that his or her wants be desirable to at least some others. By contradicting the hearer’s assertions, the motivation of the interaction ceases since the speaker shows no positive concern for addressee’s face.

2.3.6 Violent emotions
When the hearer is violated by speaker’s emotions during the interaction, he or she feels that the speaker is not attending to their emotional investment. The hearer interprets the emotions to mean that their goals, possessions and achievements are not being thought desirable by the speaker.

2.3.7 Taboo topics
According to Brown and Levinson (1978:61-62) the content of face will differ in different cultures. In some cultures especially in Africa, topics like sex are considered as taboo. Any attempt by the speaker to discuss the topics shall put the hearer’s face at risk.

2.3.8 Emotional topics
Topics which raise the emotions of the hearer like politics, football and gender issues are likely to threaten the positive face of the hearer especially if the speaker contradicts the hearer’s viewpoint.
2.4 FTA’S to the Speaker’s Negative Face

2.4.1 Expression of thanks
By expressing thanks, the speaker takes the credit away from him and transfers it to the hearer. As the hearer gets the credit, the speaker’s claim of his effort to the achievement is restricted.

2.4.2 Acceptance of a compliment
A compliment is an expression of praise, commendation or admiration. When the speaker accepts a compliment from the hearer, he or she risks losing the ‘controll’ which existed before then. The compliment will restrict the independence of the hearer and will tend to act in a way to maintain the hearer’s praise.

2.4.3 Acceptance of thanks offers and compliments
The independence of the speaker during the interaction with the hearer is restricted by accepting thanks, compliments and offers from the hearer. Compliments restrict the speaker’s behavior during the interaction as it becomes the motivating factor for the interaction.

2.5 FTA’S to the Hearer’s Negative Face

2.5.1 Orders
Orders and commands by the speaker during the interaction restrict the independence of the hearer. According to Locher (2004:91) the addressee interpret an utterance as polite when it’s perceived as appropriate and with speaker’s intention to protect his or her face needs. Orders threaten the freedom of the hearer not to be impended.
2.5.2 Requests

When the speaker makes request to the hearer, he or she interferes with the hearer’s freedom. Hedges like ‘shall I, do you mind and please just act as strategies to redress for interfering with the hearer’s independence.

2.5.3 Warnings

Warnings restrict the choice of the hearer. It limits his or her freedom and is against the wish of every member that he or she be free from any restriction.

2.6. Factors Determining Weightness of an FTA

Brown and Levinson 1987:76 suggested the following formula:

\[ W = D(S1 H) + R \]

- **W**: Weightiness of the face threatening act
- **D (S1 H)**: Distance between the speaker and the hearer
- **R**: Degree of imposition of the act

The kind and amount of politeness that the speaker applies to a certain speech act is determined by weightiness of his speech act. Speakers calculate the weight of their speech acts from three social variables:

a) Perceived social distance between the hearer and the speaker

b) Perceived power distance between the hearer and the speaker

c) Cultural ranking of the speech acts. This is the degree to which the FTA is perceived to be threatening within a specific culture.
According to Brown and Levinson (1978:74) assessment of the seriousness of an FTA involves the following factors

2.6.1 Social Distance (D)

This is the symmetrical social dimension of similarity/difference within which speaker and hearer stand. It is based on assessment of frequency of interactions. It may be influenced by

2.6.1.1 Relationship of the Interactants

Close relatives or friends are not affected by occupational, class or social status difference in their interaction. They view the honorific titles as a barrier to their bond and trust for each other. Also, a statement which could otherwise be a face threatening act may not necessarily be an FTA in their interaction.

2.6.1.2 Personality of the Interactants

Different people have different personalities. Some are social, others are reserved, mean, generous or even outspoken. To different people with different personalities, the degree of imposition of the act varies. What could be an FTA to a reserved person may not necessarily be an FTA to an outspoken one.
2.6.1.3 Age of the interactants

In many cultures especially in Africa, old age is a sign of wisdom and authority. Young people take rebuke statements from their seniors positively and don’t consider them FTA’S. Parents and teachers rebuking their children are regarded as doing their noble duty and not as ones impolite.

2.6.1.4 Environment

The setting where the interactants are play a crucial role in determining whether a statement is an FTA or not. What could be considered an FTA in an office during the day between an employer and an employee may not be an FTA when the two meet casually in the evening after work.

2.6.1.5 Culture of the interactants

Different cultures classify FTA’S differently depending on the Context, relationship and beliefs of the interactants.

2.6.2 Power (P)

It is the degree to which hearer can impose his own plans and his own self evaluation (face) at the expense of speakers plans and self evaluations. The source of control could be
2.6.2.1 Material
The rich in society are feared and respected in many cultures. According to Leech (1983:82) the function of the politeness principle is to maintain the social equilibrium and friendly relation to avoid FTAS. The low in society treat them with extra caution to avoid FTA’S.

2.6.2.2 Metaphysics
Some people in society get power and influence from their roles in the society. Priests, politicians, and other professionals are honored. The weightiness of their FTA is high and given the vulnerability of face, they have special honorific titles to enhance positive politeness.

2.6.3 Rank
Brown and Levinson (1978:77) defined rank as culturally and situational defined ranking of impositions by degree to which they are considered to interfere with self warns of self determinations or approval.

2.6.3.1 Negative face imposition
Depending on politeness system of a society an imposition could be regard red to be interfering with hearer’s independence or not. In Kiswahili context a young man being requested to stand for an old man to seat man not be an FTA.
2.6.3.2 Positive face imposition

different cultures rank aspects of positive face differently. In Kiswahili context there is no term for ugly and all women are considered beautiful.

Conclusion

In any conversation, there is risk of either interactant losing his or her face. The chapter has discussed in detail the risks to both positive and negative face. Mitigation strategies used by both the speaker and the addressee determine the success of the conversation. The chapter has discussed how the weightiness of the FTA differ according to factors discussed.
CHAPTER THREE
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains in details, the face threatening acts to both positive face and negative face in English context and their mitigation strategies citing examples from *Merchant of Venice* and *First Corinthians*. It also evaluates the effectiveness of translation of both positive and negative face mitigation strategies in Kiswahili context citing examples from *Mabepari wa Venisi* and *Wakorinitho wa Kwanza*.

3.1 FTA’S In English Context and Their Mitigation Strategies

3.1.1 FTA’S to positive face

FTA’S to positive face occurs when one of the interactant in the conversation does not show desire to at least some of the other’s goals, possessions or achievements. The words used by the speaker can either put his face to risk during the conversation or risk the face of the addressee. Given the vulnerability of face, the interactants in any language employ different strategies to mitigate threat to their faces and to the faces of their fellow interactant.

3.1.1.1 Apology

To apologize is to accept to be in the wrong thus falling short of the personality one claims to possess. The speaker has an intention of restoring peace or trust but by apologizing he or she puts his or her positive face to risk. According to Brown and
Levinson (1987:60) apology threatens speaker’s own face. It impedes his or her want that he or she be desirable to the addressee.

**Example from Merchant of Venice**

**Act 5 scene 1**

*BASSANIO: Portia forgive me this enforced wrong. And in the hearing of these many friends, I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes wherein I see myself.*

By apologizing for his wrongdoing, Bassanio’s face becomes vulnerable to losing his positive social image. Bassanio having given out the ring entrusted to her by Portia is at risk of losing his love. To win back the trust, he sincerely apologizes an act which puts his positive face at risk. By admitting his fault Bassanio risks losing former desirability from Portia, Nerissa and Gratiano as a trustworthy and faithful man.

**Mitigation**

The speaker always strives to maintain and if possible enhance his or her face for there to be continued desirability by the addressee. Having been forced by circumstances to admit his or her wrong, the speaker shall use a mitigation strategy to restore his or her positive social image. Bassanio uses on record strategy without redressive action to mitigate the FTA. The intention of bald on record strategy is unambiguously clear to all participants. The speaker is driven by to use this strategy by need for credit for being honest. The strategy also provides an opportunity to the speaker to pay back in face what he or she potentially takes away by FTA.
Act 5 scene 1

BASSANIO: Nay, but hear me. Pardon this fault and by my soul I swear I never more will break an oath with thee.

The pay off for the strategy is that the speaker is able to enlist support from those present. He also manages to get credit for honesty to himself. Bassanio was able to garner support from Gratiano, Nerissa and Antonio who were present in supporting him against the accusation of unfaithfulness. Bassanio knew so well that by enlisting their support, he would lessen the impact of the FTA as well as Portia’s love. He also got credit for honesty. Apology is associated with honesty and straightforwardness. This would enhance his positive face and add more desirability not only from the addressee (Portia) but also from those others present. (Gratiano and Nerissa).

In English context, the speaker uses softeners like ‘please forgive me’ ‘please pardon me’ ‘I beg for forgiveness’ and in some cases like above, swear never to repeat the mistake.

3.1.1.2 Self humiliation

In this context, self humiliation is any action that demotes one’s worth in the face of the fellow interactant. It could be caused by contradiction in speech or failure to meet the expectations of fellow interactant. It risks making one lose his or her positive face. Self humiliation is normally unexpected by the interactants.
Example from Merchant of Venice

Act 3 scene 1

SHYLOCK: How now Tubal? What news from Genoa? Hast thou found my daughter?

TUBAL: I often came from where I did hear of her but cannot find her.

SHYLOCK: Why there there there! A diamond gone cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfurt....

TUBAL: Yes, other men have ill luck too. Antonio as I heard in Genoa.

Tubal risks losing his positive face for failing to get Jessica Shylock’s daughter who had escaped with his father’s precious jewels. To mitigate the FTA Tubal uses an off record strategy by deviating attention from the daughter to the woos facing Antonio Shylock’s enemy.

Self humiliation threaten speaker’s own face. To satisfy the shared expectations of enhancing face, the speaker will mitigate the threat using off record strategies. Tact may include shifting the topic of discussion to the one which excites the addressee. The other strategy is not doing the FTA. The speaker will avoid at all cost self humiliation to save his or her own face.

3.1.1.3 Criticism

Criticism is judging the hearer’s attributes and actions with disapproval citing his or her demerits and faults. The expectation of every hearer is that the speaker will think their
goals, possessions and achievements desirable. Criticism takes away the emotional investment placed on the speaker by the hearer.

**Example from First Corinthians**

**1 Corinthians 3**

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the spirit but as people who are still worldly. Mere infants in Christi gave you milk, not solid food for you was not ready for it……

**Mitigation**

The speaker notices and expects negative response from the speaker after criticism. This makes him or her come up with a mechanism to lessen the impact of the criticism. Paul made use of tags in form of rhetorical questions in order to reason together with the addressee (church) and thus mitigate the risk of losing his face.

For since there is jealousy and quarrels among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?

**3.1.1.4 Confession**

Confession is admitting to be in the wrong. It is a threat to speaker’s positive face. It erodes the desirability of the speaker by the hearer. Like apology, confession makes the speaker unattractive to the addressee who has no interest on the negative side of the speaker.
Example from First Corinthians

In First Corinthians Paul makes a confession

*I Corinthians 2:1*

*When I came to you brothers, announcing the testimony of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. My speech and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a powerful demonstration by the spirit*

Mitigation

To counteract the threat, the speaker uses on-record strategies to get credit for being honest. The speaker justifies with no fear of retribution from the addressee why he or she made the confession. This gives him or her an opportunity to pay in face what is lost in the FTA.

*For I did not think it was a good idea to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified so that your faith might not be based on man’s wisdom but on God’s power.*

3.1.1.5 Disapproval

Disapproval in this context is disagreeing with the position taken or wish of the fellow interactant. It is a threat to addressee’s positive face. As Locher A.(2004:91) records, addressees interpret an utterance as polite when its perceived as appropriate and marked intention being to show positive concern for addressee’s face and/or showing speaker’s intention to protect his or her needs.
Example from First Corinthians

1 Corinthians 3:18

Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become ‘fools’ so that you may become wise.

Paul disapproves his addressee’s attitude. He threatens their positive social image by regarding their ‘wisdom’ as self deception. This could make them hate the speaker.

Mitigation Strategy

Paul uses tact by quoting his source of authority (scriptures). Thus, the addressees shall not blame the speaker for disapproving his actions but shall refer to Paul’s source of authority.

As it is written ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness.’ and again ‘The lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.’

3.1.2 FTAS to negative face

According to Brown and Levinson,(1978:70) in negative politeness, face threatening acts are redressed with apologies for interfering or transgressing. In English context the speaker uses variety of strategies to avoid impeding on the independence of the hearer.

3.1.2.1 Compliment

It is a threat to speaker’s face. To avoid the erosion of his or her social image, the speaker mitigates the threat by use of off record strategies. The speaker has to display good manners by not rejecting the compliment. Many addressees give compliments with
certain expectations which erode the speaker’s face. The speaker employs tact to remain polite and at the same time maintain his or her positive image.

**Example from Merchant of Venice**

**Act 2 scene 2**

*GRATIANO:* Signor Bassanio!

*BASSANIO:* I have suit to you

*BASSANIO:* You have obtained it.

*GRATIANO:* You must not deny me. I must go with you to Belmont.

*BASSANIO:* Why then you must. But hear thee Gratiano: Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of your voice. Parts that become thee happily enough. And in such eyes as ours appear not faulty. But where thou art not known why there they show something too liberal…

Having been addressed as Signor Bassanio, he risks losing his negative face by accepting the compliment. Bassanio uses an off record strategy by giving in to Gratiano’s wish but at the same time express his feelings politely.

**3.1.2.2 Warnings**

Warnings restrict the choice of the hearer thus limiting his or her freedom. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:62) the want of every competent adult is to be unrestricted. Paul (speaker) was impeding the addressee’s freedom of association.
Example from first Corinthians

I Corinthians 5:11

But now Aim writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or swindler.

Mitigation

What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside.

Paul employs tags which act as softeners to the threat by engaging his addressees in his argument. The tags lessen the impact of the earlier statement and wins Paul (speaker) credit for his outspokenness and honesty.

3.2 Translation of FTAS in Kiswahili Context

3.2.1 FTAS to positive face

3.2.1.1 Apology

Apology is translated as udhuru in Kiswahili. One apologizes after missing a mark or transgressing against a certain law. In translating an apology as an FTA into Kiswahili context, the mitigation strategy is determined by the weightiness of the FTA.

Translation in Mabepari wa Venisi

Tendo 5 onyesho 1

The words used to apologize are ‘niwie radhi’ (have mercy on me) which is a sign of great humility and politeness. The words are used as a mark of great transgression and are normally used to beg for forgiveness from a higher authority. This called for an effort to mitigate the speaker’s positive face.

**Mitigation**

In Kiswahili context, softeners employed by the speaker are ‘tafadhalniisamehe’ (please forgive me), ‘naambia msamaha’ (I beg for forgiveness) nakusihi nisamehe (kindly forgive me).

*BASSANIO: Tafadhali nisikie, nisamehe kosa hili, nakuapia kwa moyo kwamba siavunja tena kiape chochote kwako.*

*Tafadhali nisikie* (please listen to me) is a polite statement in Kiswahili context to beg for attention. Bassanio goes to the extent of swearing to restore trust of his love Portia.

### 3.2.1.2 Self humiliation

In Kiswahili context, self humiliation as an FTA is discouraged with the dominant strategy being not doing the FTA.

**Translation in Mabepari wa Venisi**

*Tendo 3 onyesho 1*

*SHAILOKI: Je, Tubali! Habari gani kutoka Genoa? Umempata binti yangu?*

*Tubali: Mara nyingi nilifika mahali niliposikia habari juu yake lakini sikumpata.*

*SHAILOKI: Ah! Ah, ah, alimasi imekwenda, imenigharimu dukati elfu tatu huku Frankifuti......*
TUBALI: Naam, watu wengine pia wana bahati mbaya: Antonio kama nilivyosikia huko Genoa.

In Kiswahili translation, Shylock exclaims (Ah! Ah, ah,) as a sign of displeasure after spending so much money on his friend Tubal who he trusted could get the wayward daughter. At this point, Tubal’s positive social value is at risk. The emotional investment and trust of his friend is at stake. He takes advantage of his turn in conversation to shift attention of the speaker (Shylock) to the calamities facing his rival. Being the only confidant in Shylock’s life, Tubal knew that the only news which could make shylock (Jew) happy at that moment were that of Antonio (Christian) who was his creditor by then.

3.2.1.3 Criticism

Criticism is a threat to hearer’s face. In Kiswahili context its considered impolite for a young one to criticize his or her senior.

Translation in Wakorinitho wa Kwanza

Mitigation strategy

The preceding words to criticism are ‘ndugu zangu’ (my brothers and sisters). This acts as a softener to the following criticism.

*Kwa kuwa bado kuna wivu na magombano miongoni mwenu.* *Je, ninyi si watu wa mwilini, nanyi mnaenda kwa jinsi ya kibinadamu?*

Translation of tags in Kiswahili context does not transfer the desired effect. Kiswahili language does not use tags as a mitigation strategy to FTA’S.

3.2.1.4 Confession

Paul confesses his weakness of speech and brilliance. Kiswahili translation brings out the notion of one who is weak physically.

*Translation in Wakorinitho wa Kwanza*

*Mimi nilikuja kwenu nikiwa dhaifu na mwenye hofu na kwa kutetemeka sana.* *Kuhubiri kwangu na ujumbe wangu haukuwa kwa hekima na maneno ya kwashawishi watu bali kwa madhihirisho ya nguvu za roho mtakatifu.*

*Mimi nilikuja kwenu nikiwa dhaifu na mwenye hofu na kwa kutetemeka sana.* *(I came to you being weak and sorrowful with trembling)*

Admitting physical weakness is a threat to the speaker’s face. To mitigate the threat Paul explains on-record without redressive action the intention he had and his wish for his addressees.
Mitigation

Kwa kuwa niliamua kutojua kitu chochote wakati nikiwa nanyi isipokuwa Yesu Kristo naye amesulubiwa msalabani.

3.2.1.5 Disapproval

Translation in Wakorintho wa Kwanza

1 Wakorintho 3:18

Msijidanganye .Kama mtu yeyote miongoni mwenu akidhani kuwa ana hekima kwa viwango vya dunia hii, inampasa awe mjinga ili apate kuwa na hekima.

Mitigation


In Kiswahili context where politeness is preferred, msijidanganye (do not deceive yourselves) is considered a rude statement. Even in normal contexts, the statement cannot be used without a softener to lessen the impact. Paul mitigates the impact by quoting scriptures ‘kama ilivyoandikwa’ (as it was written) a statement that shifts the threat from the speaker (Paul) by referring to a higher authority which is acknowledged by both the speaker and the addressee.
3.2.2 FTA’S to Negative Face in Kiswahili Context

3.2.2.1 Acceptance of compliment

Compliment act as an impediment to the speaker’s right to be independent. The translation in Mabepari wa Venisi as an FTA was mistranslated. Omission of honorific term ‘Signor’ which denotes compliment was left out.

Translation in Mabepari wa Venisi

*Tendo 2 onyesho 2*

**GRATIANO: Nina onbi kwako**

**BASSANIO: Umekwisha kulipata**

**GRATIANO: Usininyime : lazima tufuatane Belmonti.**

**BASSANIO : Vema, itakuwa lakini sikia Gratiano : U mshamba na fidhuli na mropokaji mno. Sifa zinazo kushamini vizuri na vya kutosha.....Walakini ugenini zitakuwa si adabu.**

However the aspect of tact (off record strategy) as Bassanio strives to mitigate the risk of losing his face is well laid.

3.3 Conclusion

The chapter has analyzed and interpreted face threatening acts to both positive and negative face as they appear in Merchant of Venice and First Corinthians. The appropriateness of mitigation strategies as transferred in Mabepari wa Venisi and Wakorinitho wa Kwanza has also been analyzed.
CHAPTER FOUR
INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with Face threatening acts (FTA’S) and translation, difficulties in translating face threatening acts from English to Kiswahili context and also impact of politeness system of a language on FTA’S and their mitigation strategies.

4.1 FTA’S and translation

According to Ivir (1996:155) equivalence is never to be conceived as obsolete but rather as inherently relatively emerging from the context of situation as defined by the interplay of many different factors and has no existence outside the context. FTA’S are contextual and they determine the success of any interaction. The translator must be aware of FTA’S in the conversation he or she is translating and the mitigation strategies available in both source and target languages. Different languages make use of different mitigation strategies depending on their politeness systems.

4.2 Difficulties in translating FTA’S from English to Kiswahili context

In any conversation, both speaker and the hearer try to mitigate their faces from threats. However every conversation is a threat to face of either interactant. Both positive and negative face of either interactant risks being lost unless they employ appropriate mitigation strategies to preserve and maintain the faces of each other. In translation the following difficulties arise while translating from English to Kiswahili context.
4.2.1 Difficulties in translating threats to positive face

The threats to positive face include confession, apology, self humiliation, disapproval, criticism, warnings and requests. The threat may be either to the speaker or the hearer. In translating apology, English context makes use of on record strategy like in Merchant of Venice where Bassanio apologizes to his love Portia.

The threat could have been handled differently in Kiswahili context. English and Kiswahili have different dominant mitigation strategies. In mitigating positive face threats in English context, the impact of an utterance is lessened by use of hedges, effective tags and facilitative tags.

A hedge essence the impact of an utterance which would otherwise threaten the face of the addressee. The utterance could be criticism, disapproval, warning or an order. Example of an hedge is somewhat and somehow. Hedges are a mark of politeness in English context. They are part of bald on record strategy with redressive action according to Brown and Levinson face theory.

Effective tags indicate concern for the positive image of the listener by the speaker. As Locher (2004:91) records politeness utterance for the addressee is an utterance that has a marked intention to show his or her concern and speakers intention to protect his or her face needs.
The addressee may not necessarily be doing well and the speaker may be aware of that. The statement indicates that the speaker cares and is concerned about the progress of the addressee.

*Example*

*Speaker:* we can make it, can’t we?

*Listener:* yes we can

The statement is an encouragement and motivation for both the speaker and the hearer. It is assign of self confidence which brings them together and boosts their positive image. Facilitative tags acknowledge the listeners achievement or condition. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:63) persons want their goals, possessions and achievements to be thought desirable by some particular others especially relevant to the particular goals.

*Example*

*You have really struggled, haven’t you?*

These act as a redressive action. They assure the hearer that the speaker has an intention of protecting his or her wants. In other cases like in *Merchant of Venice*, there is no redressive action. The speaker apologizes, makes a confession or criticism risking loss of his or her positive face. To mitigate the loss, he or she comes out openly to justify the
reason for the apology, confession or criticism. This gives him or her an opportunity to pay back in face what is lost through FTA.

Self humiliation is another positive face threat. Many interact ants avoid self humiliation. In translating self humiliation English context makes use of tact as Tubal shifts attention from Shylock’s daughter to Antonio. The challenge in translation is how to employ tact which is contextual. The weightiness of self humiliation as a face threatening act also varies from one language context to another. Weightiness of an FTA in a language context is determined by its ranking of impositions. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:77) rank of an imposition for a particular domain of FTA’S in particular culture involve complex description.

Disapproval and Criticism are also threats to the face of the hearer. In translating criticism, the translator is faced with the challenge of appropriateness of the strategy used in the source text. In First Corinthians, the strategy used is on record. To mitigate the threat English context makes use of softeners in form of tags.

*For since there is jealousy and quarrels among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?*

The translation in Kiswahili is

*Kwa kuwa bado kuna wivu na magombano miongoni mwenu, je ninyi si watu wa mwilini nanyi mwenenda kwa jinsi ya kibinadamu?*
The translation as a mitigating device is strange in Kiswahili culture which has no tags. The Kiswahili translator could have used another of mitigation strategy available in Kiswahili context. In Kiswahili context, off record strategies are dominantly used to mitigate FTA’S.

4.2.2 Difficulties in translating FTA’S to negative face

The threats to negative face include compliments, excuses, orders, requests and warnings. FTA’S have different weightiness in different cultures. According to Brown and Levinson (1978:77) FTA’S to negative face are ranked differently in order of their imposition.

Compliments range from verbal to offers. Some terms which are regarded as compliments in one culture are not necessarily compliments in another culture. In Kiswahili we have statements like:

\[\textit{Pole kwa safari (sorry for the journey)}\]
\[\textit{Pole kwa ugonjwa (sorry for the illness)}\]
\[\textit{Karibu nyumbani (welcome home)}\]
\[\textit{Karibu chakula (welcome food)}\]

The statements are part of politeness system expected from members of the society when they encounter a tired member who is from travel, one who is sick, one getting home from a journey and anybody visiting home respectively.
Reasons for excuse also vary from one culture to another. In Merchant of Venice, Bassanio gives an excuse for Portia’s ring which he had given out. The reason for excuse is contextual and the weight varies from one culture to another. In Kiswahili context it's possible that Bassanio could have avoided completely the apology in a chauvinistic society where men apologizing to women is not encouraged.

The strategies of mitigating FTA’S also vary with English context dominated by use of tags:

Modal tags request the information which is sensitive from the hearer. The speaker tries as much as possible to avoid threatening speakers negative face.

**Example**

*Your team has won today, hasn’t it?*

The speaker wants to get the information from the hearer of a very emotional topic. If the team has lost the statement shall be an FTA. To mitigate the impact the modal tag is used by putting statements on an affirmative. The addressee is not compelled by the statement to respond in the negative.

Softeners mitigate the FTA of what would be a command. They include words like *do you mind? Will you please? Shall you? Kindly*
Examples

Do you mind opening door for us?

Will you please come?

Shall you come with me?

Kindly get out

In absence of softeners the statement would be commands

4.3 FTAS and Politeness

According Sifianou (1992:86) politeness is the set of social values which instruct interactants to consider each other by satisfying shared expectations. Both the speaker and the addressee have expectations which act as motivation for the interaction. They expect their faces to be maintained, enhanced and be constantly attended to during the interactions.

Politeness is being able to mitigate the FTA’S. It is ability by interactants to maintain each other’s face during the interaction. It is the ability to employ on record and off record strategies appropriately to avoid the FTA’S.

According to Lakoff (1990:34) the goal of politeness is reflecting the social or interpersonal function of language with politeness being a system designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing potential conflict and confrontation. Conflict and confrontation occurs when the interactants are unable to mitigate the FTA’S in their interactions.
4.4 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the relationship between FTA’S and translation, difficulties on translating face threatening acts to both positive and negative face and lastly the impact of politeness system of a language on usage and mitigation of face threatening acts.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

This study deals with face threatening acts and their mitigation strategies in relation to translation. It focuses on threats to positive face and threats to negative face in English context and how they can be successfully transferred to Kiswahili context.

The study is based on face saving view on politeness by Brown and Levinson. According to the theory, face is something that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced. Any rational agent will seek to avoid FTA’S or employ certain strategies to minimize the threat.

Chapter one has stated the research problem together with objectives and hypothesis. The scope and limitations of the study have been highlighted together with rationale and a comprehensive description of face theory. Literature reviewed has been stated together with research methodology used in the study.

Chapter two has dealt with definition of terms related to face threatening acts (FTA’S). It has also explained in detail classification of face threatening acts (FTA’S) and the factors affecting weightiness of an FTA.

Chapter three has explained in details, the face threatening acts to both positive face and negative face in English context and their mitigation strategies citing examples from Merchant of Venice and First Corinthians. It has also explained the face threatening acts...
to both positive and negative face in Kiswahili context citing examples from *Mabepari wa Venisi* and *Wakorinitho wa Kwanza*.

Chapter four has dealt with Face threatening acts (FTA’S) and translation, difficulties in translating face threatening acts from English to Kiswahili context and also impact of politeness system of a language on FTA’S and their mitigation strategies.

**5.2 Remark on Hypothesis**

The research has proved that face threatening acts in English context are similar to those in Kiswahili context. However, the weightiness of a face threatening act in English context is different from that of a face threatening act in Kiswahili context. Aspects of positive face as well as impositions to negative face are different in the two language contexts.

The research has also established that face threatening acts are transferrable from English to Kiswahili context. However there are difficulties in the way the translator domesticates foreign mitigation strategies which may be a hindrance to successful translation if not well handled.

**5.3 Conclusion**

The study has generated the following findings:

The politeness system of a language determine its FTA’S and mitigation strategies.

Languages have different definition of politeness which is in the minds of its users. The
definition determine the way the language users define and mitigate the FTA’S which are likely to occur in their conversations.

In English context, bald on record strategies accompanied with softeners such as hedges, tags are dominant in mitigating FTA’S. In mitigating threats to positive face, hedges, affective tags and facilitative tags are used. In mitigating threats to negative face, modal tags and softeners are used.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This study has dealt with translation of face threatening acts and their mitigation strategies from English to Kiswahili. The study on translation of FTA’S to both positive and negative face from Kiswahili to English would complement the study.
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