SECTION A: PRAGMATIC COMMUNICATION

Beautifying the Ugly: Euphemism as a Politeness Strategy in Language Use

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Abstract

Language users seem to employ euphemisms to mitigate the effects of face threats caused by the use of words perceived as offensive or impolite. The present study shows the extent to which euphemism has been used in various settings in Nigeria as a politeness strategy in the maintenance of interlocutors' faces. Data for the study were drawn from the Nigerian discourse environment. While the work adopts an interpretative textual analysis model, the analysis was done within the framework of Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory (1987). Findings reveal that euphemisms serve mainly communicative and rhetorical purposes and facilitate social interaction by masking unpleasantness in language use and the degree of use depends on the context and the perceived social relationship between the interlocutors.

Keywords: Language, taboo, euphemism, politeness strategy, and face-saving

Introduction

Language is inevitable in every aspect of social life. It gives meaning to the people's existence, and at the same time, derives its meaning from their social behaviour. Language, thus, is an agent of social change which is used to influence people's behaviour. From the foregoing, it is fitting to say that every language user formulates their language to achieve their purpose. Hence, language users use language differently and perceive its use divergently because language gives its users the affordability and choices of communicating their ideas differently. This makes it unlikely to find uniformity of perception and judgement among speakers even from similar linguistic backgrounds. Pan (cited in Jdetawy, 2019) re-emphasizes the point when he observes

that people use different expressions/words to convey their thoughts and ideas. However, some of the words are adjudged impolite and offensive when spoken directly. Hence, speakers often avoid such words that are considered harsh, impolite, offensive and unacceptable based on social, religious, or cultural reasons. Many of such words are regarded as taboo words. Ghounane (2013) espouses that language is deeply rooted in the culture of the people including words considered as taboos by such people. Therefore, given the societal expectations, ignoring these taboo or offensive words during interactions could lead to face damage between the speaker and the hearer. Consequently, to avoid unpleasantness in communication, speakers prefer more friendly and polite words to mask and obscure the disagreeable reality of the words. By implication, the existence of taboo words or taboo ideas is the major reason for the creation of euphemism (Fromkin et al. 2011, p.473). The purpose of this study is to show how euphemisms have been widely utilized in Nigeria to express politeness in various socio-cultural contexts.

Euphemism and Politeness in Language Use: A Conceptual Construct

Different cultures have different ways of ornamenting distasteful language use by replacing it with more pleasant and mild expletives. The word, euphemism is derived from the Greek word 'euphemo' which means speaking well (Holder, 2008, p.65). Furthermore, Fromkin et al. (2011, p.473) citing the Greek historian, Plutarch, aver that the 'ancient Athenians … used to cover up the ugliness of things with auspicious and kindly terms, giving them polite and endearing names.' Evidently, the age-long tradition has remained indispensable in social interactions and in all languages. Hence, Burchfield (1985, p.23) remarks that 'a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication.'

Different scholars have described euphemism from varying perspectives. For Fromkin et al. (2011, p.473), it is 'a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid frightening or unpleasant subjects.' They further posit that euphemistic usages do not have only linguistic denotative meaning but also a connotative meaning that reflects attitudes, emotions, and value judgements of the linguistic community. It is used to avoid confrontation, hurting people's feelings or as a substitute for obscenity by masking the reality of what it refers to (Rittenburg, Gladney & Stephenson, 2016). According to Chi & Hao (2013), the absence of euphemism in certain expressions could make the language vulgar, rude and devoid of politeness to some degree. They further averred that euphemistic words could be used to make a sensitive, unpleasant, offensive event, language or behaviour less offensive or acceptable. Euphemism has been perceived as an expression that refers to something that people hesitate to mention as it causes offence. Hence, the offensiveness is lessened by 'referring indirectly to it in some way' (Cruse, 2006, p.57).Crystal (1992) summarizes the idea clearly when he argues that people use euphemisms to keep public face; avoid threatening the social face of their interlocutors; re-frame offensive topics; describe unpleasant events or experiences; avoid direct mention of distasteful subjects; avoid revealing a secret; and, sometimes, amuse interlocutors (cited in Karmnia&Khodashenas, 2016). From the foregoing, it is evident that different expressions and

language use could cause others pain. It is therefore pertinent to choose words that do not name things in a direct and precise manner but conceal the oddities and obscenities in such expressions.

There is no denying that the primary purpose for using euphemism in verbal communication is to maintain the faces of the speaker and hearer in line with the acceptable behaviour of the linguistic community. Brown and Levinson (1987) acknowledge that face is the public self-image that any member wants to claim for himself or herself. By implication, face is more of a social construct than physical construct (Oboko 2016). Brown and Levinson (1987) further made a distinction between the two related faces: the negative and positive face. While a person's negative face is his desire not to be impeded or imposed upon, the positive face is the desire of everyone to be appreciated, liked, respected, admired, understood and approved of. Acts such as order, request, warning and dare, for example, threaten a person's negative face; while acts such as expression of violence, mentioning of taboo topics, improper address forms and others threaten the positive face.

For the purpose of this study, emphasis is on the use of euphemism to tone down the offensiveness of corrupt language and taboo topics including those that are inappropriate in the context which threaten the hearer's positive face. The main function of euphemistic expressions is, therefore, to save the hearer's or speaker's face from possible violation which may come as result of using a taboo topic or offensive language to which either the speaker or hearer is sensitive (Ham, 2005 in Karimnia&Khodashenas, 2016). Since euphemism is used to lessen the impact of a word or expression, in this study, we describe euphemism as figurative expressions that are used to conceal words considered ugly, crude, offensive, corrupt and impolite. It is the use of words to beautify the ugly.

Empirical Studies on Euphemism and Problem Identification

In all languages, speakers try as much as possible to avoid offensive and taboo expressions. This avoidance is the major reason for the adoption of euphemism. The inexorability of euphemism in language use has generated a lot of scholarly interest in different climes. In Nigeria, some relevant studies have been carried out on euphemism. Some of the studies include Ojo, Ayandele&Egbeleye (2020) who investigate euphemisms of corruption among students of higher institutions in southwest Nigeria. Using four higher institutions in southwest Nigeria, the scholars identified euphemistic language used by students to describe and perpetuate corrupt practices in their relationships with academic and non-academic staff of the different institutions. The study further shows that the usage of 'runs' as a superordinate code covers diverse corrupt acts such as sex for marks, cash for marks, sex for grades, alterations, examination malpractice and the use of fake documents. Similarly, Aboh (2015) examines euphemistic choices deployed as face saving strategies and sexual discourse in selected Nigerian novels. Findings from the study reveal that euphemism as a discourse strategy is not only deployed as a way of toning

down the effect of an expression on the hearer, but also a discourse strategy that is deployed for politeness reasons. Adepoju (2016) studies euphemism as politeness strategy in language change. The work explores how relationships are sustained and made free of mutual suspicion through the use of euphemism which serves as a tool to make other interlocutors feel important.

Scholars like Chlatoh&Lando (2021) in their study of linguistic taboos and sociopragmatic analysis of selected menstrual euphemisms employed by girls/women in public conversations in Cameroon discover that conversations on menstruation evoke different themes that carry both positive and negative connotations. The study also recommends that both males and females should be properly educated on menstruation in their pre-puberty years in order to help eliminate erroneous beliefs and myths about menstruation. Like Chlatoh&Lando (2021), Epoge (2013) looks at the use of euphemism in Cameroon focusing on its appearance in Cameroon English. He observes that use of euphemism in Cameroon is not only sweet-talk but has mutated to a deception. He further argues that euphemisms are deceptive in Cameroon English because their use shows a deliberate dishonest roundabout way of using creative expressions to present offensive expressions n a mild and acceptable form. In sum, he argues that despite the temporary deceptive nature of euphemism, the lasting reality remains in the minds of the speaker and the hearer. Jdetawy (2019) in the sociolinguistic comparison of euphemism in Arabic and English, discovers that the differences between English and Arabic euphemisms is attributed mainly to cultural and religious beliefs and values. He further argues that euphemisms in Arabic and English are mainly used as a communicative and rhetorical means of facilitating social interaction by replacing taboo words and unacceptable topics with more pleasant and acceptable ones. In an attempt to find out if particular genders are prone to using more euphemistic expressions than the other, Karimnia and Khodashenias (2016) used Warren's (1992) model of euphemism to study the euphemistic strategies employed by Iranian EFL learners with expressions that focus on death and lying; the findings showed that in Iran, there is no link between gender and the use of euphemistic strategies, implying that the overall practice of a speech community is easily absorbed by its members, to the point where every gender adapts to the expected language norm and only differs in terms of context usage.

The extant studies provide the background to the present study, but it is significantly different from the previous studies because while other studies concentrated on the use of euphemism in one area of language use or a comparison of euphemism in two languages, the present study undertakes a holistic study of the use of euphemism in different discourse areas peculiar to Nigerian speakers/users of English.

Moreover, despite the fact that some scholars have worked on euphemism, the present study holds that language is dynamic and euphemistic usages change from time to time and from generation to generation. Such transformations are occasioned by ages of the speakers, global changes and influences, as well as other factors. As a result, new euphemisms continue to emerge as some words lose their euphemistic value and turn into taboo words themselves

(Wilson, 1993 cited in Jdetawy, 2019). There is need therefore to study euphemisms in language use from time to time. The identified knowledge gap is what the present study is set to fill.

Theoretical Framework

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory forms the theoretical framework on which the study is hinged. The theory is considered apt for the study because euphemism is used in interpersonal interactions with the aim of maintaining the faces of both the speaker and the hearer. Similarly, Brown and Levinson (1987) base their theory on the assumption that face and its maintenance are universal traits although there may be cultural diversities in the way face work is negotiated in different socio-cultural environments. The theory emphasized two domains of face: positive and negative face. Appealing to interlocutors' positive face helps in the maintenance of positive relationships among interactants. Although the theory outlines positive and negative politeness strategies as ways of mitigating face threats or saving the hearer from embarrassment, the current study is restricted to positive politeness strategies. This is justified given the thematic objective of the paper which is the use of euphemism to avoid offence and to show that the hearer is acknowledged, appreciated, respected, and approved of. Such reverence is domesticated within the sphere of positive politeness strategies. The use of euphemism is an indication of shared common ground between the interlocutors. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.102) aver that claiming 'common ground' in communication is a major strategy of positive politeness which shows that the speaker and hearer share 'specific wants, goals and values' which represent commonality. Apart from claiming the common ground, positive politeness conveys the understanding that both the speaker and hearer are cooperating, and finally, that the hearer's desire is being fulfilled. For the purpose of this paper, analysis will be done following the fifteen numbered strategies of positive politeness as propounded by Brown and Levinson (1987, p.102). Note that while H stands for 'hearer', S is used to denote 'speaker'. For clarity purposes, thepositive politenessstrategies are presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Brown and Levinson's Positive Politeness Strategies (1987, p.102)
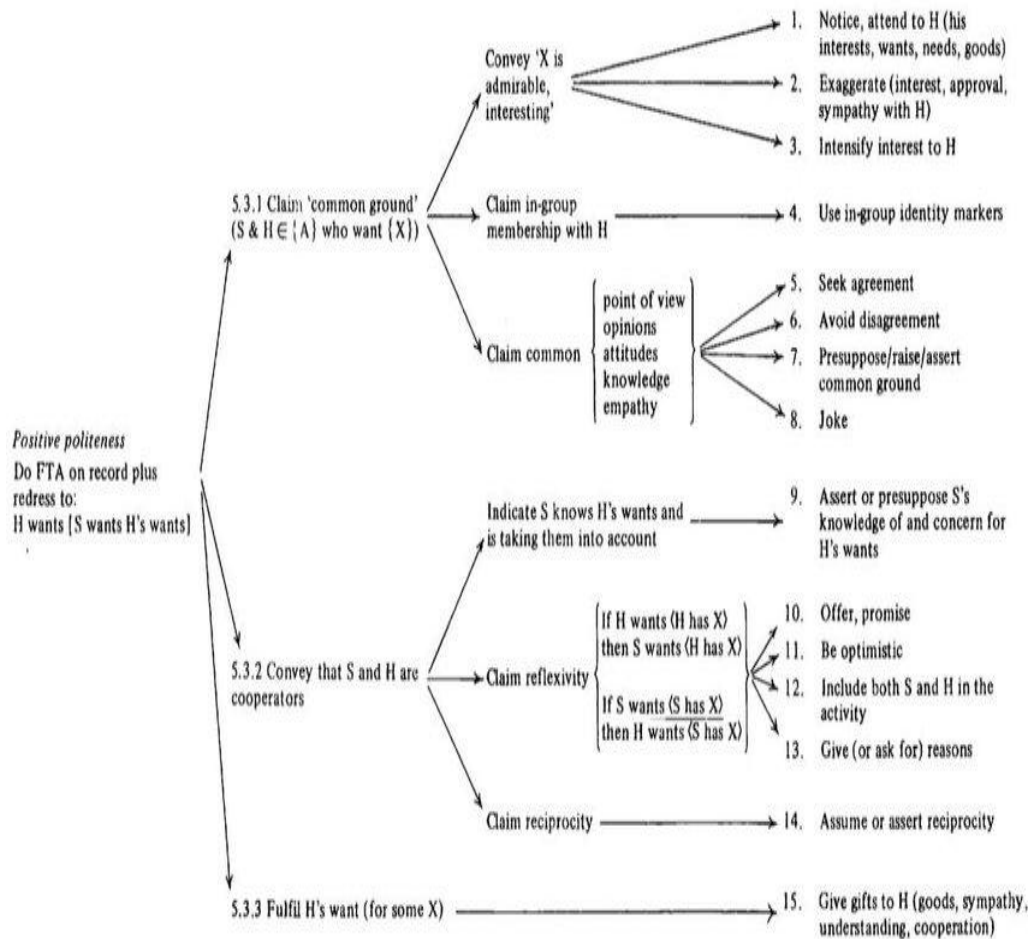
Methodology

Data for the study were collected from Nigerian discourse environment which ranges from education to politics and general social and/or official usage. A total of 82 euphemistic expressions were collected. The data collected were categorized thematically and analysed descriptively following Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness strategies. A total of nine themes were identified.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, the analysis was done by grouping the euphemistic terms into various topics, which included education, politics, societal norms/officialese, job/occupation, death, sex, crime, disability, and body parts.

Table 1: Educational related euphemism

S/ No	Tabooed/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
1	Leaked examination paper	Expo	4	Use of in-group identity marker/slang
2	Offering sex for marks	Settlement in kind	10	Offer, promise Speaker claims that within a certain sphere of relevance that whatever hearer wants, the speaker will help to obtain
3	Bribing to pass an examination	Sorting/blocking	10	Offer, promise Speaker claims that within a certain sphere of relevance that whatever hearer wants, the speaker will help to obtain
4	Male officers that aid and abet malpractice	Sabi man	4	Use of in-group identity marker/use of address form to convey in-group membership
5	Cheating in examination/ obtaining unmerited scores through fraudulent means	Runs	4	Use of in-group terminology/slang
6	Pre-planned sitting arrangement for collusion in examination malpractice	Formation	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground The use of the in-group code assumes that both the speaker and hearer share the assumption of that code (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.106)

7	Collusion in examination malpractice by teachers	Assisting/ helping students	3	Intensify interest to H Speaker makes the offer sound good by using a vivid present which heightens the intrinsic interest of the hearer
8	Awarding at least 'E' grade to assist a student	Let my people go	3	Intensify interest to H Speaker makes the offer sound good by using a vivid present which heightens the intrinsic interest of the hearer
9	Already prepared material for examination	'*Omokirikiri*' (Yoruba and Igbo)	4	Use of in-group language/slang Combination of two varieties of language or two different languages to create in-group language. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.110) describe it as a potential way of encoding positive politeness which shows involvement.
10	Alteration of students' CGPA through fraudulent means	Upgrade	4	Use of in-group jargon

Table 2: Political related euphemism

S/ No	Tabooed/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
11	Buying of power	Lobbying	3	Intensify interest to H Intensifying hearer's interest by making the story sound good
12	Rigging of election	Electoral Malpractice	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground The use of the in-group code assumes that both the speaker and hearer share the assumption of that code (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.106).
13	Influencing voters using inducements	Vote buying	4	Use of in-group terminology/slang
14	Inflation of Budget for unscrupulous reasons	Budget padding	4	Use of in-group terminology/slang
15	Elongation of tenure in office	Second term bid	5	Seek agreement (Safe topic) As a politeness strategy, the expression is a way of reassuring hearers that the speaker did not come to exploit them by 'making a request, but have an interest in general in maintaining a relationship' with them (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.112).
16	Unabated stealing of public funds	Sharing the national cake	4	Use of in-group language to evoke shared association and attitude
17	Playing politics for self-enrichment	Chop; I chop	8	Joke Jokes as positive politeness strategy are based on mutual shared background knowledge and values
18	Achieving success	Cutting corners	4	Use of in-group jargon/language to evoke

S/ No	Tabooed/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
	through dubious and treacherous means			shared attitude
19	Get rich quick syndrome	Fast lane	3	Intensify interest to H Intensifying hearer's interest by making the story sound good
20	A superior personality who provides support for another to gain advantage in politics or other areas	god-fatherism	4	Use of in-group identity marker/use of address form to convey in-group membership

Table 3: Social/officialese related euphemism

S/ No	Tabooed/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
21	Widow/widower/ a woman or man who has children without a husband or wife	Single parent	1	Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods) Notice aspects of hearer's condition in an approved way
22	Economic difficulty	Economic melt down	5	Seek agreement By raising a 'safe topic' which is considered important and a common ground to both the hearer and speaker
23	Old administrator	Seasoned administrator	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale

24	Plea for money	Ragging	8	Joke Jokes used as a way of minimizing face threatening act in requesting
25	Courting	Dating	4	Use of in-group identity marker/slang to evoke shared attitude and assumption which speaker and hearer have towards the action mentioned
26	Lateness to occasions	African time	4	Use of in-group language to evoke shared attitude
27	Retirees	Senior citizens	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
28	Unemployed	Applicants	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
29	Unmarried lady/man	Single	1	Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods) Notice aspects of hearer's condition in an approved way
30	Poor people	Low income earners/less privileged	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
31	Older men that support younger women in exchange of sex	Sugar-daddy	11	Be Optimistic Two parties are involved in the cooperative strategy and believe that both will cooperate to obtain their mutually shared interest

32	Older women that support younger men in exchange of sex	Sugar-mummy	11	Be Optimistic Two parties are involved in the cooperative strategy and believe that both will cooperate to obtain their mutually shared interest
33	Illegitimate child/ bastard	Love child	1	Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods) Notice aspects of hearer's condition in an approved way
34	Toilet/latrine	Restroom/ convenience/ ladies/gents	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground Words used presuppose that hearer's values are the same as speaker's values with respect to the shared values. (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.123)

Table 4: Job/ Occupation related euphemism

S/ No	Taboooed/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
35	Firing	Downsizing	6	Avoid disagreement By using words that hedge the extreme effect of the offensive word and makes one's opinion 'safely vague' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.116)

36	Road sweepers	Highway managers	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
37	Dirt carriers	Waste mangers	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
38	Cleaners	Caretakers/ Custodians	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
39	Luggage carrier	Porter	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
40	Tailors	Fashion designers	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
41	Cosmetologist	Make-up artist	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
42	Nanny	Care-giver	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale

43	Office boy	Office attendant	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
44	Messenger	Protocol officer	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
45	Mail runner	Dispatch rider	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
46	Harlots	Call girls/ Sex worker	6	Avoid disagreement Using such words hedges the extreme effect of the offensive word and makes one's opinion 'safely vague' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.116)
47	Cook	Caterer	6	Avoid disagreement This is using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
48	Non-academic staff	Non-teaching staff	6	Avoid disagreement By using words that hedge the extreme effect of the offensive word and makes one's opinion 'safely vague' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.116)

Table 5: Death related euphemism

S/ No	Taboo/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
49	Death	Demise/passed on/gone home/at rest/ gave up the ghost/ joined his ancestors/slept in the Lord	2	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H) Use of words that soften the effect of loss and show commiseration and sympathy
50	Dead relatives	Departed relatives/deceased relatives	2	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H) Use of words that soften the effect of loss and show commiseration and sympathy
51	Morticians	Undertakers	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale.
52	Cemetery	Vault	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
53	Corpse	Remains	2	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H) Use of words that soften the effect of loss and show commiseration and sympathy

Table 6: Sex and Pregnancy related euphemism

S/ No	Taboo/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented

54	Intercourse	Lovemaking/carnal knowledge of/sleep with	4	Use of in-group language to refer to an act which evokes all the shared association and attitude that hearer and speaker have towards the act
55	Fuck	Copulate	4	Use of in-group language to refer to an act which evokes all the shared association and attitude that hearer and speaker have towards the act
56	Pregnant woman	Expectant mother	1	Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods) Notice aspects of hearer's condition in an approved way
57	To make pregnant	Take-in	1	Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs, goods) Notice aspects of hearer's condition in an approved way
58	Disvirgin	Deflower/lose one's virginity	6	Avoid disagreement Using hedging option by choosing words that have relevance in the value scale
59	Venereal disease	STD(sexually transmitted disease)	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground The use of the in-group code assumes that both the speaker and hearer share the assumption of that code (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.106)

Table 7: Crime related euphemism

S/No	Tabooed/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
60	Prison	Correctional Centre	9	Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants
61	Prisoners	Inmates	9	Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants
62	Prison cell	Detention	9	Assert or presuppose S's knowledge of and concern for H's wants
63	Highway robber	Gentlemen of the highway	6	Avoid disagreement Using such words hedges the extreme effect of the offensive word and makes one's opinion 'safely vague' (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.116)
64	Stealing	Tapping	4	Use of in-group terminology/slang
65	Fraudsters	Scammers	4	Use of in-group terminology/slang
66	Rape	Sexual assault	2	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with H) Use of words that soften the effect of pain and show sympathy

Table 8: Disability related euphemism

S/No	Tabooed/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
67	Ugly person	Cosmetically different	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (Presuppose H's values are

				same as S's values)
				The preference for such value words is derived from the tacit claim that S and H have the same value with respect to the relevant predicate, the same definition of what constitutes beauty or goodness (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.123)
68	Short person	Vertically challenged	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (Presuppose H's values are same as S's values)
				The preference for such value words is derived from the tacit claim that S and H have the same value with respect to the relevant predicate, the same definition of what constitutes beauty or goodness (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.123)
69	Disabled person	Physically challenged/persons living with disabilities	15	Give goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation to H)
				Using words to show that H is considered, liked, admired, cared for, understood and listened to
70	A crippled person	Handicapped	15	Give goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation to H)
				Using words to show that H is considered, liked, admired, cared for, understood and listened to

71	A blind person	Visually impaired	15	Give goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation to H) Using words to show that H is considered, liked, admired, cared for, understood and listened to
72	A mad person	Mentally challenged	15	Give goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation to H) Using words to show that H is considered, liked, admired, cared for, understood and listened to
73	Children with learning disabilities	Children with special needs	15	Give goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation to H) Using words to show that H is considered, liked, admired, cared for, understood and listened to
74	Dull children	Intellectually disable	15	Give goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation to H) Using words to show that H is considered, liked, admired, cared for, understood and listened to
75	Forgetfulness	Cognition overload	15	Give goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation to H) Using words to show that H is considered, liked, admired, cared for, understood and listened to

Table 9: Body Parts/Bodily Discharge related euphemism

S/ No	Tabooed/stigmatized words/expressions	Preferred Euphemism	Positive Politeness Number	Positive Politeness Strategies Represented
76	Shit	Faeces/Excrement	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes) The preferred words indicate that S knows H's wants, tastes, habits, etc. And, this redresses the imposition of the face threats (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.122).
77	Menses	Period, monthly visitor	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes) The preferred words indicate that S knows H's wants, tastes, habits, etc. And, this redresses the imposition of the face threats.
78	Sore	Open injury	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes)
79	Piss	Urinate	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes)

80	Cunt	Private part	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes)
81	Penis	Private part	7	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (Presuppose knowledge of H's wants and attitudes)
82	A person with obesity	Plus-sized	15	Give goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation to H) Using words to show that H is considered, liked, admired, cared for, understood and listened to

Conclusion

The paper examines euphemism as a politeness strategy in language use under various discourse themes in Nigeria. Euphemism is a universal phenomenon as some expressions and usages are viewed as impolite, distasteful, offensive, derogatory, or taboos. Therefore, to cushion the effect of face threats, euphemism is deployed as a way of beautifying the ugly import of unpleasant expressions. Hence, euphemisms are used to achieve linguistic, stylistic, rhetoric and pragmatic goals in interpersonal communications. The study indicates that although euphemism is mainly used to maintain the faces of the speaker and hearer, it is mainly concerned with the maintenance of the positive face of the speaker and hearer, even when this face-keeping is inadvertent. By extension, it is used to show respect among interactants. From the study, it is also shown that euphemistic usages are common in languages, but specific usages depend on social, cultural, religious, lifestyle, ethical considerations, norms and relationships, and social distance between the interlocutors. The study concludes that constant study on euphemism is necessary because language is dynamic as well as euphemistic usages. Words with euphemistic value sometimes lose their value and become offensive or taboo over time. The situation leads to the emergence of new euphemisms which become assimilated into the language system of the linguistic community.

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