



DISCOURSE OF PESTILENCE AND MEDICATION IN OLA ROTIMI'S *THE GODS ARE NOT TO BLAME*: LESSONS FOR ORTHODOX MEDICINE

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Abstract

*This study, addressing the lack of attention to medical contents of literary works, dwells on the way pestilence and its medication are handled through discursive strategies in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* (henceforth *The gods*). Using aspects of Brown and Levinson's (1987) face work theory and Mey's theory of pragmatic acts, it unpacks all utterances related to pestilence made by the key and minor characters in the play. It contextualises pestilence in Kutuje, the physical setting of the text, in a supernatural circumstance, but initially locates its medication in a physical domain, championed by Odewale, the king. It picks out two treatment-related approaches: the folk and the institutional. The folk approach is characterized by face-threatening acts (FTA) with redress (positive politeness) and bald-on-record acts (FTA without redress) which demonstrate Odewale's ability to accommodate shock and rudeness from his subjects, in spite of his position as the king. His prescriptive, administering and follow-up discursive strategies are consistent with several aspects of patient-centred medicine. The institutional approach, operationalised as a collective effort in seeking solutions to the pestilence, demonstrates a mix of positive politeness, non performance of FTA, negative and bald-on-record politeness. When related to the context of its administration, however, it is almost predominantly patriarchal, largely because of its supernatural orientation which takes its relevance away from orthodox medicine except in their relationship at the level of modesty for the allowance of greater knowledge for medical cure. From this study, doctors should learn that rather than threaten the face of the patients by addressing them wrongly, they should be careful in their choice of words so as to get the cooperation of their patients in the diagnostic and therapeutic processes.*

Key Words: *The gods, Face work, pragmatic acts, politeness with redress, politeness without redress*

Introduction

Major studies on medical communication are relatively few in Nigeria. For instance, Ogunbode (1991), Oloruntoba Oju (1996) and Alabi (1996) are only register studies of communication needs of medical personnel. Some of the few serious available studies are Odebunmi (2003), Adegbite and Odebunmi (2003) and Odebunmi (2013). Concerning Yoruba Traditional medicine, if not for works like Adegbite (1991) and (1995) and Odebunmi and Adegbite (2013) that dwell on linguistic description of language use in the field, most other works on the field are more sociological and medical than linguistic (see for instance Fadipe, 1970 and Idowu, 1975). The present work however differs from the ones above in that it relies solely on data derived from a literary work, Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not blame*, rather than primary source. Undoubtedly, some works have written on *The gods are not to blame* (e.g. Monye 1995, Oloruntoba Oju 1998, Dairo 2001, Ogbulogo 2002, Odebunmi 2008, Odebode and Eke-Opara 2015 and Ogunsiji and Sonde 2016) which are significantly different from the present work. For instance, Dairo (2001) and Ogbulogo (2002) only made mention of *The gods* in their discussion of other works of Ola Rotimi, Monye (1995) and Oloruntoba-Oju (1998) only make mention of *The gods* while writing on the text, Odebunmi (2008) and Ogunsiji and Sonde (2016) analyse the proverbs in the text. Finally, Odebode and Eke-Opara (2015) anchor their analysis of the play on Dell Hymes' SPEAKING, the key concept in ethnography of communication.

This work is out to investigate the pestilence and medication in Ola Rotimi's *The gods are not to blame* using the theories of Face work and pragmatic acts with the purpose of examining the face threatening acts performed by the characters that play the role of medical practitioners and patients/clients in the play, identifying the approaches used to solve the problem of pestilence as well as bringing out the lessons for the orthodox medicine in the text. It is believed that the work will help medical practitioners to discover how to communicate effectively with their patients so as to give better services to them. It will also help the curriculum planners to update medical courses' curricular. Finally, it will serve as a useful resource material for students and researchers working on the text.

The Playwright, Ola Rotimi

Ola Rotimi, an internationally acclaimed playwright, was born in 1938 and died in 2002. After his primary and secondary education in Port-Harcourt and Lagos respectively, he left for Boston University for his degree in Fine Arts and Yule School of Drama for his master in Dramatic Arts. He spent most of his years as a

lecturer and researcher at University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University). In addition to being a lecturer, he was also an actor and a director. He had seven plays to his credit, namely, *Our Husband has gone Mad Again* (1966), *The gods are not to blame* (1971), *Kurumi* (1971), *Ovonramwen Nogbaisi* (1974), *Holding Talks* (1979), *If* (1983) and *Hopes of the Living Dead*.

The Context of Pestilence and Medication in *The Gods*

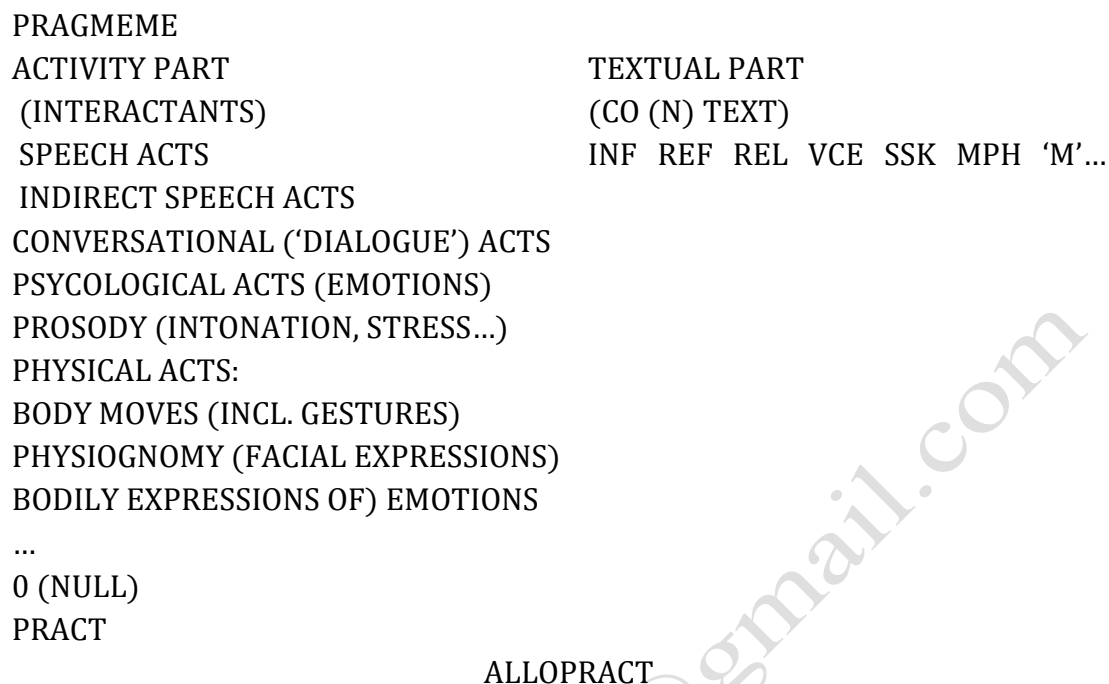
The gods are not to blame is a story of Odewale, the hero of the play, who was born into the family of King Adetusa and Queen Ojuola. An Ifa priest, Baba Fakunle, invited to divine his future reveals that he will kill his father and marry his mother. He is then given to Gbonka, a king's bodyguard for destruction in the forest. Gbonka, out of magnanimity or as faith would have it, gives him to Ogundele, a barren hunter he meets in a forest at Ijekun-Yemoja, who with his wife, Mobike, brings him up as their child. The revelation at Ijekun-Yemoja that he is bound to kill his father and marry his mother prompts him, contrary to the warning of the gods, to leave the village for Ede where he, as predicted, kills his father unknowingly, and eventually runs to Kutuje where he, after being made the king, perfects the prediction by marrying his mother. Some years into his period kingship, there is an outbreak of pestilence that ravages the village. The search for cure from the pestilence makes the king with his people resort to taking some medication and eventual consultation of a priest, when the epidemic proves intractable. It is however discovered at the end that the cause of the outbreak is spiritual rather than physical.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories are used to analyse the data for the study: the theory of pragmatic acts and face work theory. The decision to choose the theories is informed by the fact that the paper is out to consider the practs of the pestilence-related utterances and the choice of words of the characters that function as cure givers in the text. Two, we rely solely on a dramatic text (*The gods*) for our data, and a dramatic text is largely characterized by conversational acts (dialogues), prosodic acts and physical acts. These are explained in turn below.

The Theory of Pragmatic Acts

The theory of pragmatic acts was propounded to take care of the weaknesses in the theory of speech acts that is particularly considered atomistic and non-situated (See Fairclough 1989 and Mey 2001). Mey (2001) discusses the concept of pragmeme using the model below:



PRAGMEME, PRACT, ALLOPRACT

Figure1: A Model of Pragmatic Acts (Mey 2001:222)

Mey (2001: 222) claims that the theory of pragmatic acts focuses on “ the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as what is actually being said”. Pragmatic act is regarded as “the only force associated with making utterances” (Odebunmi, 2008). As posited by Mey (2001:221), “Every pract is at the same time an allopract, that is to say, a concrete instantiation of a particular pragememe”. It is the participants’ knowledge of interactional situation and the potential effect of a pract in a context that determine a pract. Practing therefore takes care of the problem of telling illocutionary force from perlocutionary force.

Figure 1 above shows that pragememe has two parts: activity part, which is meant for interactants, and textual part, which is meant for the context within which the pragememe functions. The interactants resort to the use of speech act types such as indirect speech acts, conversational (dialogue) acts, psychological acts, prosodic acts and physical acts to communicate. These are put into contexts, which include INF representing “inference”, REF, “relevance”, VCE, “voice”, SSK, “shared situation knowledge”, MPH, “metaphor”, and M, “metapragmatic joker”. The interaction between activity part and textual part produces a pract or an allopract. Germane to metapragmatic joker is “indexicality” which at the

pragmatic level requires good knowledge of the context in which an utterance is made. Mey (2001) explains the metapragmatic nature of indexicality using structural repetitions such as "What I do, I do" (John 19; 22) used by the Biblical Pilate and "Sentences are repeatable, sentences are repeatable" by Bakhtin (1994), whose meanings do not depend on the repetitions made, but rather on the indexical context. The indexicality here, according to Mey (ibid) can only "be brought out by an analysis of the discourse in which the utterance takes place". Mey wraps up his explanation by submitting that the metapragmatic indexicality plays a significant role in understanding the importance of pragmatic acts discourse.

Face Threatening Acts

The concept of face which is believed to have originated from the notion of deference and politeness was introduced by Goffman (1967). Face is the public self image of a person. Face, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), Thomas (1995) and Yule (1996), is the means by which we give recognition to a person's socio-emotional value. In the words of Odeunmi (2003), it is the social and emotional value that a person has of himself and expects other people to recognise. Brown and Levinson (1987) submit that it is important interactants maintain each other's face. Face may be positive or negative. Face can be said to be positive when an individual demands respect, approval or appreciation from others, while negative face is when he desires freedom or independence to act without imposition.

Face threatening acts, on the other hand, are those acts that damage or threaten a person's positive or negative face. It is however possible to reduce a damage that a speaker's act has done to a hearer through the adoption of some strategies. These strategies are meant to avoid conversational breakdown that may occur if speakers disregard their hearers' face needs (Mullany, 2002:3). These strategies are five in number: (i) performing the FTA on record without redress (bald-on-record acts), (ii) performing the FTA on record using positive politeness, (iii) performing the FTA using negative politeness, (iv) performing the FTA using off-record politeness and (v) not performing the FTA. Performing the FTA without redress also known as bald-on-record acts happens when certain external factors force a person to speak directly. Bald-on-record acts generally involve the use of imperatives, usually followed by some mitigating devices that soften the harsh nature of the speech. As observed by Yule (1996), bald-on-record acts are used in a situation when the speaker has power over others and which gives him the tendency to want to control their behaviour through the use of words.

An act is performed with redress when a speaker considers the hearer's positive face. The politeness expressed here is comparable to Leech's (1983) principles of politeness such as "seek agreement", "avoid disagreement", "be optimistic" and "give sympathy". These positive features help to save hearers' face in interaction. Performing an FTA with redress (negative politeness) may involve the use of politeness markers, deference markers and minimizing imposition (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Thomas, 1995). Brown and Levinson (1987) present fifteen strategies for performing off-record politeness. Some of them are giving hints, using metaphors and being ambiguous or vague. We have non performance of FTA when a person that is expected to speak does not say anything because what he intends to say looks face-threatening. This, according to Tamaka, can be either "genuine or strategic". Thomas (1995) however contends that saying nothing when one is expected to speak is itself a massive FTA.

Methodology

Two major factors informed our choice of the text, *The gods*. One, the playwright, Ola Rotimi was known internationally; two, it discusses how a cure is got to the outbreak of epidemic that nearly ravages a village, Kutuje. Three, the text best illustrates what transpires between medical practitioners and their patients. The text was thoroughly and critically read to unpack all utterances related to pestilence made by the major and minor characters in it. Folk and institutional approaches are identified as the two approaches to the treatment of the pestilence in the text.

Data Analysis

The analysis will be based on the two approaches to treatment identified in the text, namely the folk and institutional approaches and will be hinged on the theories of pragmatic acts and face work. The approaches are discussed and exemplified in turn below.

The folk approach: This is the traditional approach. It involves the use of herbs for the treatment of diseases. Odewale plays the key role here. He demonstrates a good knowledge of traditional medicine. He patiently listens to, diagnoses and offers prognosis to the townspeople's problem. In Act One, Scene One, for instance, after the outbreak of the pestilence that daily denigrates the village, the townspeople troop to the palace to register their complaint to King Odewale. In the process, they accuse him of carelessness and negligence, but Odewale is unperturbed. While attending to them he engages in the use of FTA

with redress (positive politeness) and FTA without redress (bald-on-record) to practice persuading, encouraging, challenging and advising,

Face threatening acts with redress: Instances of this manifest in Odewale's interaction with the townspeople when they come to him to accuse him of folding his hands doing nothing while they suffer. He uses face threatening acts with redress to practice encouraging and persuading. Let us, for instance, consider the conversations that ensue between them.

Example 1

First Chief: Enough! People of our land! People of our land- the king stands before you in greeting

First Citizen: What use are greetings to a dying body?

Chiefs: [shocked]. Aha!

Odewale: [gestures to Chiefs]. Let them talk

Even when the normal thing is for the younger person or person of lower status to initiate greeting in the Yoruba society (Odeunmi, 2013), greeting in the conversation above is initiated by the king. But rather than accord him honour he deserves, the citizens threaten his face, and they discountenance him. In fact, First Citizen claims greetings are useless to a dying person. This statement practices accusing. Shocked by this unholy behaviour, the chiefs try to caution them, but the king gestures to them to allow the people to talk. The king, with this paralinguistic feature, engages positive politeness to practice encouraging. He does not damage the people's positive face. He similarly makes them feel good. Another instance of positive politeness is demonstrated in the example below

Example 2

First Woman: Yesterday, my twins died- both of them. My third child... [unstrapping the baby

on her back here, feel how hot she is... come feel.

Odewale: Goes down and feels the child.

First Woman, not respecting the status of Odewale as the king, bluntly says, "my twins died- both of them" and tells him to come and feel the hotness of the third one, indirectly accusing the king that if no action is taken by him on time to help her, he (the third child) may also die. But to engage positive politeness, Odewale goes down and feels the child to practice encouraging.

Example 3

Second Citizen: When the head of a house dies, the house becomes an empty shell. But we have you as our head, and with you, our chiefs: yet we do not know whether to thank the gods that you are with us, or to look elsewhere for hope.

Third Citizen: When the chameleon brings forth a child, is it not expected to dance? As we have made you king, act as king.

Second Woman: Sickness has been killing us all these many days. What has the king done about it?

Third Woman: You overwhelmed the bushmen of Ikolu when they attacked and enslaved our land. Now we cry in pain for help, and there is silence.

Second Citizen: When rain falls on the leopard, does it wash off its spots? Has the richness of kingly life washed off the love of our king for his people?

Fourth Citizen: We have suffered long in silence!

Odewale: My people. Children of our fathers. Sickness is like rain. Does it fall on one roof and alone? No. does it fall on one body and not on another? No. whoever the rain sees, on him it rains. Does it not? You do me great wrong, therefore to think that, like a rock in the middle of a lake, forever cooled by flowing waters, I do not know, and cannot know the sun's hotness that burns and dries up the open land. Indeed, you do me great wrong, my people... (pp 8-10).

Like the first two examples, Second Citizen, Third Citizen, Second Woman, Third Woman and Fourth Citizen threaten the positive face of the king in that they attack him directly without respecting his status as the king. Second Citizen attacks him using the metaphor of the death of the head of a house, and claims that if he is not dead and does not expect them to look for another king, as the head of the village, he should do something to help them out of their problem. Third Citizen using the metaphor of chameleon's child that is expected to dance after birth, accuses him of not being caring, he should therefore act as expected of a king. Second Woman directly demands to know what the king has done about the sickness that has decimated the village. Third Citizen accuses him of not being useful again as before, since he leaves them languishing in pain. Second Citizen rudely alleges

him of allowing the glamour and splendor of kingship to have made him blind to their plight. However, rather than being annoyed, Odewale working on the metaphor of rain falling on everybody and making reference to sickness, politely persuades them that his family is not excluded from sickness, and they should not think that he, "like a rock in the middle of a lake" is forever cooled by flowing waters." He then threatens their face saying: "Indeed, you do me great wrong, my people..." He uses this to show them that they have accused him wrongly. Working on shared cultural knowledge and shared situation knowledge, he however quickly mitigates the face threat through practice of persuasion by explaining to them that he has not been sleeping, doing nothing about their plight using the metaphor of a madman sleeping with his house on fire.

Odewale: Now to answer your question. What have I been doing about the sickness in the land? Have I been sleeping? If so, I am sick in the head: for only madman would go to sleep with his roof on fire. (p.11)

FTA Without Redress (Bald-on-record):

This is used in the text by Odewale to bluntly and directly encourage his citizens that they need to prepare the herbs they need very well and that they need to be patient to get perfect healing/ cure they need. This makes his utterances clear and unambiguous to his hearers. This is in support of the submission of Odebunmi & Adegbite (2013) that except when doctors are being tactful for some special reasons, diagnoses are usually directly announced. They argue further that this is in agreement with medical ethics that the patients should be told the whole truth about their ailments (Odebunmi & Adegbite 2013:305). Let us consider an example to illustrate this.

Example 4

Second Woman: Your highness... I have tried, in my own house, I have tried...I boiled some herbs, drank them, yet sickness remains.

Odewale: What herbs did you boil?

Second Woman: Asufe eijeje leaves---

Odewale: Y-e-s.

Second Woman: Lemon grass, teabush, and some limeskins.

Odewale: That's good. And nothing happened?

Second Woman: I and my household drank the medicine, yet we do not get better, my lord.

Odewale: For how long did you boil it?

Second Woman: As soon as it boiled, I put it down.

Odewale: No, no. You must boil it longer, woman, longer, so that the medicines

in the herbs can come out in full spirit to fight the sickness. Boil it longer.

Third Woman: I boiled mine longer---a long time. I even added dogo-yaro leaves to it.

Odewale: And how does the body feel?

Third Woman: Not as well as the heart wishes, my lord.

Odewale: Our talk is of illness, sister. To get fully cured one needs patience.

---Keep on drinking the medicine; one day you will see change.

Patience. (Pp13-14)

In response to Odewale's, challenge, Second and Third women tell him the efforts they have taken and their limitations, Odewale using the battle metaphor, practs encouraging to convince them that they need to boil the herbs longer and they need patience to get fully cured of the sickness. He, using FTA without redress (bald-on-record act), encourages Second Woman: "You must boil it longer, woman, longer, so that the medicines in the herbs can come out in full spirit to fight the sickness." and to Third Woman who argues she boils hers longer but still has not felt as she wishes, he, using bald-on-record act says: "To get fully cured one needs patience---Keep on drinking the medicine, one day you will see change." Odewale is forced to use FTA without redress here because he, as the king, desires healing for them and does not want to hide anything that will give them quick healing. Though Odebunmi & Adegbite (2013) observe that the occurrence of FTA without redress is relatively scarce in Yoruba Traditional Medicine (YTM), they are quick to add that it is sometimes used when priests intend to warn their clients on the need to strictly observe the procedure of a treatment or when they want to discourage or correct their clients' wrong notions.

Similarly, when Fourth Woman claims she does not know how to give the herbs to her children, Odewale also performing FTA without redress, practs encouraging using the metaphor of a monkey learning to jump from tree to tree without falling. As argued above, Odewale uses FTA without redress not because he wants to damage her positive face but he does not want to hide the truth from her and he wants his message to be clear to her. He does directly say:

By trying often, monkey learns to jump from tree to tree without falling. Keep on trying. (Pp 12-14)

Another practice closely related to encouraging that Odewale uses is that of advising. First Citizen claims that she does not know the herbs to use, and Odewale using FTA without redress, advises:

Ask your neighbours.

Example 5

After explaining what he and his chiefs have done to rid the village of the epidemic, making reference to “sickness” and some of the expressions that have been used by the townspeople such as “The land is bad”, “We suffer much” and “We die” he practices challenging by asking them a set of questions relating to what they themselves have done to help themselves. He uses bard-on-record here to challenge them to go to the bush to cut herbs they will prepare for themselves and their families.

Odewale: Yes I know. But what have you done about it, I ask. You there---Mama Ibeji---

...what did you do to save your twins from dying? It is sickness that man can cure, not death. What did you do to cure their sickness? Nothing? Oh, I see, your body is too weak, your bones suddenly gone soft, you cannot move, you cannot go into the bush and cut herbs to boil for your children to drink. Is it so? Answer. ‘The land is bad’, you all cry, ‘we suffer much, we die’. You moan. Yet each one of you lies down in his small hut and does nothing, you have all come like lobsters, crying your large heads of complaints to my door-step.... If you need help search for it first among yourselves.

Institutional Approach: This has to do with the collective effort in seeking solution to sickness. In the text, King Odewale and his chiefs have to decide on how to get to the root cause of the problem in the village. It is this decision that informs their consultation of an Ifa priest, Baba Fakunle when the epidemic seems intractable. The interaction between the people and Baba Fakunle is largely characterized with positive politeness, non performance of FTA and bald-on-record. While Odewale and his chiefs use positive politeness while addressing Baba Fakunle so as not to damage his face and to accord him respect he deserves, Baba Fakunle’s speech is characterized with non performance of FTA and bald-

on-record. This is possibly because he considers the status and the temper of his patient, the king. Let us consider some of the conversational interactions between him and people to illustrate this.

Non Performance of FTA:

The instances of this in the text are used by Baba Fakunle in Act Two Scene 1 to attack King Odewale and his chiefs. Let us consider the next two examples to explain this.

Example 6

When Baba Fakunle is brought to King Odewale's palace at Kutuje to tell them the cause of their problem, the chiefs, using positive politeness, come to him and squat to greet him to practice respecting, but he does not perform any FTA, he only "remains crouched over his stick, unmoved by the courtesies shown to him" (P.25). Considering their status, he uses this act to practice attacking having known that the cause of the suffering in the land is there. He refuses to talk because he possibly thinks what he wants to say may damage his listeners' face. This is in consonance with Odebunmi & Adegbite's (2013) submission that non performance of FTA happens when a speaker decides not to say anything when he sees that what he intends to say may threaten his listener's face. Thomas (1995:175) however argues that saying nothing when one is expected to talk is itself "a massive FTA". Another example is considered below.

Example 7

Odewale: There is a plague in this land, and Orunmila tells us from Ile-Ife that the cause of this suffering is the presence of a murderer, one who murdered King Adetusa, the king before I became King of this land of Kutuje. Pray, tell, who is this murderer?

Second Chief: We beg of you, Old One, help us with your strange powers.

Odewale: Baba Fakunle, you have come well.

Baba Fakunle: Don't come near me! I smelled it. I smelled the truth as I came to this land. The truth smelled stronger and still stronger as I came into this place. Now it is choking me...choking me. I say. Boy!

Lead on home away from here.

Second Chief: For the love of the gods, do not turn away.

First Chief: You offend the gods who gave you powers to help us, Old One. We are blind.

Baba Fakunle: Pray, let me depart from here in peace (P.27).

In the extract above, in spite of everything said by Odewale and his chiefs to persuade Baba Fakunle to speak, he refuses to talk. Odewale, using positive politeness, says "...Pray, tell, who is this murderer" while the Second Chief and First Chief also using positive politeness in an attempt to persuade him to talk plead: "We beg of you, Old One, help us with your strange powers." "You offend the gods who gave you powers to help us, Old One, we are blind." But when Baba Fakunle talks, he says something that differs from what they expect; "Don't come near me! I smelled it. I smelled the truth as I came to this land..." As argued above, he decides not to perform FTA because he does not want to damage the face of his clients. In the next example, an instance of the use of bald-on-record is given. **Bald-on-Record (FTA without Redress)**; This is used by Baba Fakunle to reveal the truth to King Odewale.

Example 8

Third Chief: Pray you, Old One, to be silent is to be---

Odewale: Don't beg him. He will not talk. The murderers have sealed his lips with money. [...]

Baba Fakunle: You call me pig! You are the murderer! (P 27)

In the example above, Odewale accuses Baba Fakunle of being bribed by the murderers of King Adetusa, the king who ruled the land before him. This forces him to bluntly practise exposing using bald-on-record (FTA without redress). He declares: "You are the murderer!" and he leaves the palace, leaving the king to discover his identity himself. He feels this is the only means through which he can declare the truth without being harmed.

Lessons for the Orthodox Medicine

Considering what transpire between the two major characters who perform the role of medical practitioners/priests in the text and those who constitute their patients/clients, the following recommendations are suggested. One, doctors should know that patients are the most important personalities in a hospital; every other person is there because of them. Those attending to them should therefore be careful in selecting words they will use to address them so as to be patient-centred. In spite of the fact that the townspeople who come to King Odewale address him rudely, without considering his status and power, he patiently and politely persuades, encourages and advises them on how to get solution to their problem. He uses positive politeness (FTA with redress) mostly when addressing them. He uses FTA without redress when it becomes

unavoidably necessary for him to use it to politely challenge them to go to the bush to get herbs that they need for their treatment.

Closely related to this is that medical treatment should be made patient-centred rather than doctor/ nurse-centred. Doctors and nurses should stop seeing themselves as the most important persons in the hospitals. This will, to a great extent, guide them on how to address their patients. Odewale forgets his status as the king and addresses his townspeople patiently and respectfully. He sees them as more important at that point. Thirdly, adequate medical personnel should be employed in every hospital so as to avoid over reaction / impatience that usually results from over working / tiredness which makes medical personnel address their patients impolitely. Finally, communication skills courses should be introduced to the curricular of medical/ para-medical students. This will expose them to the linguistic skills they need to address their patients politely. Baba Fakunle, though an old and experienced priest, addresses Odewale sharply and impolitely, and this hastens his (Odewale's) destruction.

Conclusion

We have so far discussed the issue of pestilence and medicine in *The gods* using the theories of face work and pragmatic acts. The epidemic that decimates the land of Kutuje is treated using folk and institutional approaches. The two major characters who perform the role of medical doctors pract encouraging, persuading, challenging, advising, attacking and exposing using FTA with redress, FTA without redress and non performance of FTA.

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