

## **IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES AS VIOLENCE AND DEFENCE THERAPY IN BOLLYWOOD'S ANUPAMA**

**ROSECOLETTE N. EWURUM (PhD)**  
**ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, OWERRI**  
**colrin68@yahoo.com**  
**+2348063523211**

### **Abstract**

*Various stripes of violence against women have been the thrust of many discourses including various film industries, especially Nollywood and Bollywood. While some Nollywood films have been studied from non-linguistic theoretical frameworks, hardly has any Bollywood film been studied from the relatively nascent linguistic-based politeness principle linguistic framework. This study examines the Face-threatening Acts (FTAS) and impoliteness strategies that constitute psychological and emotional violence in Bollywood Anupama and the impoliteness strategies adopted as psychological therapy. Forty utterances and texts extracted from the study film by the stratified random sampling technique constitute data for examining the identified variables. Insights for theoretical framework drawn from Culpeper's (1996 & 2005) impoliteness strategies also constitute framework for analyzing the variables. From the investigations, it is discovered that bald-on-record and negative impoliteness strategies are predominantly deployed by females in altercative discourses to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the psychological violence they experience at males' utterances and actions. Impoliteness in the study film is intentional as the fight against injustice and the defense of female dignity. The scale of perceived offense is high to portray hurt, cause offense as retaliation and serve as defense therapy. Some interrogatives are face-threatening acts designed as violence therapy for female dignity as well as a tool for offense and retaliation to heal. It is therefore concluded from the study film that, intentional maximization of bald-on-record and negative impoliteness strategies can serve as violence and defense therapy against psychological violence. Intentionality in the use of words is very essential as it cause violence and also remedy mental hurt. Intentionality is essential in adopting impoliteness as violence therapy. It is recommended that interlocutors should be politeness rather than impoliteness strategies that can cause health disorders as Psychological violence.*

**Key Words;** Violence, psychological violence, impoliteness strategies, violence therapy.

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY:**

Many have erroneously attributed cultural inhibitions of servitude and voicelessness that often times placed death sentence on women to African culture alone. Many studies have dwelt on various types of violence as experienced by women in Nollywood films. This study examines psychological and emotional types of violence inflicted with impoliteness strategies against women in Bollywood *Anupama* and the subsequent impoliteness strategies adopted by women as violence therapy. Non-verbal language strategies are also deployed by the voiceless women as radical attempt to challenge inhibitions and violence as hit back strategy,

Language has been proven as an essential ingredient in man's existence. "It plays vital roles in many issues of life. It is the tool for offence, defense and correction, also, a tool for destruction. Language can escalate conflict. Fasold and Linton (2012) assert that "we use language to persuade others to our convictions and urge them towards action by crafting texts that demonstrate the logic and appeal to accomplish one's communicative ends. The human's desires, emotions - likes and dislikes, problems, are often communicated via language. Language is deployed to express all of man's emotions which he cares to express. Language

is also employed to hurt as well as please others. It can serve as a major tool of violence. This study consequently examines the psychological and emotional violence in Bollywood's *Anupama* through impoliteness strategies as well as the politeness strategies manipulated as violence therapy. This investigation highlights the face-threatening Acts that constitute emotional violence in the study film, *Anupama*. While some language use cause psychological trauma, some impoliteness strategies can be manipulated as therapy for the negative effect of violence since the ability to use language and communicate can be a therapy for the depressions that violence cause many women who lost their voices to the cultural violence of inhibition.

Ewurum and Ibejunjo (2021) aver "cultural inhibitions of servitude and voicelessness have often times placed death sentences on women," "Society contributes to perpetrating the acts of verbal violence by not taking it seriously enough and by treating it as expected-normal or deserved" (Obinaju 2004). The culture of a people through language guides their beliefs, norms, actions and behaviours. The cultural context depicts the set of belief, values and norms of behaviour which are shared by those communicating. "Although shared beliefs and values are important characteristics of culture, it is the communication rules in a culture that directly affects the way in which people interact. Societal considerations rate on higher scale when women issues are involved more than individual's considerations. It is against this backdrop that verbal abuses that constitute impoliteness strategies that cause violence and those that serve as violence therapy are examined. Eelen (2001) has observed seriously that "theories of politeness have mainly focused far more on polite behaviour rather than impolite behaviour," She further observes that "this is all the more surprising, since commentators on and participants in verbal interactions are more likely to be impolite, rude, discourteous, obstreperous, etc than on polite behaviour and they tend to agree far more readily in the classification of negative end of the scale than of the positive end".

"Language has generally been agreed to hold a great key to the success or failure of man's affairs. But some cultures and societies tend to silence women and exclude them from maximizing the great values of language (Ewurum and Anozie Ibejunjo 2021:1) The culture of a people which greatly guides and influences the beliefs, norms, actions and behaviours is predominantly expressed through language. "The cultural heritages of a people are transmitted from generation to generation using language. Udofot (2015:3) stresses that culture defines a people's identity and cultural requirements influence the way language is used in speech community. In all, language is an essential tool for human existence for good and for bad.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to:

- \* investigate the face-threatening acts that constitute psychological violence,
- \* assess the bald-on-record impoliteness strategy as tool for psychological violence and violence therapy,
- \* highlight interrogatives as impoliteness strategy for violence therapy.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study adopts Culpeper's (2005) impoliteness strategy as the theoretical framework for the analysis of data. Culpeper is the the propounder of impoliteness strategies as he is the first scholar to seriously address the issues on the concept in 1996. His definition of impoliteness is "communicative strategies to attack face and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony (Culpeper 2011,p.1). Culpeper highlights such concepts as face, social norms and rights, intentions and emotions as very relevant in issues of impoliteness. Spencer - Oatey (2008) corroborating Culpeper's view on intentionality adds that "intentionality is also criteria to impoliteness and one notion by which people try to understand impoliteness". He also holds emotion as key to impoliteness.

The impoliteness strategies propounded by Culpeper first in (1996) and slightly modified in Culpeper 2005 will constitute the framework for our data analysis.

**\*BALD-ON-RECORD IMPOLITENESS:** This face-threatening-Acts is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized.

**\*POSITIVE IMPOLITENESS:** The use of strategies designed to damage the addressee’s positive face wants include:

- \*Ignore
- \*Snub the other
- \*Fail to acknowledge the others presence
- \*Exclude the others from an activity.
- \*Disassociate from the other - for example deny association or common ground with the other, avoid sitting together.
- \*Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic.
- \*Use inappropriate identity markers - for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when distant relationship pertains.
- \*Use obscure or secretive language - for example mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target.
- \*Seek disagreement - select a sensitive topic, make the other feel uncomfortable - for example do not avoid silence, joke or use small talk.
- \*Use taboo words - swear, or use abusive or profane language.
- \*Call the other names - use derogatory nominations.

**\*Negative Impoliteness:**

This involves the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee’s negative face wants. E.g.

- \*Frighten - instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur.
- \*Condescend, scorn, or ridicule.
- \*Emphasize your relative power
- \*Be contemptuous
- \*Do not treat the other seriously
- \*Belittle the other (e.g., use diminutives)
- \*Invade the other’s space - literally (e.g position yourself closer to the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g., ask for or speak about information which is too intimate given the relationship)
- \*Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect - personalize, use the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘you’. put the others indebtedness on record.
- \*Violate the structure of conversation - interrupt
- \*Impoliteness Meta - strategy: sarcasm or mock politeness: The FTA is performed with the use of polite strategies that are obviously insincere, thus remain surface realization, Culpeper (2011) adduces that impoliteness that is relatively direct and impoliteness that is relatively indirect both inclined to produce more offence. The more directly the impoliteness is triggered, the more offence is taken (e.g., “Leave” is predicted to be more offensive than “would you mind leaving?”)

Culpeper’s (2005) types of face attack include;

<b>Attack on</b>	<b>Definition of Desire/Belief</b>	<b>Impoliteness Strategies</b>
Quality face	Desire to be evaluated positively in terms of personal qualities	Attack the other’s appearance, attack the other’s ability for work
Social Identity face	Desire for acknowledgement of our social identities of roles	Condescend, scorn or ridicule
Equity rights	Belief that we are entitled to be treated fairly by others	Ignore or snub the other, disassociate from the other

The aforementioned impoliteness strategies were summed by what he termed conventional impolite expressions that include:

- Insults (name calling etc)

- Personalized negative vocatives.
- Personalized negative assertions
- Dismissals
- Silencers
- Threats
- Condescension
- Challenges (usually rhetorical questions: why do)

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

Violence according to Borghini (2019) is a central concept for describing social relationships among humans, a concept loaded with ethical and political significance.

WHO defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. Violence against women takes place daily as well as psychological and physical consequences that can affect them as individuals.

Mudiare (2013) observes that cultural norms do not condone women being aggressors and when this happens in some Nigerian cultures, women have to carry out sacrifices to appease the gods and ancestors. Sever, Darson and Johnson (2004) aver “Most women experience ten times as many incidents of violence compared to men ... and also experience multiple forms of violence in the home. The most common form of violence is wife battery, ranging from slapping, kicking, verbal abuse, denial of financial support to rape and death. (\_Project Art, 2001, 2006, Mudiare, 2013b).

“Violence against women and girls is defined as any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women and girls including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. Violence against women and girls encompasses, but is not limited to physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family or within the general community, and perpetrated or condoned by the state” (UN Women 2023).

“Psychological violence involves causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner or children; destruction of pets and property; “Mind games” and / or work”. Emotional violence include undermining a person’s sense of self-worth through constant criticism, belittle one’s abilities; name-calling or other verbal abuse’.damaging a partner’s relationship with the children; or not letting a partner see friends and family.(UN WOMEN 2023).

Psychological violence is defined as any intentional conduct that seriously impairs another person’s psychological integrity through coercion or threats. Statistical definition has ‘it as “any act which causes psychological harm to an individual. Psychological violence can take the form of coercion, defamation, verbal insult or harassment.”

Psychological violence is quite distinct from physical violence as well as verbal violence. “Psychological violence may be defined as that sort of violence which involves psychological damage on the part of the agent who is being violated. You do have psychological violence, any time that an agent voluntarily inflicts some psychological distress on an agent”.

Psychological violence is compatible with physical violence or verbal violence. The damage done to a person that has been the victim of a sexual assault is not only the damage deriving from the physical injuries to her or his body; the psychological trauma the event may provoke is part and parcel of the violence perpetrated, which is a psychological sort of violence and... discriminatory attitudes of all sorts do put some psychological pressure on agents.

“Some maintain that certain forms of psychological violence may be more atrocious than any form of the worst forms of physical violence; it is indeed the case that some of the worst forms of torture are

psychological and may involve no direct physical damage begin inflicted on the tortured.” A common definition of psychological abuse among researchers is chronic verbal aggression. Psychological violence is intimately related to a person’s inability to tolerate another when circumstances make communication difficult. ...five cases of psychological violence include;

- subjectivity,
- undue pressure,
- humiliating behaviour
- health problems
- exploitation

Within families you may find the quiet husband and the vociferous wife or the other way round! The thrust of this study is that psychological violence is not only predominant in African soil, it can also be found in other more civilized communities as exemplified in Bollywood’s *Anupama*, and that it can be affected by interlocutors’ impolite choices of words and matching impoliteness strategies can serve as therapy for healing.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

### **BALD-ON-RECORD IMPOLITENESS THAT CAUSES PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE**

Utterance 1, Vanrage: Parky, let Carvia teach you the dance and accompany you for the competition. Your mother is irresponsible and will mess it all up, she is an illiterate,

Utterance 2, Mr. Shaw: (Yelling) You are illiterate. Carvia is an educated working-class lady.

Utterance 3, Mr. Shaw: (Reacting to Anupama’s touch, yelling) keep your dirt hands off me. They smell of spices.

Utterance 4, Anupama: But I am your wife of twenty-six.

Utterance 5, Mr. Shaw: (Yelling) I have lived with you for twenty-six years but I have not really notice you.

Utterance 6, Mr. Shaw: What are all these gifts for?

Utterance 7, Samrat: They are for 18th.

Utterance 8, Mr. Shaw: What happens on the 18th?

Utterance 9, Samrat: Mother’s birthday Mr. Shaw. You forget as you always do. On mother’s birthday cake you wrote congratulations Carvia, Carvia, your girlfriend.

Utterance 10, Mr Shaw: (Yelling)Security throw this woman out!

The discourses in utterances 1, 2, 3 and 4 are typical examples of bald-on-record, impoliteness effected by a husband on his wife in a marriage of twenty-six years old without mitigation. Such Bald-on-record impoliteness strategies constitute psychological violence. Carvia in utterances 1 and 8, is Mr. Shaw’s mistress and colleague whom he has brought home to live in the same house with his wife and children. Mr. Shaw adopt bald-on-record unmitigated intentional face attack perceived as same by the listener, his wife, Anupama. The lexeme; illiterate is face-threatening and dehumanizing. Comparing one’s wife daily with one’s mistress is a serious cause of psychological trauma. Telling one’s wife that he has lived with her for twenty-six years yet, has not noticed her is also an unmitigated intentional bald-on-record impoliteness strategy designed to humiliate. The face-insensitivity in Mr. Shaw’s utterances are causes of psychological or mental pain to a voiceless wife. Constantly yelling on one’s wife in the presence of one’s children and even guests is a seek disagreement impoliteness technique that can create psychological imbalance in a person by robbing her face-worth.

Another instance is utterance 10 - “Security throw this woman out.”

The height of bald-on-record impoliteness strategy is seen in Mr. Shaw’s threat and humiliation of his wife in utterance 10 “security throw this woman out” The interlocutor intentionally attacks the wife’s face in an unmitigated bald-on-record impoliteness which she perceives as such. He stops at nothing to demean his wife all through their stay - thereby making her feel uncomfortable. He calls her irresponsible.

Samrat, Mr. Shaw and Anupama's second son, confronts his father's question on "what happens on the 18th" in utterance 8 with a direct, unambiguous face-threatening bald-on-record impoliteness strategy to make his father lose face over the psychological trauma he has caused his mother as he responds in utterance 9: "Mother's birthday Mr. Shaw, you forget as you always do. On mother's birthday cake, you deliberately wrote: Congratulations Carvia, Mr. Shaw's girlfriend". The inscription, congratulations Carvia on Anupama's birthday cake was a non-verbal impolite action that robs Anupama's her face worth and caused psychological trauma. Anupama's heart ache is expressed in the following utterances "my husband belongs to another," Samrat's use of inappropriate identify marker - his father's surname, Mr. Shaw, is also a positive impoliteness strategy designed to express his displeasure as his father that caused psychological trauma for his mother.

### **POSITIVE IMPOLITENESS**

Utterance 11, Anupama: The only thing I want is some of your time; but I understand, you don't have time for me and the children.

Utterance 12, Mr. Shaw: Honestly, I don't have time for you.

Utterance 13, Anupama: Is work everything to you? We live in the same room, sleep on the same bed but we are total strangers. We can't even talk to each other.

Mr. Shaw deployed positive impoliteness strategy in ignoring his wife Anupama's yearning; "honestly I don't have time for you"

For twenty-six years, he ignores his wife and actually owns up to the fact in his arrogance as seen in utterance 4: I have lived with you for twenty-six years but I have not noticed you. Even the wife's pain at his betrayal on their twenty-sixth wedding anniversary means nothing to him, "when my heart was broken, I lost interest in everything. Lassitude is a very serious psychological problem.

He was unconcerned, unsympathetic and disinterested at the wife's pain especially at the non-verbal impoliteness action of taking his mistress, Carvia, to his wife's bed exactly on their 26th anniversary where his wife caught them.

Utterance 14, Anupama: It was on our 26th Anniversary, I was at home. My husband was my everything. On that day, I felt like flying and I fell, just hard.

I opened my bedroom and saw Mr. Shaw and Carvia on my bed. I saw my husband with another woman lying on my bed. That day hurts more than any other in my life. It's hard. I repeated the pain every day and I cried and cried and it affects me.

Utterance 15, KingJoe: You are just like your father. Do you know what mother told me today? She had to wait with grandfather for your dad, Mr Shaw, to return every night but he never did. You are following his footsteps, you never have time for your wife.

### **\*ANOTHER IMPOLITE STRATEGY CAUSING PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA IS THE DEHUMANIZING FLOGGING OF A WIFE**

Movika, cannot attend any New Year's Eve celebration because she is depressed because of her husband's floggings and threats.

Utterance 16, Movika: I am scared but I want to try one more time, then, if I can't, then, I won't try again.

Utterance 17, Anupama: It is said that the one who tries will never fail.

A snap and her depression start in a flashback on 31st December.

Utterance 18, Movika: (shouting) No-oooo! don't hit me! (Taking an anti-depressant).

Utterance 19, Movika: (Still shouts) Don't hit me. Don't harm me please; don't hit me again, please.

Utterance 20, Movika: Please don't hit me. Please don't hit me, leave me alone. Please I can't take it any longer.

Utterance 21, Movika: Noo-ooo! don't hit me. It hurts.

Utterance 22, Amby: (Shouting) You know how angry I am. You won't tell your brother!

Utterance 23. Movika: I won't tell him. Don't hit me. It hurts too much Anush, I can't take it.  
It hurts a lot.

### **Evidence of Psychological Trauma**

Utterance 24, Kavia: Honestly, I don't even know how to smile again. Anupama has not been the enemy. We have been her enemies here. Don't get in her way of happiness. It's not every woman that is blessed with a second chance.

Utterance 25, Anupama: A mother is never off duty. Every breath will feel like broken glass. Every moment will suffocate you.

### **TALK TO HEAL**

The Regain Editorial Team on domestic violence counselling advises victims to "talk about all your feelings without fear of being judged or hurt because of them" as therapy. Language is used to talk. The protagonist of the study Bollywood film, *Anupama*, who has been voiceless as soon as she divorces her husband, Mr Shaw, regains her voice.

Being free from societal inhibitions, she talks to challenge the society that has promoted violence against women as well as her ex-husband as an attempt to heal. She guides her fellow woman, Movika to also talk to heal. The talk involves the use of language to hit back and heal.

### **IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES AS VIOLENCE THERAPY**

#### **Negative Impoliteness as Psychological Violence Therapy**

Utterance 26, Anupama; Bad things will come around to those who do bad. Nothing good will ever come to you Mr Shaw, after what you have done.  
Your dream will be defeated eventually!

The conventional impolite expressions deployed by Anupama were designed to be a therapy to all her bottled-up emotions. The personalized negative vocatives and threats are evidence of face insensitivity resulting from the pain the interlocutor has felt.

### **BALD-ON-RECORD INTERROGATIVES AS VIOLENCE THERAPY**

The following interrogatives are also face-threatening.

Utterance 27, Anupama: What happens when the father has always been a shameless being Mr Shaw?

Utterance 28, Anupama: Are you surprised, Mr Shaw that I called you by your name?

Utterance 29, Anupama: If you don't love and care for yourself, how can you care for others?

Utterance 30, Anupama: (Addressing her mother-in-law) What society is that that couldn't offer any help to a suffering soul? Then I don't care about them anymore!

Utterance 31, Anush: Can somebody who is never honest in business be in love? That is the case with Vanrage.

Utterance 32, Anupama: The society should learn to stop imposing on women. Men are forgiven for everything. If a son disrespects the mother because he is angry, society will forgive him but not the woman. If a woman knows how to control her emotions, why won't men?

Utterance 33, Anupama: Why are you doing all these? Do you want my past to hunt my future? But it's not possible, you threw me out of my house.

Utterance 34, Anupama: So, are you telling me that cheating on your wife is the best?

Utterance 35, Anupama: Where is that society that can only point at a woman but cannot lend a hand when that woman is in trouble?

Utterance 36, Anupama: (defiantly jumping down the wall) Who dares stop Anupama from daring? Can you now, Mr Shaw?

Most of the interrogatives directed at Mr Shaw, Anupama's husband are face-threatening but designed as a therapy to help her heal.

### **Therapy**

Utterance 37, Anupama: (Giving Movika a pillow) Take this. Take it to be Amby. Take your anger out on him. Hit it. Listen to me. This anger and pain you have inside of you – something you wanted to say but couldn't, speak Muku. Take out all your pain and rage today.

#### **Non-verbal Impoliteness**

- **Hitting the pillow as Amby,**
- **tearing it apart**
- **flogging it with a belt.**

Utterance 38, Movika: (Holding the pillow as if her ex-husband, Amby) Why did you hit me? Why did you hit me? How dare you? What did I do to deserve that kind of treatment? If you try to hurt me again, I will break your hand!

Text 39: Defiance: Climbing a seat and scaling a wall when Mr Shaw locks her in and tries stopping her from travelling with Mr Anush.

#### **After Therapy**

Utterance 40, Movika: I have never felt this relaxed before. It's like a load has been lifted off my shoulder.

Utterance 41, Anupama: We deserve to laugh when we want to. You, Anush, have given me that.

#### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION**

This study examines the psychological and emotional violence in Bollywood's *Anupama* through impoliteness strategies. It also assesses the conventional impoliteness strategies deployed as violence therapy.

Both verbal and non-verbal face-threatening Acts that constitute emotional violence in the study film, *Anupama* are highlighted, and Culpeper's (2005 and 2015) theory of impoliteness is deployed as the framework for analysing the variables under investigation. It is discovered that using some impoliteness strategies can cause psychological harm to women. Constantly yelling at a wife is a form of psychological violence. Constantly blaming a wife for offences, she has not really committed and calling her irresponsible and other names can cause emotional trauma for her. Always using derogatory tags for her can make her feel uncomfortable and dehumanized. Flogging and battering a wife can cause mental depression in the case of Movika. Other non-verbal impoliteness strategies that can cause psychological trauma include;

- throwing a wife out of her house,
- shutting the door on her,
- flogging a wife,
- turning one's back on the wife,
- invading her space always,
- lying with a mistress on the matrimonial bed,
- avoid sitting together,
- avoid going out together.
- avoid identifying with one's wife and introducing her to friends,
- not being proud of one's spouse.
- negative inscriptions.

It is also discovered that some impoliteness strategies can be deployed as a healing therapy to escape depression and psychological harm such as;

- Positive impoliteness strategies of using inappropriate identity markers such as a close person's surname like "Mr Shaw" for *Anupama's* husband.
- Scorn,
- ridicule,
- instil a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur.
- invade Mr Shaw's space scornfully.
- pointing a warning finger at one's husband.
- Defiance – climbing a seat and jumping over a wall to thwart a husband's orders.



It is concluded that always using hurting utterances that seek disagreement and make people cry in relationships can cause psychological trauma. Also, intentional conventional impoliteness such as challenges, rhetorical questions, threats and even insults can be deployed as violence therapy. Talking out one's pain rather than bottling it up can help to heal psychological trauma.

Negative impoliteness can be adopted as psychological violence therapy by instilling a belief that action detrimental to the other will happen or occur.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Teachers of English as a second language should teach learners the importance of using language to express their pent-up emotions to avoid mental injuries as a result of hurt suffered from others' utterances in relationships. Interlocutors should learn to maximize politeness strategies rather than impoliteness strategies since some of them can cause lasting health damage.

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