

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS

**FACE THREATENING ACTS IN THE DISCOURSE OF THE
ACADEMIC CLINIC IN KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

I am grateful to God that this work started and did get completed. It is grace. I also thank the following people for their encouragement, support and prayer:

My husband Joseph Mwaniki without whom I would have given up.

My children: Miriam, Eva and Ephraim. They eventually became part of the journey as did Bishop Benson Macharia.

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God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

In Kenya today, secondary school students sometimes describe themselves as neglected because they feel they are denied the opportunity to express their views. Considering the many communicative events in schools, this is puzzling. The study posits that the communication may be marred, causing the students neither to enjoy nor benefit from the fora provided. This study, “Face Threatening Acts in the Discourse of The Academic Clinic in Kenyan Secondary Schools” is an attempt at a pragmatic examination of the verbal communication of parents, teachers and students during the academic clinic forum in Kenyan secondary schools. The problem the study examines is the possibly ineffective communication in the formal conversation of the academic clinic. The ineffectiveness is explained using the concept of face threatening acts which is a major tenet of the Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987), which has been used in this study together with The Speech Acts Theory of Austin and Searle (1975). To this end, the first two objectives of the study are to identify the face threatening acts in the utterances of parents and teachers respectively in their formal conversation with the student during the academic clinic. The third is to determine the extent to which students read face threat in the conversation of the academic clinic. The research design is mainly qualitative as the data collected is in the form of conversations. The location of the study is Kiambu County of Kenya. Systematic random sampling is used to select thirty students from three public secondary schools who (together with their parents and teachers) participate in this study. Their conversations are tape-recorded and then transcribed. Out of the thirty conversations, ten are picked for content analysis. A questionnaire is also used to examine students’ perception of face threat in parents’ and teachers’ utterances during the academic clinic. The data is presented in transcribed conversations, tables, graphs and piecharts. The findings show that both parents and teachers do threaten the students’ face. Teachers’ utterances are more threatening than the parents’. It also emerges that it is the negative face that receives more threat. The questionnaire shows that students do read face threat in the conversation of the academic clinic. It is clear that while the forum is still a useful day, there is need to improve the communicative competence of the participants. The findings of the study have implications for parents and teachers, social scientists, Parents’ Association, the relevant ministry, as well as school administration.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

1. BOM - Board of Management
2. CP - Co-operative Principle
3. FTA - Face Threatening Act
4. GoK - Government of Kenya
5. H - Hearer
6. KCPE - Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
7. MOEST - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
8. PT - Politeness Theory
9. PA - Parents' Association
10. S - Speaker
11. SAT - Speech Acts Theory
12. TSC - Teachers Service Commission

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Communication - The transmission of information, ideas, attitudes or emotions from one person to another using words.
- Communicative competence - Knowledge of how to communicate effectively.
- The academic clinic - A day in Kenyan public schools when parents visit the schools in which their children learn. Each parent engages in a formal conversation with their child and the teacher under whose care the child is. The aim of the communicative event is to discuss how the student is doing in academics, co-curricular activities, discipline and general welfare. The forum is also referred to “Open Day”.
- Face - An abstract concept meaning the self-image that every adult tries to project.
- Face threatening Act - An utterance that is contrary to the face wants of the addressee and / or speaker.
- Kinesics - A category of non-verbal communication that includes gestures, posture, facial expressions, body movement and eye-contact.
- Speech Act - Actions performed by a speaker in uttering a sentence.
- Paralanguage - A way of communicating meaning through voice qualities rather than words. It includes pitch, volume, rate and quality of voice.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This section presents the background against which the study was developed. It also presents the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, rationale and finally the scope and limitations of the research.

1.2 Background to the Study

There are many occasions in Kenyan secondary schools in which effective communication is needed. The Basic Education Act , 2013 mandates the Parents' Association (henceforth PA) in conjunction with the Board of management (henceforth BOM) to “hold such number of meetings at such places and at such times as the association shall consider necessary for the proper discharge of its functions.” Some of these meetings involve teachers (who are represented in the PA) and students. Examples of such forums are school assemblies, guidance and counseling sessions, and meetings between teachers and student leaders. School BOMs also hold meetings. Parents of children in boarding schools interact with their children on visiting days. Parents, teachers and students meet in prize-giving days, annual general meetings, parents' days, and in the academic clinics.

All these communication forums notwithstanding, the GoK (2008) report blamed “breakdown in communication” among school stakeholders for unrests and strikes in secondary schools. The report describes Kenyan students as “feeling neglected when they lack avenues to express themselves.” This is the gap that this research hopes to fill. This research holds that the communicative events may not be effective avenues for the students to express themselves because of the way parents and teachers use language. It examines the

utterances of parents and teachers to determine whether they offend the students and therefore take away the intended benefit of the many communicative events in secondary schools. The offence is interpreted using the Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) as further expounded in chapter 2.

The academic clinic forum is the focus of this research. On this day, parents visit the schools where their children learn. Here, they engage in a formal conversation with the child as well as the teachers who interact with the child in curricular and co-curricular activities. Usually, the record of the child's performance in exams and discipline is used to guide the discussion. The objective of the discussion is to allow for parents' and teachers' participation in guiding the student to improve not only in academics, but also in co-curricular activities and character development. Since the teachers are the custodians of the student's performance record, they tend to lead the discussion. In relation to the focus of this research, the interest of the student as a hearer is to have his self-image taken care of by the parents and the teachers in the course of the discourse. This is in accordance with Levinson and Brown (1987) whose theory guides this research. In contrast, according to GoK (2001), the interest of the parents and teachers should be to use the discourse to enhance school discipline, acceptable behaviour, students' academic progress, moral growth and welfare.

According to the GoK (2001) report, the academic clinics in Kenyan secondary schools started being organized in the late 1980s. This was in a bid to make parents and students participate more in decisions affecting the learning process. The clinics are likely to remain an important communicative event for a long time to come. This is because the GoK (2001)

report recommends that “Schools facilitate fora where parents can discuss their concerns about the school openly to inculcate a sense of ownership”. Some of the concerns handled during the academic clinics are suggested in the same GoK (2001) report. It recommends that parents, in their talks with children, should aim to “enhance school discipline and acceptable behaviour”. The teacher on the other hand, should “show interest in academic progress, moral growth and the welfare of his/ her students”. Clearly therefore, the academic clinic communication is intended to meet very important needs especially in the student.

To achieve these intentions, communicative competence is called for. Hudson (1980) says communicative competence is knowledge needed by a speaker or hearer, but is more broadly based than the linguistic competence of Chomskyan linguistics. Linguistic competence is the linguistic knowledge that allows a speaker of a language to understand and produce new well-formed structures of any length as seen in Rodman and Fromkin (2004). On the other hand, communication is the process through which there is deliberate or accidental transfer of meaning (Gamble and Gamble, 2002). Communicative competence therefore requires one to not only have linguistic competence, but also to understand how messages are sent and received so as to share meaning. This research examines the linguistic competence of parents and teachers as they speak to students during the academic clinic. Since context is important, communicative competence also involves an understanding of pragmatics.

According to Galvin et al (1994) the communication process involves two or more persons attempting to communicate their ideas, feelings and attitudes. She continues to note that in most communication situations, speakers and listeners interact with each other for some time,

each trying to understand what the other person means. Coulthard (1985) writes that speakers require hearers to 'work' to a greater or lesser extent to derive their message from the words uttered. In this research, the student is mainly examined in his role as the hearer and the study examines the extent to which students read offence in the utterances of parents and teachers. Thus, an examination of communicative competence is a description of language in use. One approach to describing language in use is the pragmatic one which focuses on speaker meaning. According to Yule (1986), Pragmatics studies the meaning of a speaker (or writer) as interpreted by a listener (or reader) in a context. In the pragmatic approach, the speaker's intended meaning can be interpreted by the listener paying attention to speaker reference, conventional and conversational implicatures, presupposition and inference.

To get the speaker meaning, the listener needs to work out speaker reference. Yule (1986) defines reference as an act by which a speaker (or writer) uses language to enable a listener (or reader) to identify something. Other than reference, the listener also needs to work out the implicatures used by the speaker. According to Yule (1983), implicatures are a concept attributed to Grice (1975). Implicatures refer to what is suggested in an utterance, even though it is not expressed or entailed by the utterance. While conventional implicature is derived from the existing associations of word use in the society, conversational implicature is derived from the Cooperative Principle (henceforth CP) as well as the Politeness Theory, (henceforth PT).

There is a connection between implicatures, cooperation and politeness in conversation. Coulthard (1985) suggests that participants in a conversation need to co-operate with each other to make the conversation follow an accepted purpose or direction. This means that in the event of lack of cooperation, a conversation may fail to achieve its desired purpose. As for politeness, Goffman (1971) shows that it is needed to 'disarm' the potential aggression which exists in every communication. Brown and Levinson (1987) built on Goffman's concept to come up with PT. The main tenet of PT is 'face' which is an abstract concept describing the public self-image that every adult tries to project. Politeness is treated as awareness by participants of a conversation, of the self-esteem needs of each other and an attempt to meet those needs in the course of the conversation.

Sometimes however, an utterance in a conversation may be interpreted to be expressing a disregard for these esteem needs. Brown and Levinson (1987) call such utterances face threatening acts (henceforth FTAs). FTAs are significant because they can sabotage the effectiveness of communication no matter how well intentioned the speaker might be. In the context of the academic clinic discourse, the parent and teacher give much guidance to the student on a wide spectrum of issues. These conversations form the data for this proposed study. The focus of this research is to establish the extent to which the use of FTAs by parents and teachers may affect the well intentioned communication of the academic clinic conversation. It would be interesting to note the interaction between FTAs and data as the guidance is being given.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The research problem is the apparent ineffectiveness of communication in the secondary school academic clinic forum. The academic clinic as a communicative event in Kenyan secondary school is unique because it is the one event that brings each individual student, his/her parent and the teacher together to openly discuss issues of student academic growth, discipline, moral growth and welfare as advised in GoK (2001) . In this forum, students are not assembled in groups and addressed by parents and/or teachers as is the case in most other communicative events in secondary schools. The fact that the GoK (2008) report found a “breakdown in communication” to be existing in schools while the clinics were still in place is puzzling. Ideally, this is a forum for candid self-expression by parents, teachers and students. This research examined the academic clinic conversations for FTA content in a bid to establish what hinders the communication. The research also sought to establish whether the students did experience face threat as parents and teachers talked with them. This is because the message of any utterance is ultimately with the receiver. It is hoped that an awareness of the possible weaknesses in the communication could help make academic clinics more effective.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

- i.) Identify the FTAs in parents’ utterances during the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools.
- ii.) Describe the FTAs in teachers’ utterances during the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools.

- iii.) Determine the extent to which students read face threat in utterances made to them by parents and teachers during the academic clinic.

1.5 Research Questions

The research set out to answer the following questions:

- i.) Which FTAs do parents of Kenyan secondary schools perform as they speak to the student during the academic clinic?
- ii.) Which FTAs do teachers of Kenyan secondary school perform as they speak to the student during the academic clinic?
- iii.) To what extent do the students of Kenyan secondary schools interpret the academic clinic conversation to be a threat to their face?

1.6 Rationale of Study

The findings of this study could be used to create awareness among parents and teachers. A consideration of FTAs would make them more sensitive in their choice of language as they communicate with the students. Galvin (1994) notes that school is one area in our lives in which we need to acquire highly developed communication skills. The study recognizes that indeed some FTAs must be used by parents and teachers as they fulfill their mandate on the upbringing of the student. But there are utterances that have potential for face threat and are not necessary to the conversation but are used in ignorance of their potential to hurt the face needs of the student. Awareness would help parents and teachers to do away with them or manage the FTA to minimize threat. There are also utterances with minimal threat that parents and teachers could use more frequently to achieve the desired ends of the academic clinic communication.

As pointed out earlier, the academic clinics were established for the purpose of achieving stakeholder participation in the running of school affairs (c.f 1.1). The parent, teacher and student were being given a chance to actively participate in the student's overall growth: academics, morals, co-curricular activities, discipline and welfare. That the GoK (2008) report indicated that students feel they have been denied avenues for self-expression could imply they are yet to participate in their own affairs. Holding the meetings may not be enough. A consideration of the findings of this research may help parents and teachers to focus on making the student participate more by taking greater care of his face needs. There is need to examine the communication of the parents and teachers so that the objective of stakeholder participation is achieved.

A consideration of the findings of this research may also be important for the maintenance of tranquility, law and order in schools. The GoK (2008) report records that a "breakdown in communication provides a fertile ground for unrests in schools." These unrests could be minimized if the forum offered in the academic clinic becomes a chance for all stakeholders to communicate in an atmosphere of mutual respect. It is this respect that FTAs threaten. Hence the need to establish the frequency and perception of their use in the academic clinic communication. It is hoped that with an improvement in the communication, students' grievances could be heard during this meeting and be dealt with before they can lead to unrests and riots in schools.

An awareness of FTAs in school communication may also help schools adjust to changes in the wider society. Current management trends in institutions, government and the corporate world stress the need for better manager- clientele relations. This is a change that is getting enshrined in national constitutions, strategic plans, core values, service charters as well as vision and mission statements of organizations. Writing in *Teacher's Image* volume 18 (2012), the TSC secretary at the time, urges all workers in the education sector to note the “paradigm shift” in teacher management in the new Kenyan constitution, “... while at the same time respecting the spirit of the supreme law with regard to stakeholder involvement, promotion of the democratic practices and respect for human rights.” Improved communication must be given priority if secondary schools are not to be left behind. This research hoped to provide information that would be useful for raising the awareness of school stakeholders on the importance of politer communication. It was hoped that an examination of FTAs in the academic clinic conversation might be a step towards improved communication in the school set-up.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of Study

The study was conducted in 3 secondary schools situated in Kiambu County. Through the study, the researcher examined the formal conversations of parents, teachers and students during the academic clinic. As noted earlier in this study, the topics to be discussed in the academic clinic conversation are laid out in a government report (c.f 1.5). This means the conversations tend to be similar in topic and structure. For this reason, the 3 schools were taken to be representative of the academic clinic conversations in Kenyan secondary schools. 30 conversations were collected – 10 from each school. From these, 10 were picked for content analysis. It was believed that those conversations would be sufficient to show the extent of FTA content in the academic clinic conversation. Though conversations could be

analysed for many aspects, the research limited its analysis to the FTAs that were employed in the utterances.

Communication also includes the non-verbal dimension which involves transmitting messages through touch, kinesics, distance, time, colour, personal grooming and paralanguage. This study did not investigate these non-verbals but collected and investigated only the utterances used. This is because the concept of FTA is mainly related to utterances.

To sum up, Chapter One has indicated that communication in school is important. Despite the many communicative events in Kenyan secondary schools, students still decry a lack of avenues for self-expression. This research examines the communication of the academic clinic with a focus of establishing the weakness in the communication which could have led to its becoming ineffective. This ineffectiveness has an impact on stakeholder involvement, school discipline, students' self-esteem and the fulfillment of the intended purpose behind the establishment of school academic clinics. The research posits that the problem is poor communication from parents and teachers. This qualitative research will focus on the FTAs in the discourse of parents and teachers as they speak to students during the academic clinic. Student perception of face threat will also be examined. The research will limit itself to the words of teachers and parents during the formal conversation of the academic clinic. Chapter two will present the readings informing the research as well as the theories used.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature that informed the research. The researcher presents relevant readings on school communication, the impact of the parent's utterances on the child, and relevant studies on politeness in communication. The chapter also presents the theories that inform this study. The main one was the Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987). The Speech Acts Theory of Austin and Searle as presented in Searle (1976) and expounded in Traugott and Pratt (1980) was also used. 2.1 presents the Literature Review while 2.2 presents the Theoretical Framework.

2.1.0 Literature Review

The readings presented in 2.1.1 and 2.1.3 are on the impact of teacher and parent utterances on the self-esteem of the student. Additionally, relevant politeness studies are presented. These range from those carried out outside Africa, outside Kenya, to those carried out in Kenya by the time this research study was done.

2.1.1 Studies on School Communication

One tenet of the PT that this study refers to is 'face'. Brown and Levinson (1987) use the term 'face' to mean self-esteem. There is a relationship between a student's self-esteem and school communication. Brooks (1993) examined the contribution of teachers on the self-esteem of their students. To do this, he asked grown-ups to give their experiences with an educator when one was a student, which lessened or reinforced self-esteem. The grown-ups are reported to having a 'vivid memory' and 'strong emotion' even when the communication had taken place decades before. Teachers are found to have demeaned, belittled or accused

students of being disruptive as they struggled to understand what was being taught. This research study set out to establish whether the Kenyan teachers could be inadvertently doing the same in their communication with students as represented in their utterances during the academic clinic.

Ideally, all teachers need to be polite in their communication to students. The GoK (2001) report describes a good teacher as one who relates well with (among others) students, is 'civil', has ability to appreciate his/her students' individual differences and at all times listens to them and motivates them to do their best. The teacher is charged with the responsibility of creating "a conducive learning environment". Impolite communication will cast aspersion on the teacher's credentials and make holistic development of the student difficult. It is possible that teachers in Kenya need to improve their skills in the area of communication. The same GoK (2001) report goes on to note that they (teachers of Kenyan secondary schools) lack knowledge and skills in guidance and counseling. Considering that the academic clinic conversations are expected to (among other purposes) guide and counsel students, impolite communication would be very harmful. This means the present research would be a pointer as to how teachers can make their utterances during the academic clinic more fruitful. Teacher utterances formed an important part of the data for the proposed study. Brooks (1993) observes that teacher impact involves not only the teaching of particular skills, but as importantly, the fostering of students' self-esteem. This present study considered the utterances of teachers during the formal conversations of academic clinics and examined them for FTA content.

2.1.2 The Impact of the Parent's Utterances on the Child

Van (1995) observes that parents need to cultivate feelings of being cared for and respected in their children. This enables the children to have a healthy self-esteem as they grow older. Van singles out parents as the main source of positive and/or negative experiences a child will have. In the early years of a child's life, parents are the most significant influence on self-esteem. This is mainly through the choice of utterances. Impolite utterances from parents damage the child's self-esteem. Van (1995) notes that among utterances that damage self-esteem are repeated negative evaluations. "If the child is repeatedly told he is dumb, stupid, slow, fat and so on, he/she can come to believe this". Van (1995) is related to the present study as both seek to examine poor communication in the utterances of parents. Van's study singles out poor communication from parents as the most significant factor in the child's self-esteem. This includes hurting words which this present study looks at as FTAs. But, while Van is more focused on the emotional and/or psychological impact of parents' utterances on the child, the focus of this research is the linguistic impact of the communication. The weakness in communication is examined using the concept of FTAs according to Brown and Levinson (1987). Though the focus of Van's study is different from the present one's, it would still be interesting to see how much FTA content would be found in parents' utterances during the academic clinic.

The objectives of the academic clinic may fail to be achieved if parents' communication is impolite. Galvin (1994) observes that one goal of successful communication is to manage to present information persuasively, to argue and come to an agreement. Parents may need to agree with their children so that (where need be) they change their beliefs, attitudes and

behaviour with the ultimate goal of maximizing the potential of the child. The presence of FTAs in parent utterances would make persuasion difficult.

2.1.3 Some Relevant Studies on Politeness in Communication

Politeness has been widely studied. Gibson (2008) used the PT to examine politeness of cashiers of fast – food retailers as they responded to (deliberately) ambiguous requests from clients. The cashier would be forced to use a question to clarify the request. The questions were examined for politeness. Gibson concluded that male cashiers were more polite when questioning female clients than when handling male clients. Female cashiers used more markers of politeness when speaking to male clients than they did when responding to female clients. Gibson noted that threats to a hearer’s negative face can include orders, requests, suggestions and warnings among others. She continued to show that disagreements or challenges can threaten a hearer’s positive face. These observations are important because orders, requests, suggestions and warnings may form part of the data for this study. They may be difficult (at times impossible) to avoid in a forum like the academic clinic in which parents and teachers are mandated to guide students. But while her focus was on politeness, this one focuses on FTAs. In addition, Gibson (2008) examined the impact of gender on the use of politeness which this one does not. Gibson (2008) is important because it points to what might need to be done to minimize face threat during the academic clinic.

Yet another relevant politeness study is Ryall (2013). Ryall noted that in recognition of the importance of politeness, the United Kingdom’s branch of Sasakawa Foundation sponsors an “International Conference on Politeness” every year. This conference highlights politeness – related issues in different societies. Ryall states that a study of politeness can examine the

linguistic mechanisms available to express polite meanings. She also shows some real-world implications of politeness which includes the analysis of misunderstandings in communication. Ryall observes that “Politeness must take into account impoliteness”. This was a relevant statement to this study since it showed the gap the researcher attempted to fill. This is the possible misunderstanding that takes place during the academic clinic conversation. While Ryall looks at it as impoliteness, this present study looks at the misunderstanding from the perspective of FTA content in the discourse. The two studies share common ground in that they both examine the possible weakness in communication with the hope that the awareness can encourage politeness.

Nchedo and Omeje (2008) examined the use of polite communication skills by female students in single and mixed – sex schools in Nigeria. The aspects examined included the use of tag questions, politeness, slang, cooperative attributes and correct grammar. The study found that context influences the use of politeness. The female students were more polite in a girls-only school than in the mixed school where they tended to be influenced by the orientation of male communication patterns. Nchedo’s study was important because in common with the present study it shares a concern for school communication.

Yet another relevant study has been carried out in South Africa. Coleman et al (Ed 2004) focused on the communication pattern of the leadership and management in schools. Teachers and parents were taken to be part of the management. The study found that education systems were highly centralized and teachers were authoritarian. Coleman observed that good communication is important in strategic planning so that all stakeholders

in a school share the vision. These observations stress the need for teachers and parents to continually focus on their communication skills. This is the gap the current study set out to pay attention to.

In Kenya, Kimotho (2009) has studied the use of politeness strategies in resolving social conflict. The research data was collected from the (then) popular Kenyan TV programme – Makutano Junction. Kimotho recorded utterances made by two of the main characters in times of interpersonal verbal conflict. He examined the different politeness strategies used to solve the conflicts. He concluded that gender, situational context, social distance and status influence the choice of politeness and conflict resolution strategies. While this current study did not major on social conflicts, it reflects the importance of politeness in communication, just like Kimotho's study.

In school, students and teachers communicate a lot to each other. Mwarania (2010) examined the use of polite forms in the language used by students of Kaaga Girls High School when communicating with their teachers. Her source of data was the dialogue that took place between form four students and ten of their teachers. The conversations were recorded and examined for the presence or absence of polite forms. She focused on the students' language only, unlike this research which examined the utterances of parents and teachers.

The Speech Acts Theory (henceforth SAT) is also useful in discourse analysis. Walya examined the discourse of banking in Kenya. The Edmondson's 1981 model of SAT was

used to describe the structure of banking discourse. Walya's study showed both the import of language use in an institution and the usefulness of speech acts in analysing discourse. In the face of these and other politeness studies it was hoped that a study on the FTAs in the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools would also be useful.

2.2.0 Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by two theories. The Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) was used to categorise, analyse and discuss the FTAs in the utterances of parents and teachers in the formal conversations of Kenyan secondary schools' academic clinics. The Speech Acts Theory of Austin and Searle as presented in Searle (1976) and modified in Traugott and Prat (1980) was used to categorise the utterances to include in the questionnaire for students. The Politeness Theory is explained in 2.2.1 and the Speech Acts Theory in 2.2.2.

2.2.1 The Politeness Theory

Brown and Levinson (1987) attribute the Politeness Theory to themselves – Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson. Their main argument is that participants in a conversation typically observe politeness. Politeness is taken to be the expression of the speaker's intention to mitigate face threats. Central to the concept of politeness is the idea of 'face' which Brown and Levinson developed from the work of Goffman. Goffman (1967) argues that participants in a conversation have potential for aggression which politeness tries to disarm. This aggression or virtual offence is committed when the listener interprets the speaker's utterances as a trespass on his interests, equanimity or personal preserve. From this, Brown and Levinson (1987) developed their concept of 'face' which they define as the public self-image that every adult tries to project and hopes will be maintained in the course of conversation. The tenet of face is important to this study since incompetent communication hurts the self-esteem of the hearer.

Apart from politeness and face, the other tenets of PT that were considered significant to this research were positive face, negative face and face threatening acts. Brown and Levinson (1987) define positive face as “the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants”. It is also described further as “the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others”. Brown and Levinson continue to say that some acts “threaten the positive-face wants by indicating (potentially) that the speaker does not care about the addressee’s feelings, wants etc_ that in some important respect he doesn’t want H’s wants.” These acts are put into two categories:

- i) Those that show that S has a negative evaluation of some aspect of H’s positive face.

These acts are further put in sub-categories

- a) Expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt/ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations, insults.
- b) Contradictions or disagreements, challenges

- ii) Those that show that S doesn’t care about (or is indifferent to) H’s positive face.

These too are sub-categorized:

- a) Expressions of violent (out of control) emotions.
- b) Irreverence, mention of taboo topics, including those that are inappropriate in the context.
- c) Bringing of bad news (by S) about H, or good news (boasting) about S.
- d) Raising of dangerously emotive or divisive topics.
- e) Blatant non-cooperation.

- f) Use of offensive address terms and other status-marked identifications in initial encounters.

Positive face is significant to this research especially because negative evaluation may be inescapable in a discussion touching on students' academic performance. There will always be an area the parent or teacher considers not as well done as they would like. This would go contrary to the students' need to belong and be affirmed by parents whom every student will feel is significant to them.

Negative face on the other hand is the desire of every adult that his actions be unimpeded by others. It is the need by speech interactants to be shown respect and not have their privacy and space invaded, resources spent and actions restricted without cause (Brown and Levinson 1987).

Participants in a conversation are assumed to be working together to maintain each other's face. But unfortunately, this is not easy. Levinson and Brown (1987) show that speech participants often perform actions that threaten face. They further note that many utterances are 'intrinsically face threatening'. This means they run counter to the face wants of the speaker or hearer.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), positive FTAs are acts that have the potential to indicate that the speaker (henceforth S) does not care about the feelings and wants of the hearer (henceforth H). Positive FTAs are categorized into two broad categories. The classes

will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four. Examples of positive FTAs are those acts expressing disapproval, criticism, ridicule, contempt, complaint, reprimand accusation or insult. Additionally, contradictions, disagreement or challenge , expressions (by S) of violent (out of control) emotions, introduction of irreverence, taboo/emotive/ topics, bringing of bad news about H, non-cooperation in the conversation as well as the use of offensive status-marked identifications have potential to inflict hurt on the hearer's positive face.

Negative FTAs can also hurt the hearer's face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), they potentially express the fact that S has no intention of avoiding impeding on H's freedom of future action. Negative FTAs are put in three broad classes as follows:

- i) Those acts that predicate some future act of H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) some act. Brown and Levinson (1987) further divide these acts into the following sub-categories:
 - a) Orders and requests
 - b) Suggestions and advice
 - c) Reminders
 - d) Threats, warnings and dares.
- ii) Those acts that predicate some positive future act of S towards H, and in so doing, put some pressure on H to accept or reject them, and possibly incur a debt. These acts are sub-categorized as follows:
 - a) Offers
 - b) Promises

- iii) Those acts that predicate some desire of S towards H or H's goods, giving H reason to think he may have to take action to protect the object of S's desire, or give it to S. These acts are sub-categorized as follows:
 - a) Compliments, expressions of envy or admiration
 - b) Expressions of strong (negative) emotions towards H.

Negative FTAs are important in this research because they are expected to form part of the utterance of parents and teachers. This is because of the GoK (2001) recommendation that actually instructs parents and teachers to guide students on certain topics (c.f 1.1).

The construct of FTAs was the main focus of the analysis in this present study. Through it, the researcher set out to establish the presence and extent of both positive and negative FTAs in the academic clinic conversation. The data which comprised utterances of parents and teachers was categorized following FTA categories as shown in Brown and Levinson (1987).

2.2.2 The Speech Acts Theory

The Speech Acts Theory was the second theory used to study the discourse of the academic clinic in this study. Austin (1975) shows that SAT was developed in the 1960's by a group of British philosophers, the most notable of whom were himself (Austin) and Searle. Traugott and Pratt (1980) observe that the Speech Acts Theory is a philosophical approach which can be used to describe language use in context. According to Searle (1976)), as we speak, we not only say something, but we do something. The utterances in which saying something is equal to doing something he called performatives. Levinson (1983) notes that Austin's theory evolves from a theory about some special and peculiar utterances (performatives) to a general theory that pertains to all kinds of sentences. He goes on to note that Searle is credited with

having 'systematized' Austin's work. Part of the systematization is Searle's classification of utterances which was an attempt at improving an Austin's. Levinson (1983) continues to observe that Searle (1976) proposed that there are just five kinds of action that one can perform in speaking, by means of the five types of utterances or speech acts. However, Levinson (1983) goes on to show that post- Austinian thought continued to build on Searle's classification. This research used the Searle (1976) classification alongside a post- Austinian modification described by Traugott and Pratt (1980) as a 'useful working classification.'

Searle (1976) presents five classes; Representatives, directives, commissives, declarations and expressives. For each category, Seale presents a definition of the particular speech act followed by paradigm cases of the speech act category as will be presented further on in this section. While Traugott and Pratt (1980) go along with the five categories as shown in Searle (1976), they also give further examples of what utterances in a particular speech category are capable of doing. Additionally, Traugott and Pratt (1980) come up with a sixth category: verdictives. This category, in the estimation of the researcher, covers a group of utterances that are very important in terms of potential face threat but which may not have been recognized as a definite category in Searle (1976).The definition and examples of verdictives is presented hereafter as item (f) of the categories used in classifying utterances in the questionnaire for students. The six utterances used in the questionnaire were representative of all six classes of speech acts or illocutionary acts. They are numbered from (a) to (f) as follows:

- a) Representatives. According to Searle (1976), these are utterances which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. (Paradigm cases: asserting and

concluding). Traugott and Pratt (1980) further exemplify representatives as stating, claiming, hypothesizing, describing, predicting and telling, insisting, suggesting or swearing that something is the case. In the thinking of SAT, these are illocutionary acts that undertake to present a state of affairs.

- b) Directives. According to Searle (1976), these are utterances which are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something (paradigm cases: requesting, questioning). Traugott and Pratt (1980) also add commanding, pleading, inviting, daring and insisting or suggesting that the addressee do something. These are illocutionary acts designed to get the addressee to do something.
- c) Commissives. According to Searle (1976), these are utterances which commit the speaker to some future course of action (Paradigm cases: promising, threatening, offering). To this class, Traugott and Pratt (1980) also add vowing. They are illocutionary acts that commit the speaker to doing something.
- d) Expressives. According to Searle (1976), these are utterances which express a psychological state (paradigm cases: thanking, apologising, welcoming and congratulating). To this class, Traugott and Pratt (1980) add deploring, condoling and greeting. These are variously described as illocutionary acts that express only the speaker's psychological attitude towards some state of affairs.
- e) Declarations. According to Searle (1976), these are utterances which effect immediate change in the institutional state of affairs and which tend to rely on elaborate extra-linguistic institutions (paradigm cases: excommunicating, declaring war, christening and firing from employment.) Traugott and Pratt (1980) also add blessing, bidding, passing sentence and marrying. Declarations are described as illocutionary acts that bring about the state of affairs they refer to.

f) Verdictives. This class, as earlier mentioned, is an addition to Searle's classification. The research considered it very important as it includes utterances which were not included in the five classes attributed to Searle, but could feature prominently in the conversations of the academic clinic. Traugott and Pratt (1980) define verdictives as illocutionary acts that deliver a finding as to value or fact and thus that rate some entity or situation on a scale, such as assessing, ranking, estimating and all other judgmental acts.

SAT was deemed relevant to the current study because it provided a classification of the utterances to be used in the student's questionnaire with the academic clinic being the context of use. The researcher considered that the six classes of speech acts (which are fewer than the categories of FTAs in PT) would be useful in coming up with a brief but all-inclusive set of utterances against which the students' perception of face threat would be tested.

The tenets of the SAT that were deemed relevant to this study are speech act, illocutionary force and perlocutionary force. According to Coulthard (1985), the term 'speech act' is based on Austin's fundamental assertion that "in saying anything, one is performing some kind of act". According to Traugott and Pratt (1980), an utterance is an act performed by a speaker in a context with respect to an addressee. This definition is in tandem with this study in which the utterances of parents and teachers were being viewed as acts they performed on the student within the context of a secondary school academic clinic. That an utterance is an act underlines the seriousness with which teachers and parents need to consider how they speak to the student. Austin and Searle (1963) see illocutionary force of an utterance as the force accompanying it and which has a consequential effect on the addressee.

Closely related to the tenet of illocutionary act is perlocutionary force. Levinson (1983), quoting Austin, defines this as the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance. Searle (1989) defines perlocutionary force as the consequences or effects that the speaker's illocutionary acts have on the hearer. This tenet was held important to this current study since it helped to underline the fact that the utterances by teachers and parents do have an effect on the student. It is notable that the effect would hold, whether the speaker intended it or not. The SAT is therefore important to this study. It would be interesting to see whether the illocutionary acts are perceived to be face threatening acts by the student. This would suggest a close relationship between the two theories.

In Chapter two, the researcher has presented the literature review and theoretical framework. The literature that has a bearing on this research has examined communication in school, at home, in a retail outlet and in conflict resolution. These show that the concept of politeness is important in communication in different contexts .The SAT was used to come up with the six utterances used in the questionnaire for students. The PT was used to analyse the data collected.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section presents the research design, location of study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, data collection procedures , data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The research design chosen for the study is qualitative design. According to Gray (2009), Qualitative design is “... a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomenon within their own context- specific settings”. This design was chosen because the interpretation of the academic clinic discourse is highly influenced by the school context. It’s also naturalistic since the researcher did not interfere with the research environment but tape - recorded the academic clinic conversations just as they were carried out by the participants.

The research examined the FTAs present in the utterances of parents and teachers as they spoke to students. The researcher took the pragmatic approach which focuses on the listener’s interpretation of intended speaker meaning. The perception of the listener can only be seen if the researcher sets out to gain what Gray (2009) calls a “holistic or integrated overview of the study, including the perception of participants”. Kombo and Tromp (2004), quoting Orodho and Kombo (2002), write that “In qualitative research, feelings and insights are important”. Qualitative research design is recommended for studies that seek to investigate reasons and motivations behind a particular situation. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) write: “By using the qualitative method, researchers are able to collect data and explain phenomena more deeply

and exhaustively”. This research hoped to come up with an in-depth explanation as to why participants of the academic clinic discourse in Kenyan secondary schools may need to be more sensitive to the impact of FTAs in their conversation.

3.2 Location of Study

The study was conducted in three schools of Thika West sub-county in Kenya’s Kiambu County. The schools had the academic clinic as part of their calendar of events. This means the researcher could collect data from them. Kiambu County was chosen because it was possible to access 3 schools of different categories within the same location.

3.3 Target Population

According to Kombo and Tromp (2004), a population is a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement. The target population is all the formal conversations that take place between parents and teachers on one hand, and students on the other in the Kenyan secondary school academic clinic forum. Since secondary schools in Kenya are too many for the conversations to be examined, the research worked with an accessible population of thirty conversations. The thirty was considered sufficient since the conversations may be relatively similar. The accessible population is comparable to the target population. This is because of the shared school context, topics, structure and nature of participants. The conversations were taken from a boys’ national school, a girls’ county school and a mixed sub-county school. This was in a bid to be more representative.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Quoting Fink (2002), Gray (2009) says: “A good sample is a miniature of the population - just like it, only smaller”. The sample for the study was ten conversations taken from three schools in Thika West, Kiambu County. The ten conversations were considered sufficient for

content analysis because the formal conversations of the academic clinic share a lot in common. Furthermore, Milroy (1987) states that large samples tend not to be necessary for linguistic surveys since linguistic behaviour is more homogeneous than many other types of behaviour. In each of the three schools, ten students were picked from the admission register using systematic random sampling. The thirty parents were requested for consent to audio-tape their academic clinic conversation and for their children to participate in the research. The audio-taped conversations were then transcribed and numbered from one to thirty at random. Then systematic random sampling was applied at intervals of three. Every third conversation was picked for content analysis.

3.5 Research Instruments

The study mainly used a tape-recorder to capture the academic clinic conversations. This instrument was chosen because it records utterances as they are made and no part of the conversation is lost. From the tape-recorder, the researcher transcribed the conversations for content analysis.

The researcher also used a questionnaire for students. The questionnaire enabled students to give information on their reading of face threat in the academic clinic discourse. This needed to be done because the student as the hearer is the one interpreting the utterances of the parent and teacher.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The conversations were collected by tape-recording. The academic clinic host teacher would do the recording without the researcher being present as part of the discourse. This was to ensure that the conversation was as natural as possible since the researcher did not influence

it. Though the parent would have given written consent to record the conversation, care was taken to ensure that the audio recorder was not visible to the speech participants, to minimize the impact of the gadget on the naturalness of the data collected.

Questionnaire items were designed in such a way that they would be easy to respond to. Gray (2009) says non-response can be reduced by making questionnaires easy to answer. The questions were mostly closed-ended in style. Once designed, they were delivered by hand to the thirty students whose parents had given consent to participate in the research. Each of the 3 schools had 10 questionnaires issued to students. The researcher or research assistant would wait until the questionnaires were duly filled and pick them to reduce the rate of non-response or questionnaire being lost. A maximum of thirty minutes was given to fill the questionnaire so that each respondent could give well-thought-out complete responses.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data was mainly analysed qualitatively. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) recommend that studies such as this one that will mainly collect utterances for data may use qualitative data analysis because the areas under study may not require quantifiable data. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), such researchers obtain detailed information about the phenomenon under study and then try to establish patterns, trends and relationships from the information gathered.

To allow for the researcher to be systematic in analysis, tables and graphs were used. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) write that “such representation gives us a clearer picture of

the distribution”. The researcher used tables to show the proportion of face threat perceived by the students when parents and teachers used particular speech acts in the conversations of the academic clinic. This was deemed important because the tables would show at a glance whether the students actually perceived face threat as parents and teachers spoke to them during the formal academic clinic conversation. This is related to the third objective of this study (c.f 1.3). The tables also give a visual representation of how frequently the various FTAs were used by parents and teachers as they spoke to students during the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools. As much as was possible, the quantifiable data in the tables was presented in percentages. This is because Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) note that “Percentages are extremely important, especially if there is need to compare groups that differ in size”. The tables therefore help compare the extent of the face threat perceived by the students when the various FTAs and speech acts are employed by teachers and parents during the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools.

Bar graphs and pie charts were also be used. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) write: “Graphic representation of data is a valuable supplement to statistical analysis”. The charts and graphs were used to show the various positive and negative FTAs observed in the data collected. The categories used in the charts and tables were taken from the SAT and PT since these were the theories used to explain the poor communication in secondary schools.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Data collection started after a research permit had been acquired.

Members of the sample population were requested to be part of it. A consent form had been designed for each to sign. The members were given enough information about the study

without letting out information that would make them biased or artificial in the communication. The students, being minors, needed to have their parents allow them to be part of the sample population. The questionnaire expressly advised students not to write their names. All the information collected was used only for the purpose of the study. Even when known to the researcher/ research assistant, the identity of the participants was not revealed in the study .Where names of students were used to address them by parents or teachers, they have been replaced with “Student X”, “Student Y” or “Student Z”. The subjects are referred to as “Subject X”, Subject Y” or Subject Z”. The three schools used for the research were also randomly coded A, B and C. Parts of conversations considered to have sensitive information that might reveal the identity of the informant were left out.

In the preceding chapter, the researcher has presented the research methodology. The research design is qualitative, which allows an understanding of FTAs in the natural setting of the academic clinic conversation. The study, located in Kiambu County, targets the formal conversations of the academic clinic. Ten conversations form the sample size, picked through systematic random sampling. A tape-recorder and questionnaire are used to collect data, which is then analysed qualitatively. Ethical considerations were taken care of.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, a presentation will be made of the face threatening acts (FTAs) observed in the utterances made by parents and teachers as they conversed with students during the secondary school academic clinic event. The data was taken from ten conversations that had been transcribed. It was noted that the parent, teacher and student tended to use both Kiswahili and English in the conversation of the academic clinic. Whenever this happened, the researcher wrote the Kiswahili words in italics and followed them up with an English rendition in round brackets. Where extracts from the conversations are used, the words considered to constitute a particular FTA were written in bold. Note that some conversations were referred to more than once to illustrate different FTAs. Where this happened, the researcher has notified the reader that it is a previously used discourse represented as a different example. The FTAs will be classified, analysed and interpreted using the Politeness Theory (PT) of Brown and Levinson (1987) in fulfillment of the first two objectives of the study (c.f 1.3). The findings, analysis and interpretation of data from parents' utterances are presented in 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. The findings, analysis and interpretation of data derived from teachers' utterances are presented in 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

Additionally, 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 present the findings, analysis and interpretation of data collected from a questionnaire for students to show the extent to which students read face threat in the conversations of the academic clinic. In 4.3.1, the researcher presents the face threat read in the teachers' utterances. In 4.3.2, the researcher presents the face threat read in the parents'

utterances. The sentences used to assess their perception are classified using the SAT of Austin and Searle (1975) to make sure that all possible speech acts are included in the questionnaire. Thereafter, the students' responses are analysed and interpreted using the PT to show the degree to which they (students) feel threatened by the utterances of their parents and teachers. This meets the demands of the third objective of the study (c.f 1.3).

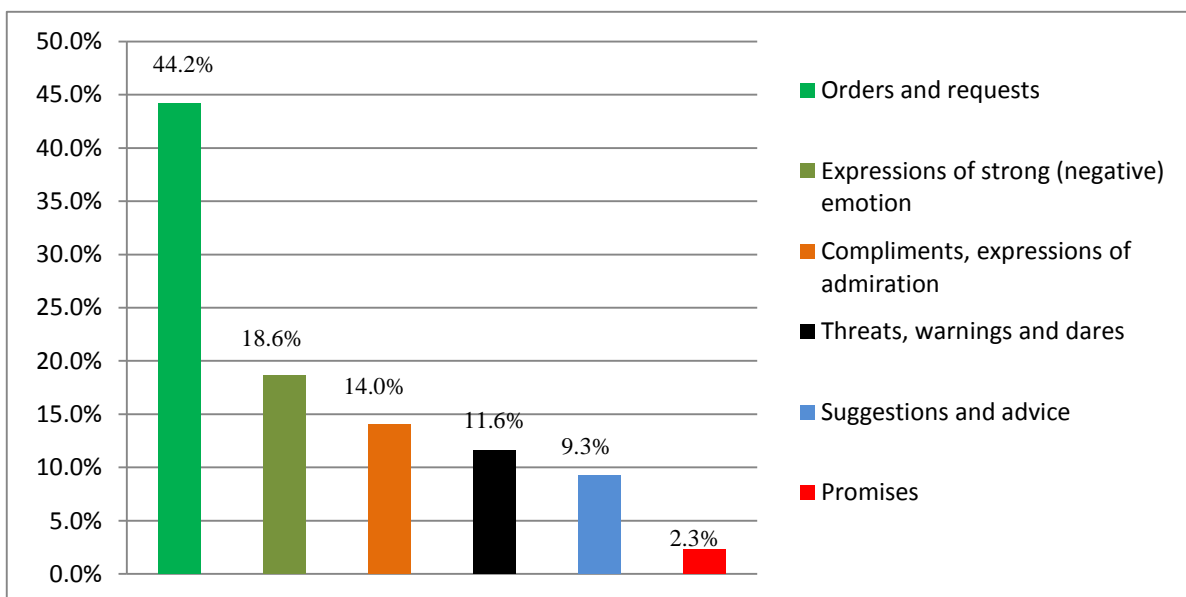
4.1.1 Parents' Utterances That Threaten Students' Negative Face

As noted before in this research (c.f 2.1.2), Van (1995) observed that parents are the most significant influence on the self-esteem of their children. That their utterances may threaten the students' self-esteem was examined by looking at their (parents') recorded utterances using the PT. In the PT, self-esteem is referred to as 'face'. The idea of face has been developed from Goffman (1967) who argues that participants in a conversation have potential for aggression against face. The aggression is what PT refers to as face threat. Brown and Levinson (1987) define face as the public self-image that every adult has and desires for speech interactants to acknowledge and help maintain. They further point out that face has two components which are the positive and negative face.

The negative face, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), is the desire of every adult that his /her actions be unimpeded by others. Thus, the acts that run counter to this basic face want threaten the hearer's (henceforth H's) negative face. Such acts indicate (potentially) that the speaker (henceforth S) does not intend to avoid impending H's freedom of action. These acts are divided into 3 broad categories and further subdivided into sub categories as shown in an earlier chapter of this dissertation (c.f 2.2.1).

The data collected showed that parents do actually threaten the students' negative face. The number of negative FTAs observed in the parents' utterances was 43. The FTAs fall into 6 sub categories as classified in Brown and Levinson (1987). They will be presented beginning with the most to the least frequent. This is the order: orders and requests; expressions of strong negative emotion; compliments; expressions of admiration or envy; threats, warnings and dares; suggestions and advice; offers and promises. These are graphically presented with percentages in Figure 4.1.1. In the discussion that follows Figure 4.1.1, each type of FTA observed in the data will be presented in sections numbered from (a) to (e). Each section will take its heading from the type of FTA under discussion.

Figure 4.1.1 Bar Graph Showing Parents Utterances That Threaten Students' Negative Face



a) Parents' Orders and requests

As Figure 4.1.1 above shows, top on the list of threatening acts in parents' utterances is the use of orders and requests. Consider the following example:

Example 1 (Source: Discourse 2 Appendix2)

Teacher: *Sijui kama mama ana jambo la kusema?* I don't know whether Mother has something to say?

Parent: I...er...**unless he explains...what he finds a little bit hard. Is it to understand these concepts, which means he has a problem in application? Is it particular topics or...**

Teacher : Or everything?

Parent: **Or all of them? Which ones have you singled out as the hard ones that you can't...not really understood them?**

Student: We told the teacher.

Teacher: The ones you raised as a class? So, the thirteen of them; you are a member to that?

Student: Matrices and Partial variation

In the preceding Example1, the parent requested for information from the student. She requested him to explain the areas he finds hard to understand. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), requests are acts in which S indicates that he wants H to do or refrain from doing some act. In Example 1, the parent wanted the student to think and identify the topics he had not understood and then reveal that information to the teacher and him (parent). Implied is that the student would also need to do or stop doing some act(s) so that he improves in those topics. According to the PT, even giving the information may threaten the negative face which is in other words defined as the need by speech participant (in this case the student) to be shown respect and not have their privacy and space invaded, resources spent and activities restricted without cause. Information on student performance/academic challenges (especially when the performance is perceived as below expectations) may be considered private by the student and the request to give it threatens. In the ten conversations examined, parents' requested/ordered students to give information, work harder, see teachers for extra work, improve on grades, set a performance target and be consistent in performance among others. Of the 43 FTAs observed in parent utterances, 45% of them were orders and requests.

b) Parents' expressions of strong negative emotions.

Expressions of strong negative emotions were also observed in parents' utterances. Consider the following example. The example is taken from a different part of Discourse 2, a part of whose excerpt has been previously referred to as Example 1. Here, an excerpt from the same discourse is represented as Example 2 to illustrate a different FTA.

Example 2 (Source: Discourse 2.Appendix 2)

Teacher: *Kuna good attempts ingawanje hajaweka ile energy yote inatakikana. He has more potential and ame-relax this time round. There are good attempts but he has not given it all the energy that is needed. He has relaxed this time round.*

Parent: *Eeeh, hizi matrips nitazikaja tu. Za mahali X ...si hata uwache tukaje vile nilifanya za X wenu. Alikaa shule mpaka holiday na nikamsahau huko aji-sort. Asome mpaka aone tu vitabu zinakua kama nyasi. Anasiangalia hivi.....that is the only thing na pocket money tunaikaja. **Yeah, I will just cancel those trips. To place X.... why don't you let me cancel them the same way I did those of your sibling X? He stayed in school even over the holiday and I forgot him there to sort himself out. He reads until he sees books growing like grass. He looks at them like this.....that is the only way.***

Teacher: *Unamalizana na yeye? Are you washing your hands off him?*

Parent: *Eeeh, ninamalizana na yeye. **Yeah, I'm washing my hands off him***

In Example 2, the parent reacts to information from the teacher that the student has relaxed in his academic performance. He tells the teacher (in the hearing of the student), "Yeah, I will just cancel those trips. To place X..." The parent then talks directly to the student, "Why don't you let me cancel them the same way I did those of your sibling X? He stayed in school even over the holiday and I forgot him there to sort himself out. He reads until he sees books growing like grass. He looks at them like this...That is the only way" The anger is apparently noted by the teacher who asks him whether he is washing his hands off his son. The parent responds, "Yeah, I am washing my hands off him." The researcher noted yet another example of strong negative emotion in the data. Consider the following example:"

Example 3 (Source: Discourse 8. Appendix 2)

- Teacher: He needs to tell us what we can do to help him
- Parent: (To student) What can we do?
- Student: I don't know
- Parent: You don't know?
- Student: Yes.
- Parent: You don't know what can help you to get a better grade?
- Teacher: (To student) Is there anything I can do? Or he [parent] can do? Or else, the problem is...Where is the problem? Is it with me, or is it him or is it you?
- Student: Maybe it is me.
- Teacher : Not maybe. It is you...Okay? Can you re-focus your interests in the right place? What I am telling you is: if you don't, you are going to end up very sorry. It will have been such a wasted opportunity and such a wasted person. Okay? The ball is in your court.
- Parent: (To student) Did you say it could be in you? Because I would also take that one as a way of also of...What do you think the teacher could do to help you overcome that?
- Student: I don't know.
- Parent: You can't tell me that you don't know what you need in the form of help. If you ask me how I want to go to Nairobi and go quickly, I'll need to board the matatus and have some bus fare. So, the help I need is to get to the road. So what time do you need to change this grade? **Don't tell me you don't know again because I really get annoyed.** I will get annoyed. Please don't take me there. What help do you need? Or if you are actually not interested, say you are not interested, I forget about this. I just go back home and you will become what you want to become. You'll need to speak up!

In Example 3 above, the student says he doesn't know how the teacher can help him. Among other things, the parent tells the student, "Don't tell me you don't know again because I really get annoyed." Both examples 2 and 3 contain expressions of strong (negative) emotion. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the emotions expressed could be identified as hatred, anger or lust. The research took it that examples 2 and 3 expressed the anger of the parents towards the students because of failing to give academic excellence due seriousness and not co-operating with the parent in the academic clinic conversation respectively. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), expressions of strong (negative) emotion made by S to H make H feel threatened that S could harm him or his goods. The student addressees in

the preceding two examples have reason to feel coerced to take action so that their parents do not get annoyed, give them up and leave them to their own devices. The acts of anger have potential to force the students to do something in future as protection against the (potentially) expressed motive to harm them from their parents. The utterances run counter to the demands of parental responsibility as put forth in Children Act (2001). They (parents) are expected to protect the child in every way. They have to make sure the child is not left to suffer or be abused in any way. Expressions of strong (negative) emotion make the child suffer during the interaction. This goes on even after the interaction since the speaker (parent) threatens to harm the child in future unless he improves his performance as desired by the parent. Of the 43 acts in parent's utterances that were observed to have potential to harm the student's negative face, 18% were expressions of strong (negative) emotion.

c) Parents' compliments/expressions of admiration

The third act coming from parents that could harm the students' negative face is compliments/expressions of admiration. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), in using this act, S indicates that he likes something of H's. The following two excerpts from discourses are used to exemplify the use of compliments/expressions of admiration made by parents to students. Note that a part of Discourse 2 has been previously used to exemplify another FTA but the excerpt in use here is represented as Example 4.

Example 4 (Source: Discourse 2. Appendix 2)

Parent: I always remind him, when he was in primary school...

Teacher: He was a force to reckon with? And to be feared in the village? (To student) *kwani wewe ni jogoo wa mashambani? Hauwezi wika mjini?* Are you a village cock? Can't you crow in the town? You should come here and also show us the might.

Parent: **But he has made attempts**

Teacher: *There are good attempts ingawaje hajaweka ile energy yote inatakikana. He has more potential and ame-relax this time round.* There are good attempts but he has not given it all the energy that is needed. He has relaxed this time round.

Example 5 (Source: Discourse 3. Appendix 2)

Parent: So what are you promising or targeting to get at the end of term?

Student: “B”

Teacher: Are you sure you can get “B” in the end term? Yes, get that. *I will talk to your father kado niseme ununuliwe kitu.* I will talk, to your father privately and say you be bought something. “B” in end term? Go get that. I don’t want “A”. I want “B”. Yes. And mentioning it is so easy but getting it requires a lot of hard work and dedication. Okay? So, you don’t just mention it so as to end this conversation.

Parent: It’s true Mwalimu. **In fact, I was telling him that he has the ability.** I was asking him, what does he wait for? The time is too short.

Teacher: He has less than two months to live in this confinement of school. (To student) Okay? It is how many days?

Student: 52 days to go.

In the preceding Example 4, the parent expresses a liking for the student’s work when he says, “But he has made attempts.” This is to acknowledge the student’s effort although the present performance is below Primary school standards. Similarly, in Example 5, the parent says, “In fact, I was telling him [the student] that he has the ability.” Since the parent is addressing the teacher in the presence of the student, the researcher took this utterance as a compliment/ expression of admiration meant for the student. The parent therefore expresses a liking for the student’s personality when he says the student has the ability. In examples 4 and 5, the parents express a liking for the student’s work and personality respectively. This is a way of complimenting the students by pointing out something in them that their parents like. But Brown and Levinson (1987) treat compliments, expressions of admiration and envy as threats to H’s negative face. This is because H is forced to accept the debt, do self-denigration or in turn praise some aspect of S. In the data collected, compliments, expressions of admiration accounted for 14% of the threats to negative face observed. However, contrary to the expectations of the PT, the students did not respond to show they had been forced to accept the debt. They neither did self-denigration nor praised some aspect of S (the parent) as would have been expected.

d) Parents' threats, warnings and dares

It was observed that parents also used threats as they spoke to students during the academic clinic. Consider the following example which has been referred to previously but is here represented as Example 6:

Example 6 (Source: Discourse 8. Appendix 2)

Teacher: Not maybe. It [the problem] is you...Okay? Can you refocus your interests in the right place? What am telling you is, if you don't, you are going to end up very sorry. It will have been such a wasted opportunity and such a wasted person. Okay? The ball is in your court.

Parent: (To student) Did you say it could be you? Because I would also take that one as a way of also of...What do you think the teacher could do to help you overcome that?

Student: I don't know.

Parent: You can't tell me that you don't know what you need in the form of help. If you ask me how I want to go to Nairobi and go quickly, I'll need to board the matatus and have some bus fare. So, the help I need is to get to the road. So what time do you need to change this grade? Don't tell me you don't know again because I really get annoyed. **I will get annoyed. Please don't take me there. What help do you need? Or if you are actually not interested, say you are not interested I forget about this. I just go back home and you will become what you want to become. You'll need to speak up.**

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), threats, warnings and dares threaten the negative face of the addressee. This is because in using them, "S indicates that he or someone or something will instigate sanctions against H unless he [H] does some action 'A'". In this way, H's desire for freedom to chart out his future course of action is impeded. In example 6, the parent warns/threatens the student against being uncooperative or withholding information: "Don't tell me you don't know again...I will get annoyed. Please don't take me there." He also dares the student to say he is not interested. The parent indicates the 'sanctions' the student will face: he (parent) will get annoyed, go home and forget about the student's education. In the source discourse later on, the student actually spoke up to say he needed papers. This confirms the PT in the sense that through the use of the threat/warning/dare, the student's future course of action was determined by the parent who used the FTA to force the

student to ‘speak up’. Threats, warnings and dares take up 11.6% of the total acts from parents that have potential to threaten the students’ negative face.

e) Parents’ advice and suggestions

Advice and suggestions were also observed in the utterances of parents. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), these acts do threaten the negative face of the addressee. Consider the following example:

Example 6 (Source: Discourse 2. Appendix 2)

Parent: *Inaonekana anatuinjoi, yeye alisema atapita lakini labda hatapita.* It seems he is joking with us, he said he would pass but he possibly won’t but you never know. *Mimi nafikiria afaa kuongezewa assignment.* **I think he should be given more assignments.**

Teacher: Assignment

Parent: *Huyu jamaa muongezee assignment, ndio akiamuka asubuhi... hii Subject X unaona amepata ngapi? C na yet anataka career X na unajua career X lazima ufanye vizuri kwa somo X na subject Y.* **Give more assignments to this fellow,** so that when he wakes up in the morning...what mark has he got in Subject X? “C” and yet he wants to join career X and you know, to train for career X you must have passed well in subjects X and Y.

Teacher: *Aongeze kazi.* He should work more.

Parent: *Aongeze tu kazi, kwanza yake yeye.* **He should work more, especially his own extra work.**

Teacher: *Already ako nayo na analia, sijui anataka aje.* He already has it and is whining. I don’t know what he wants

Parent: *Analia kumbe?* So he whines?

Teacher: *Kulia analia ati Mwalimu unajua...*He does whine. He complains that “Teacher you know...”

Parent: *Aah, kwanza akienda holiday asikuwe na time ya kuona TV. Assignment kama tatu.* Oh, in the first place when he goes on holiday, he should not even have time to watch TV. Let him have about three assignments.

Teacher: *Uzuri wake at least ajaribu kubalance. Wajua ingekuwa baya kwa hesabu kama angeenda ashidwe kubalance. At least akapata 50-60...kuna wanapata 60. Lakini yeye anapata 70 na 20, kwa hivyo sasa itategemea swing iko wapi.* It would be good for him to try to be consistent. You know it would be bad mathematics if he failed to be consistent in his performance. If he at least ranges between 50 – 60...there are some who get 60. But he will get 70 this time and 20 the next. So, it will depend on where the swing is.

Parent: *Consistency ndio hakuna.* **Consistency is what is lacking**

Teacher: *Eeh, lakini sasa ako na 50. Amejaribu. Kuna kajoto fulani anasikia.* Yeah, but now he has 50, he has tried. There’s some little warmth he is feeling.

Parent: *Lakini hako kajoto ndio ana-assume. (To student) unajua ukisikia kajoto unasema “sitasikia baridi.”* **But that little warmth is what is making him assume. (To student) You know when you feel some little warmth you say, “I will never feel cold.”**

Student: (Keeps quiet)

The suggestion from the parent was that the student increases the amount of school work he was doing. The parent also indirectly advised the student against complacency. He advised that when he (the student) makes some little progress (metaphorically called a “little warmth”), he should not become over confident but should press on to guard against sliding back to poor performance (metaphorically referred to as the “cold”). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), advice and suggestions are one act among many that threaten H’s negative face by indicating that S does not intend to avoid impeding H’s freedom. This is because in giving advice/suggestions, S suggests that H ought to do some act. In this case, the parent indicates that the student ought to increase the work load he takes on and to consistently press on even when he notes a small improvement in performance. In so doing, the parent (potentially) charted out the student’s future course of action, hence impeding his (student’s) freedom to do so. Advice and suggestions form 9.3% of the total face threat that parents make on the students’ negative face.

f) Parents’ promises and offers

One promise was observed in the conversations of parents. To quote from Discourse One, the parent tells the student, “If you do, you’ll get it.” From the context, the promise is that if the student improves from being number two to number one in the class, the father will buy him a smart phone. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), in making a promise, the parent puts pressure on the student either to accept or reject the promise. This will involve incurring a debt. It therefore threatens the student’s negative face. Promises made up 2.3% of the total face threat that parents inflicted on the students’ face.

It was clear that parents did threaten the students' negative face during the academic clinic. The acts they employed were: orders and requests; expressions of strong (negative) emotion; compliments; threats, warnings and dares; suggestions and advice in that order. As shown in the preceding discussion, the parents' utterances do have potential for aggression or virtual offence against the student's negative face. Altogether, 43 negative FTAs were observed from the utterances of the parents in the discussion of the academic clinic. While the acts in parents' utterances that threaten the students' negative face have been presented in 4.1.1, those that threaten the positive face will be presented in 4.1.2.

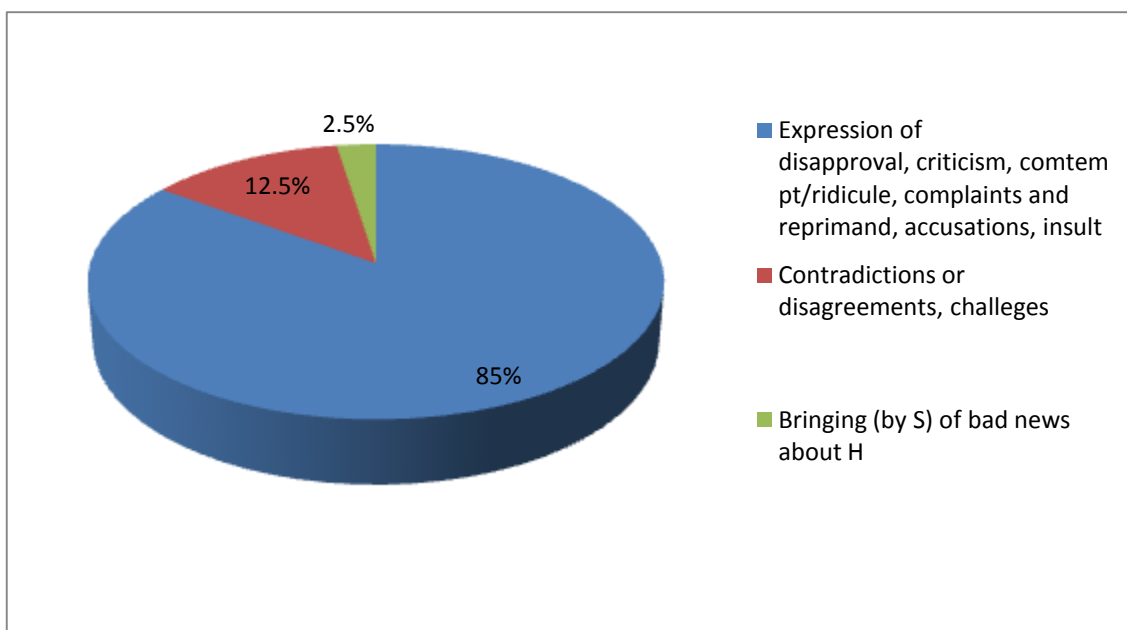
4.1.2 Parents' Utterances That Threaten the Students' Positive Face

Negative face has been dealt with in 4.1.1. So has the significance of parents' utterances on the students' face/self-esteem. Other than negative face, the second component of face according to PT is positive face (c.f 2.2.1). The data examined showed that parents used 40 acts that had potential to threaten the students' face by indicating they (parents) did not want the students' wants. The FTAs observed fall into three sub-categories within the two categories as previously shown in chapter two (c.f 2.2.1). In the first category are FTAs that indicate S has a negative evaluation of H. The bulk of these acts are within the sub category of expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt, ridicule, complaints, reprimands, accusations and insults. The other sub-category in order of frequency of use is the use of contradictions. In the second category, parents also assaulted the students' positive face by using an act that showed they did not care about their (students') positive face. The act noted was in the sub category of bringing (by S) of bad news about H.

The frequency of occurrence of the three FTAs in parents' utterances is presented in Figure 4.1.2 that follows. After the figure, the three FTAs observed will be discussed in subsections

numbered from (a) to (c). Each subsection will take its heading from the FTA under discussion. The FTA sub-categories are based on the PT as shown in Brown and Levinson (1987). Each FTA observed is presented as a percentage of all the positive FTAs observed in the utterances of parents as they spoke to students during the academic clinic.

Figure 4.1.2 Pie Chart Showing Parents’ Utterances That Threaten Students’ Positive Face.



a) Parents’ expression of disapproval

As can be seen in Figure 4.1.2 above, expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt/ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations and insults, were the predominant positive FTA observed in the parents’ utterances as they made up 34 out of the total 40.

Consider the following example:

Example 7 (Source: Discourse 5. Appendix 2)

Teacher: So Student X, you have decided not to work.

Parent: *Mwalimu wa subject X alisema, walikaa 3 weeks hapo kwa kiwaja wakicheza hizi michezo yao. Akienda, she doesn't consult the teacher later. Hata hafanyi exams.* The teacher of

subject X said, they took three weeks in the field playing **those games of theirs. When she goes, she doesn't consult the teacher later, she doesn't even do exams.**

- Teacher: You need to put your priorities right eh? *If not, utatoka hapa na machozi* .If not, you will leave here with tears.
- Parent: *Na machozi. Hata imeanza hiyo machozi.* With tears. Even they have started; those tears.
- Teacher: What is your target?
- Student: "C" stand
- Parent: **Which target?** *Last time alisema hakufikisha.* The last time she said it, she did not fulfill.
- Teacher: You are always failing to meet your target?
- Parent: *Sasa kama wengine wanasema "A" na yeye ako hapo "C" stand and you are in the same class unapata the same assistance....(To teacher) na huyu msichana alikuwa mzuri toka primary. Sasa, nini inamfanya hivi saa hii? Now as others are saying "A" she is saying "C" stand and (to student) you are in the same class. You get the same assistance.... (To teacher) And this girl was good from primary. Now, what makes her like this at this time?*

In Example 7 above, the parent disapproves of the fact that the student spends too much time in the field, does not consult the teacher, fails to do exams and has set a performance target of grade "C" while others are aiming at "A". In the thinking of the PT, there is a sense in which the parent is also criticizing the student since what she (parent) points out are what she perceives to be mistakes made (by the student). In the sense that she wants the student to note the wrongdoing, the parent's remarks can be seen as reprimands/ complaints too. In saying that the student does not usually meet her performance targets, there is an expression of contempt: "Which target?" The student is being presented as dishonest or untrustworthy. In all these remarks, the parent failed to want the student's wants which is what Brown and Levinson (1987) call a threat to the positive face. It is notable that the student's passion for games, which is presented as the main problem, was unacceptable to the mother, who referred to them as "those games of theirs". The parent on the whole made a negative evaluation of the student's performance and character, thus threatening her (student's) positive face. Other parents also made a negative evaluation of the students' study patterns, examination techniques, mental ability, performance in particular subjects and failure to

speak up during the academic clinic. This sub-category of FTAs was very much in use by parents during the academic clinic as it was observed to take up 85% of all positive FTAs they used as they spoke to students.

b) Parents' contradictions/disagreements and challenges

Disagreements / contradictions were also observed in the parents' utterances. Of the 40 positive FTAs observed in the parents' utterances, 5 were disagreements/contradictions.

Consider the following:

Example 8 (Source: Discourse 8. Appendix 2)

- Teacher: I don't know what happened to him. He should tell us. In fact there is a time he gave me another story and I want to confirm if indeed it is true. I am not amused. (To student) You got a "D+" and it is not your grade. What's happening? Are you losing interest? And there was a time you used to doze a lot in class. The whole of last term.
- Parent: I was told by Mrs X when we met here last time we visited. But I also understand since then he's been moved from the place where he was sitting to the front.
- Teacher: Yes. He used to sit at the back. He was at a corner at the back of the class.
- Student: I have been moved
- Teacher: Now that was recent; this term. **Then he was telling me...there was a time I was almost punishing him for that...but he told me his tummy ached.**
- Parent: **I think that must be merely a story because that was a while ago. It only came up in this one term when the grades were really bad.** Then you came in as his teacher. His grades shot up and then really came down again. So it's not about a time he did not understand. It's about what is happening now. That is the way I look at it. It doesn't make sense. There's no way you'll have a "D" in subject X and "B" in subject Y from the same head; unless you have a Subject X site and a Subject Y site. It's up to you to pull up.
- Teacher: (To student) You know you can give us so many tales. But at the end of the day we are not really...it is you, your life. You know it is much better you say, "Okay, I have not read" as you have not been reading consistently. Full stop .Then we say, "Okay, that is wrong, that is dangerous because if it continues like this you are going to end up very sorry." Is that what you want? And you know that maybe there are one or two things you have not been doing well. Okay? You know at this stage it is very easy for one to get distracted and ignore the most important things that count. And when we ask you, what is happening, you give us a very long story but at the end of the day, you know it's you. So what is happening?

In Example 8 above, the parent disagreed with the student who had told the teacher he (student) used to doze and perform poorly because of stomach ache. The parent dismissed the student's account as having been "merely a story" which means it was untrue, just made up.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), contradictions/disagreements or challenges are an indicator that S “thinks H is wrong or misguided or unreasonable about some issues, such wrongness being associated with disapproval.” In Example 8, when the parent disagreed with the student’s account, he was also indicating his disapproval (negative evaluation) of the way the student responded to a (possible) demand from the teacher that he accounts for having been dozing in class and performing poorly.

In the PT explanation of positive face wants, it is possible that the student’s account to the teacher was meant to make his (the student’s) mental ability (as reflected in his performance) to be desirable to the teacher since he performed poorly only because he was unwell. The student may also have needed the teacher to desire his behaviour (being alert in class) by implying that he only failed to keep awake in class at that time when he was unwell. The parent (potentially) made the teacher not to meet the positive-face wants of the student by discrediting the reason given as having been merely a story. Examples 7 and 8 both show that parents threatened the student’s positive face when they used acts that indicated their negative evaluation of the student or his goods. The data examined showed that as far as parents’ onslaught on students’ positive face was concerned, disagreements/contradictions made up 12.5% of the FTAs.

c) Bringing of bad news about the student by parents

The second category of acts that threaten positive face comprises all those acts that show S doesn’t care about H’s face. This category, as explained in chapter two, comprises expressions of violent (out of control) emotions by S toward H, irreverence, introduction of taboo/emotive/inappropriate topics by S, blatant non-cooperation from S, use of offensive

status-marked identifications in first encounters, as well as bringing (by S) of bad news about H (c.f 2.2.1). In the data collected, the only act noted that falls under this category is the bringing (by S) of bad news about H. This was observed to have occurred only once out of the 40 instances of positive FTA use observed. Consider the following example:

Example 9 (Source: Discourse 7. Appendix 2)

Teacher: So you feel if you do well in form one and two work you will do well?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: So, in this coming exam, what will you get?

Student: “B+”

Teacher: A “B+”? (To parent) we are going to back her target. So, she is telling us that she will push the “E” up to a “B+”. (To student) and if you don’t feel comfortable with form one and two work, please do that, or else, this is the same grade you are going to get in K.C.S.E if you don’t pull up your socks. (To parent) she has not been working hard.

Parent: **Actually, she has also been a joker** although I have also contributed. For part of last term, she was away for fees for almost a whole month.

In example 9 above, the student had told the teacher and parent that her problem was Form one and two work which was a manageable challenge since by the end of term she would apparently have familiarised herself with it and hoped to get a “B+”, an improvement from “E”. The teacher observed she had not been working hard by implying that if she did, she would get the ‘B+’. But at this point, the parent said the student had actually been a joker. The parent was saying the student has a serious flaw of character. This is bad news because the student desires the parent to praise her (want her wants) especially in the presence of the teacher, but not to reveal negative personal information about her. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that by the bringing of bad news about H, “S indicates that he is willing to cause distress to H and/or doesn’t care about H’s feelings”. The parent makes the student lose face in the eyes of the teacher since he says hers (the student’s) is not just a school problem (Form One and Two work) but a character weakness noticeable right from home. Bringing

(by S) of bad news about H accounted for 2.5% of all positive FTAs observed in the utterances of parents during the academic clinic.

It is notable that parents' utterances did not contain expressions of irreverence, taboo/divisive topics, topics that are out of context, blatant non-cooperation, use of address terms and other status-marked identifications in initial encounters, or expressions of violent (out of control) emotions. All these, would threaten the student's positive face. The research attributed the absence of these FTAs (partially) to the fact that the topics for discussion during the academic clinic are laid out in the GoK (2001) report (c.f 1.1). The concerns parents and teachers are advised to take care of are discipline, moral growth, acceptable behaviour, academic performance and student welfare. This may have acted as a safeguard as far as the topics of discussion are concerned. That the parents did not express violent (out of control) emotions or use irreverent expressions was commendable. It possibly showed that the communication of the academic clinic was not all threat. It only needs polishing. The status marked identifications especially in first encounters could not possibly have had occasion for use by parents during the academic clinic as the meeting is not a first encounter between them and the students.

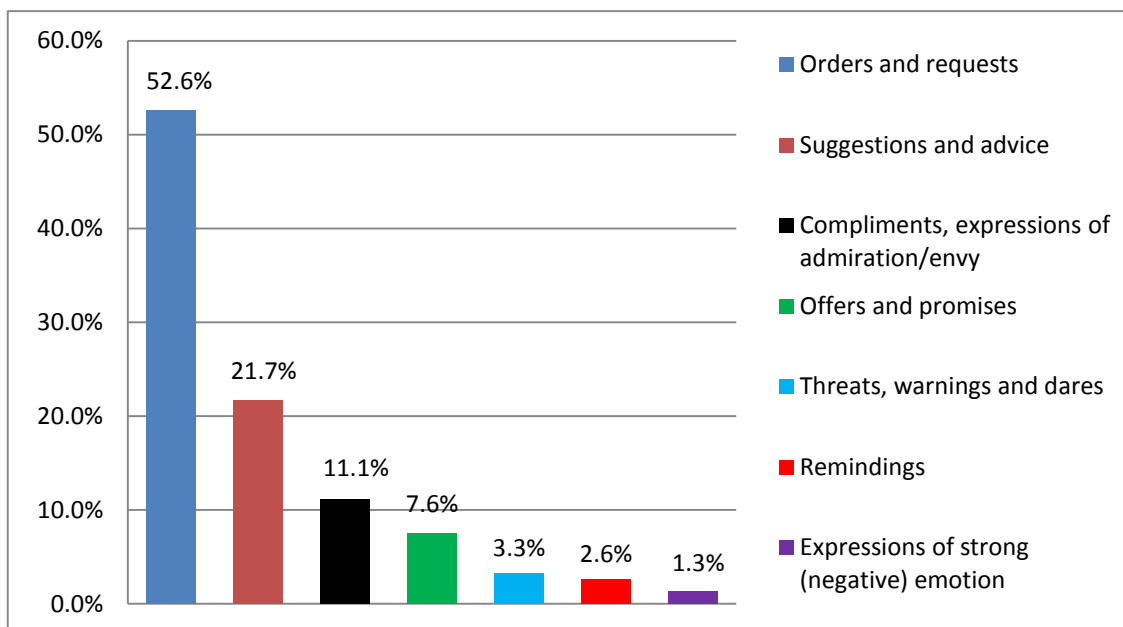
In a nutshell, the predominant negative FTA used by parents was orders and requests while the positive one was the use of expressions of negative evaluation of the student as shown by the utterances of the parents sampled in 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. Comparatively, parents threaten negative face more than the positive one. In the following two sections (4.2.1 and 4.2.2), the utterances of teachers will be examined.

4.2.1 Teachers' Utterances That Threaten Students' Negative Face

The concepts of 'face threat' and 'negative face' have been made clear in 2.2.1 in accordance with the PT. In 4.2.1, the negative FTAs made by teachers are examined. As stated earlier, one way in which the negative face of H is threatened is when S indicates that he has no intention to avoid impending H's freedom of future action (c.f 2.2.1). There are some acts that predicate some future act of H, thus denying him the freedom to decide on his future course of action. This section will present the negative FTAs in teacher utterances in their order of decreasing frequency of use as observed in the data. These FTAs are: Orders and requests; suggestions and advice; compliments/expression of envy/admiration; offers, threats, reminders; promises and expressions of strong (negative) emotion. The FTAs are presented in Figure 4. 2.1. Thereafter, the discussion will be presented in sub sections numbered from (a) to (g) with headings drawn from the FTA under discussion. Altogether, 152 negative FTAs were observed in the utterances of teachers to students during the academic clinic. Each sub category of FTAs is presented as a percentage of the total for greater ease in comparing the relative contribution of each to the overall face threat inflicted on the students' negative face by the teachers during the academic clinic.

Figure 4.2.1 Bar graph Showing Teachers’ Utterances That Threaten Students’

Negative Face.



a) Teachers’ orders and requests

To begin with, the utterances of teachers during the academic clinic were observed to contain many orders and requests. In the ten conversations, 80 utterances from teachers were, as found in this study, orders and requests. Consider the following example:

Example 10 (Source: Discourse 9. Appendix 2)

Teacher: *Ni...kuna shida kidogo pale, nafikiri one of the ways eh... (To student) sijuikama uko na revision materials. It is ...There is a small problem there, I think one of the ways eh... (To student) **I don’t know whether you have revision materials?***

Student: Eh, I normally use some handouts.

Teacher: *Ulinunua? **That you bought?***

Student: Uh-uh. *Kuna student X ako nazo.* Uh-uh. A certain student X has them

Teacher: *Hauna yako? **Don’t you have yours?***

Student: Uh –uh.

Teacher: Okay, Aaah so, you...what I would advocate you do, is you do extra work. And this time you...instead of doing it yourself, maybe we could do it together. That would be one way of...I could assist you in.

Student: *Eeeh.* Yeah.

- Teacher: So that you improve performance. Then, I don't know about your...*Umeprogramme your timetable? Have you programmed your timetable? Study timetable?*
- Student: *Eeh. Yeah*
- Teacher: **Which you use?**
- Student: *Eeh. Yeah*
- Teacher: **Any other problem that you have?**
- Student: Eh....I don't think I have another problem except in subject X and subject Y.
- Teacher: *Eeh...Yeah...Because hii grade sio mzuri sana. This is not your grade X. Kijana ambaye anatia bidii hivyo. Because this grade is not very good. This is not your grade X. A boy who puts much effort the way you do.*

In Example 10 above, the teacher requested for personal information: whether the student had revision materials, whether he had bought them, whether he did not have his own revision materials, whether he had and used a personal timetable and what other problem he had. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), orders and requests put pressure on H to do or refrain from doing some act as indicated by S. Requests for personal information both compel the student to respond (with the information) and to follow it up with some act that S wants done. For example, when the teacher asks whether the student has revision materials, he is indicating that he would like the student to have some in future if he doesn't. Consider another FTA in the same sub-category from a different part of the same discourse, here represented as Example 11:

Example 11 (Source: Discourse 9. Appendix 2)

- Teacher: *Hi ya...end of term. This one for end term. We can look at the areas where you are weak...*
- Teacher: *And then I tell you, pengine shida ni hii, shida ni hii. Perhaps this or other is the problem. Lakini pia, work on your handwriting, nimekwambia mambo ya handwriting. **But on top that, work on your handwriting. I have told you about the handwriting.***
- Student: Yes.

In Example 11 above, the teacher told the student to work on his handwriting. This act could be an order through which the teacher made the student feel constrained to improve the handwriting. In so doing, the teacher threatened the students' negative face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), through the use of orders, "S indicates that he wants H to do, or

refrain from doing some act.” In this way, they (orders) impede on the student’s desire to be free to determine his future course of action. In the teachers’ utterances examined, 52.6% of all negative-face threats were orders and requests.

b) Teachers’ suggestions and advice

Suggestions and advice were observed in the utterances of teachers. Of the 152 negative FTAs observed in teachers’ utterances, 30 were suggestions/advice. It is also a significant act because of the ten conversations examined, all were observed to contain suggestions and advice. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), by using suggestions and advice, “S indicates that he thinks H ought to (perhaps) do some act A”. In so doing, S threatens H’s negative face by “predicating some future act of H, and in so doing, put some pressure on H to do (or refrain from doing) some act A.” Consider the following example:

Example 12 (Source: Discourse 6.Appendix 2)

- Teacher: *Shida iko wapi?* Where is the problem?
- Student: The way I approach a certain topic...the way I give answers, despite how much I try, I still don’t do well and that is why I sometimes give up.
- Teacher: Your answers are different from what I award?
- Student: Yes especially maybe Topic X
- Teacher: Maybe?
- Student: Topic X
- Teacher: **Find out why. You’ve heard of Thomas Edison? There is this inventor who invented the bulb __ the electric bulb. Do you know how many times he tried before he got it right? One thousand. You don’t give up. But you seek to find out where you are weak.** That is why you are a student. That’s why you are tested after...after how many years?
- Student: Four
- Teacher: So that during these 4 years, you learn, okay? The test __ the kind that you are doing and get wrong is part of the learning process. **So it is upon you to find out why and you learn the right things so that next time you get it right. Do not be discouraged.** Is that clear?

In the preceding Example 12, the teacher indicated that he thought the student ought to: find out why her answers were different from what he (the teacher) awarded, identify where she was weak and avoid being discouraged. In telling the student about Thomas Edison, the teacher also suggested/advised that the student ought to keep trying even when she failed. The teacher was giving advice/suggestions in response to the problem the student had disclosed which was that she sometimes gave up because no matter how well she tried to answer exam questions, she still failed.

While these teacher utterances are useful for guiding the students, from the perspective of the PT, they have potential to threaten the student's negative face. This is because they indicated that the teacher thought the student ought to be determined /encouraged in the face of present failure. In practical terms, the teacher was possibly telling the student that she ought to continue studying the particular subject and possibly deal with the mental/emotional state of feeling discouraged/like giving up. In so doing, the teacher impeded on the student's right to choose her future action. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), these utterances are acts that threaten the negative face of the addressee (Student) "by indicating (potentially) that the speaker [Teacher] does not intend to avoid impeding H's [Student's] freedom of action'. In the teachers' utterances examined, advice/suggestions took up 21.7% of the negative FTAs observed. However, it is the interpretation of the study that advice/suggestions cannot be avoided during the academic clinic. This is because the government instructs teachers to use this forum to show interest in the students' academic progress (c.f 1.1).The giving of advice and suggestions could be an instance of inevitable face threat that cannot be done away with but instead calls for strategies to minimize threat.

c) Teachers' compliments

Compliments were also observed in the utterances of teachers. These were observed to have been used 17 times. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) a compliment is an FTA in which “S indicates that he likes or would like something of H’s.” Consider the following example:

Example 13 (Source: Discourse 3. Appendix 2)

- Teacher: Student X. She is my girl in class. *Nang’ang’ana na yeye kwa sababu kwanza sijui kama ni kuogopa ama ni nini.* I struggle with her because in the first place I don’t know whether it is fear or what it is (To student). Do you fear subject X?
- Student: No.
- Teacher: Um... (To parent) she had an ‘E’ and I am not happy with an ‘E’ because opening she had 56%, then the following exam that they did she got 24.
- Parent: 24
- Teacher: Then the following she gets a 60% then, end of term one she gets 23% and paper two she gets 21.
- Parent: 21%?
- Teacher: Yes, so average she gets 36% which is...Now, let’s look at her Exam 1 and Exam 3. Exam 1 she has 56 and exam 3 she has 60. But she can go as low as 21%. So, that oscillation, X, I cannot understand. I can actually say with finality that I do not know her as far as subject X is concerned. Because she will pull a surprise of 60 and some other time she goes to 20.
- Parent : Yes, like when she goes to 60.
- Teacher: **Yes, she is a good student** then, but all of a sudden, she goes to 21. (To student) What happens? Please tell us. Help us to help you.
- Parent : Because of the fluctuation
- Teacher : *Mmmh.* Yeah.

While commenting on a time when the student had done well in an exam (getting 60%), the teacher says “She is a good student then”. It was taken that the teacher was complimenting the student on her good performance/mental ability. Elsewhere in the discourses, teachers compliment other students for their performance e.g. I am impressed that you come top of your stream (Discourse 1). Other students are complimented because of good discipline e.g. “He is...I like his discipline.” (Discourse10). While these are encouraging statements in everyday life, in PT, compliments are a negative FTA. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), compliments threaten H’s negative face because they “predicate some desire of S

toward H or H's goods, giving H reason to think that he may have to take action to protect the object of S's desires, or give it to S." The student could protect the object of the teacher's desire (student's mental prowess or disciplined character) either by self-denigration (belittling the object liked by S) or by praising something of S's. It is notable however that though teachers' complimented students in 7 out of the 10 conversations in the study, no student acted to protect the object of the teacher's desire in the manner described in the PT. The study noted that the student may not have been given the turn to respond to the compliment. When all negative FTAs observed from teacher utterances were considered, 11.1% of them were compliments.

d) Teachers' offers

Offers were also observed in teachers' utterances. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), in making an offer, 'S' indicates that he wants H to commit himself to whether or not he wants S to do some act for H, thereby incurring a possible debt". Consider the following example:

Example 14 (Source: Discourse 10 Appendix 2)

- Teacher: You need revision books. You know now you are almost in form 3, so...normally revision starts early. You need to practise so, one book I would recommend *inaitwa* (is entitled)....
- Parent: Write for me
- Teacher: *Sawasawa. Nitakupatia mbili.* Okay, I will give you two, okay. But you can choose....*uzuri wa hii ni from form one to four.* The goodness of this is it is from Form One to Form four.
- Parent: Highflyer
- Teacher: *Eeh...Ama Golden Tips kwa sababu ya....it has some notes. From form one to form four.* Yeah...or Golden Tips because of...it has some notes. From Form One to Four.
- Parent: Ooh.
- Teacher: Eeh, which are important also for them, for their revision. *Then.....iko na.....it has revision questions also.*
- Parent: We shall buy them....*badala ya wakule biscuits wanunuliwe vitabu.* Instead of eating biscuits we buy them books.
- Teacher: **(To student) That one is okay? Unataka biscuits? You want biscuits?**

Student: *Hapana. No.*

Teacher: *Ama vitabu?* (To parent) *lakini ako more focused. Or books?* (To parent) But he is more focused.

In the preceding Example 14, the student was presented with two options: to have either revision books or biscuits bought for him. The teacher put these options across to the student in the form of a Yes/no question: “Do you want biscuits?” in phrasing it as a question that calls for either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ for an answer, the teacher was inviting the student to commit himself to whether or not he wanted the parent to buy biscuits or books. It could be argued that in the context of Example 14, the teacher was actually leading the student to choose books rather than biscuits since he (Teacher) had earlier on told him that he needed revision books. It is notable that the future act of the parent buying books for the student may actually be beneficial. Other apparently beneficial offers were made by teachers during the academic clinic. In the data collected (Discourse 6 and 9), teachers offered to assist student understand areas they found difficult. In both cases, the student was told he could go consult the teacher. The researcher noted that when the teacher led the student to make a commitment, the offer was accepted. By the use of offers, teachers threatened the students’ negative face. This is because according to Brown and Levinson (1987), through offers, when S indicates that he wants H to commit himself, he potentially indicates that he has no intention to avoid impending H’s freedom of future action. Of the negative FTAs used by teachers on students, 4.6% are offers.

e) Teachers' threats, warnings and dares

Threats, warnings and dares were also observed in the teachers' utterances. These were observed to have occurred 5 times. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), these are negative FTAs in which "S indicates that he _or someone or something else _will instigate sanctions against H unless he does some action A." Consider the following example, used previously but represented here as example 15:

Example 15 (Source: Discourse 5. Appendix 2)

Teacher: So X, you have decided not to work.

Parent: *Mwalimu wa subject X alisema, walikaa 3 weeks hapo kwa kiwaja wakicheza hizi michezo yao. Akienda, she doesn't consult the teacher later. Hata hafanyi exams.* The teacher of subject X said, they took three weeks in the field playing these games of theirs. When she goes, she doesn't consult the teacher later. She doesn't even do exams.

Teacher: You need to put your priorities right eh? *If not, utatoka hapa na machozi. **If not, you will leave here with tears.***

Parent: *Na machozi. Hata imeanza hiyo machozi.* With tears. Even they have started; those tears.

Teacher: What is your target?

Student: "C"stand

In Example 15 above, the teacher told the student that unless she put her priorities right, she would leave the school "with tears". The teacher was giving a warning/threat. He (Teacher) was indicating that the student should do some act (put priorities right) without which something (poor performance perhaps) would instigate sanctions against her. The tears (metaphorically used to mean regret/misery) were what the teacher used to show the student she would suffer. This threatened suffering was being used to make the student put her priorities right as the teacher wanted. In another conversation, the teacher warned/threatened the student that "Failing to plan is planning to fail" (Discourse 8). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), warnings/threats/dares "threaten the addressee's negative-face want, by indicating (potentially) that the speaker does not intend to avoid impeding H's freedom of

action.” In the data collected, 3.2% of the negative FTAs observed were warnings/ threats/ dares. While the percentage looks almost negligible, the study notes that this FTA uses a predication of a possible bad event in the future of the addressee to force her to do some act in the present. While the teacher needs to make students face up to the reality that choices have consequences, perhaps it may be better to focus more on the positive eventualities than the negative.

f) Teachers’ reminders

Reminders were another FTA observed in teachers’ utterances. Consider the following example, previously used but represented here as example 16:

Example 16 (Source: Discourse 9. Appendix 2)

Teacher: And then we can go through the paper, like the last paper we did.

Student: Yes

Teacher: *Hi ya....end of term.* This one for end term. We can look at the areas where you are weak....

Student: Yes

Teacher: *And then I tell you, pengine shida ni hii, shida ni hii.* And then I tell you, perhaps this or other is the problem. *Lakini pia work on your handwriting, nimekuambia mambo ya handwriting. But on top of that, work on your handwriting. I have told you about the handwriting.*

Student: Yes.

In the preceding Example 16, the teacher reminded the student to work on his handwriting:

“But on top of that, work on your handwriting. I have told you about the handwriting.”

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), when S uses reminders, he “indicates that H should remember to do some act A.” In so doing, S predicates some future act of H, which expresses the fact that S does not intend to avoid impeding H’s freedom of action”. When the teacher in Example 16 reminds the student to work on his handwriting, the student is (potentially) compelled to possibly train himself to write better. 2.6% of the negative FTAs observed in teachers’ utterances were reminders.

g) Teachers' expressions of strong negative emotion

The last negative FTA that was observed in teachers' utterances was the expression of strong (negative) emotion. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this could involve S expressing anger, hatred or lust towards H. Consider the following example, from an excerpt referred to previously but represented here as Example 17:

Example 17 (Source: Discourse 7. Appendix 2)

- Teacher: (To student) where is that form we are filling? *Na usiikuje namna hii*. And don't fold it like this. Now last term you got 39% but even the other term, you know, performance between "D", sometimes it goes to a "C"...which is the highest grade you have got in subject X?
- Student: "C"
- Teacher: A "C"? "C" *sio mzuri*. "C" is not good. What's the problem?
- Student: No problem.
- Teacher: **No problem and you are getting an "E"? Eeh? You said there is no problem and you are getting and "E"? Tell us the reason why you have an "E". Otherwise, you can't say you don't have a problem.** (To parent) Last term she got "D-". (To student) **Then you are saying there is no problem? Are you serious? If there is no problem, then there is nothing to talk about.** (To parent) She is okay with that. That is what she is saying. (To student) **You are okay with "E"?**
- Student: No...
- Teacher: **But you are saying there is no problem.**
- Parent: She can tell us why she is saying that. She has an issue. (To student) Tell us.
- Teacher: What is the issue?
- Student: Form one and two work

In Example 17 above, the teacher told the student, "No problem and you are getting an 'E'? Eeh? You said there is no problem and you are getting an 'E'? Are you serious? If there is no problem then there is nothing to talk about". This was in response to the student saying there was no problem while the teacher felt there was and it should have been revealed by the student for discussion during the academic clinic. The repetition and use of interjection were interpreted to be expressing strong emotion. The researcher identified the emotion expressed

to be anger. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), when S uses this FTA, “S indicates possible motivation for harming H or H’s goods.” This influences H’s future course of action as she has “reason to think he [in this case she] may have to take action to protect the object of S’s [harmful] desire.” In example 17, the teacher might harm the student because he (the teacher) is angry. In expressing the anger and not controlling it, the teacher indicated that he had no intention to avoid impeding the student’s face. The student acted to protect herself and the discussion; she changed her statement to agree with the teacher that there was a problem and later on in the discussion went on to identify it. There were only two instances of expression of anger in the ten conversations, meaning teachers were observed to generally control strong (negative) emotion during the academic clinic. Expressions of strong (negative) emotion took up 1.3 % of the negative FTAs observed in teachers’ utterances made during the formal conversations of the academic clinic.

In 4.2.1, the acts in teacher utterances that threaten the student’s negative face have been presented, analysed and interpreted. It is suggested that teachers use strategies to lessen the face threat on the student. Brown and Levinson (1987) write that “negative politeness is oriented mainly towards partially satisfying (redressing) H’s negative face, his basic want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination. Negative politeness, thus, is essentially avoidance based and realizations of negative politeness strategies consist in assurance that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee’s negative face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee’s freedom of action.” It is the suggestion of this study that negative politeness strategies could be put into use to make the teachers’ utterances to students during the academic clinic more sensitive to negative-face wants of the student.

Some FTAs could be avoided for example; threats, dares and expressions of strong (negative) emotion.

In section (4.2.2) that follows, the researcher will present, analyse and interpret FTAs observed in teachers' utterances that run counter to the students positive-face wants.

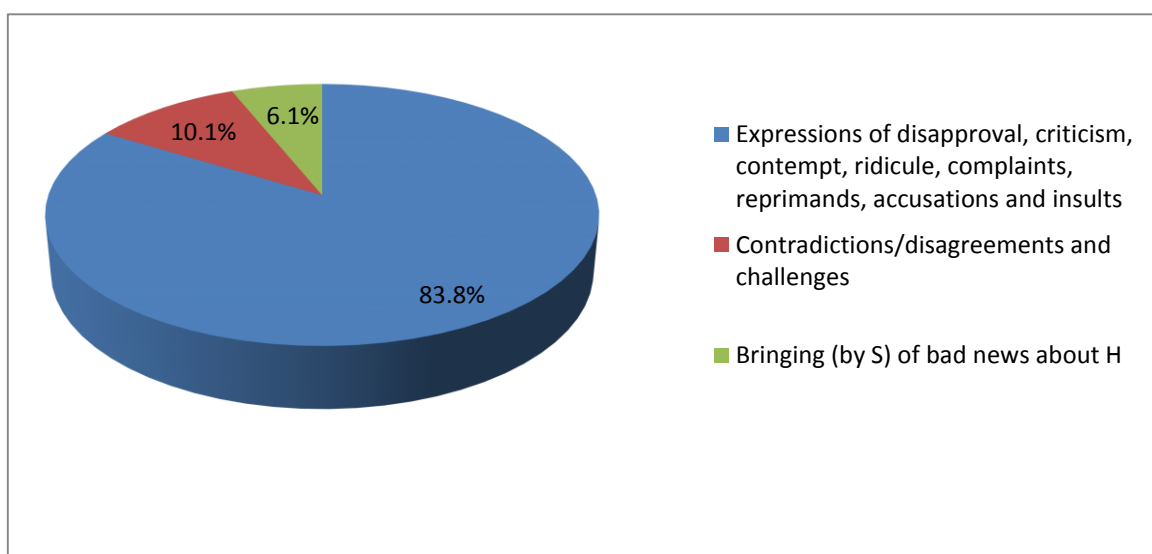
4.2.2 Teachers' Utterances That Threaten Students' Positive Face.

As earlier indicated, Brown and Levinson (1987) define positive face as "the positive, consistent self-image or personality (crucially including the desire that his self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants" (c.f 4.1.2). In the context of the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools, teachers' utterances are very important to the student's positive-face wants. This is because as Brown and Levinson (1987) observe, "A third point is that, in general, persons want their goals, possessions and achievements to be thought desirable not just by anyone, but by some particular others especially relevant to be particular goals." There is no doubt that teachers are relevant to the students' goal of consistent advancement in academic, co-curricular and character growth. The teacher's approval and appreciation of the student's self-image is important. This study rests on the premise that teachers' utterances may contain positive FTAs, thus making the conversations of the academic clinic less effective than they should be.

Teachers' utterances were observed to be containing 99 positive FTAs. These are in two broad categories as shown in Brown and Levinson (1987). In the first category are those FTAs that "indicate a negative evaluation by S of H's positive face". In the second are those that "show that S doesn't care about (or is indifferent to) H's positive face." The sub-

categories are identified in an earlier part of this study in accordance with PT (c.f 2.2.1). The positive FTAs will be presented, discussed and interpreted in order of decreasing frequency of use. Three sub-categories of FTAs were observed which will be presented in Figure 4.4.2. First, expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt, ridicule, complaints, reprimands, accusations and insults. Second, contradictions, disagreements and challenges. Third, the bringing (by S) of bad news about H. The three are discussed after the figure. They are numbered from (a) to (c) and take their heading from the FTA under discussion. Each FTA has been presented as a percentage of all other positive FTAs observed in the utterances of teachers during the formal conversation of the academic clinic.

Figure 4.2.2 Pie Chart Showing Teachers’ Utterances That Threaten Students’ Positive Face.



a) Teachers’ expressions of disapproval

As can be seen in the preceding Figure 4.2.2, it was observed that teachers threatened the students’ positive face by indicating a negative evaluation of some aspect of the student’s positive face. 83 expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and

reprimands, accusations and insults were observed. Consider the following example, previously used but represented here as Example 18:

Example 18 (Source: Discourse 5. Appendix 2)

- Teacher: **So Student X, you have decided not to work.**
- Parent: *Mwalimu wa subject X alisema, walikaa 3 weeks hapo kwa kiwaja wakicheza hizi michezo yao. Akienda, she doesn't consult the teacher later. Hata hafanyi exams.* The teacher of subject X said, they took three weeks in the field playing those games of theirs. When she goes, she doesn't consult the teacher later, she doesn't even do exams.
- Teacher: **You need to put your priorities right eh?** *If not, utatoka hapa na machozi.* If not, you will leave here with tears.
- Parent: *Na machozi. Hata imeanza; hiyo machozi.* With tears. Even they have started; those tears.
- Teacher: What is your target?
- Student: "C" stand
- Parent: Which target? *Last time alisema hakufikisha.* The last time she said it, she did not fulfill.
- Teacher: You are always failing to meet your target?
- Parent: *Sasa kama wengine wanasema "A" na yeye ako hapo "C" stand and you are in the same class unapata the same assistance....(To teacher) na huyu msichana alikuwa mzuri toka primary. Sasa, nini inamfanya hivi saa hii?* Now others are saying "A" and she is saying "C" stand and (to student) you are in the same class. You get the same assistance... (To teacher) And this girl was good from primary. Now, what makes her like this at this time??
- Teacher: (To student) Which target?
- Student: "C+"
- Teacher: Ah no, there's no "C+" here. I don't accept a "C+" as a target in subject X. I expect you to get a "B" and then your mean grade?
- Student: That one will be a "B".
- Teacher: Yes, and you must work towards this. *Sawa sawa?* Okay? You must attain this target.
- Parent: *Shida yake ni gani Mwalimu?* What is her problem Teacher? You are the class teacher.
- Teacher: **Haven't I told you she is not serious? She is not working.**

In the preceding Example 18, the teacher asked the student, "So Student X, you have decided not to work?" The utterance potentially indicated that the teacher disapproved of the student's value system when he (the teacher) interpreted poor academic performance as an indicator of the student's preference for laziness ("not working") rather than diligence which, the teacher implied, would be reflected in good academic performance. In the PT, the utterance therefore

is a positive FTA indicating the teacher doesn't want the student's values. The utterance also has potential to be interpreted as an accusation. This is because through it, the teacher ascribes the crime of laziness to the student. The teacher also told the student, "You need to put your priorities right, eh?" meaning he failed to like the student's priority system. In saying, "Haven't I told you she is not serious? She is not working," the teacher could be indicating (potentially) that he found fault with how the student worked, which expression would be a criticism. The same utterance could also be interpreted to mean the teacher did not respect the student/her values since he evaluated her as not serious. Thus, the utterance potentially expresses the teacher's contempt for the student. Moreover, in judging (as shown in what he says) the student to be neither serious nor hardworking, the teacher is reprimanding her for failure to work hard and be serious. The utterance therefore has potential to be interpreted as an accusation, expression of criticism, contempt and reprimand. All are positive FTAs.

Aside from Example 18, a teacher told a student, "You are a wise young man, isn't it? But here, you are thinking like a fool" (Discourse 10). This was because the student had neglected an optional subject and therefore performed poorly both in the particular subject and the overall grade. The student's reasoning was that he planned to drop the subject and needed not waste his effort in studying it. When the teacher tells the student he is "thinking like a fool", it could be interpreted as an insult. It is to be noted however, that he (the teacher) had made an attempt to soften the potential insult by first calling the student a wise young man. All these FTAs have the potential to threaten the student's positive face. This is because according to Brown and Levinson (1987), they "indicate (potentially) that the speaker does not care about the addressee's feelings, wants, meaning that in some important respect he

doesn't want H's wants." In the ten conversations analysed, this intrinsic FTA (expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations and insults) took up 83.8% of the total positive FTAs made by teachers.

b) Teachers' contradictions/disagreements and challenges

In the data under analysis, contradictions/disagreement and challenges were observed to have occurred 10 times. Consider the following example:

Example 19 (Source: Discourse 7. Appendix 2)

- Teacher: A "C"? "C" *sio mzuri*. "C" is not good. What's the problem?
- Student: **No problem.**
- Teacher: **No problem and you are getting an "E"? Eee? You said there is no problem and you are getting an "E"?** Tell us the reason why you have an "E". **Otherwise, you can't say you don't have a problem.** (To parent) last term she got "D"-. (To student) **Then you are saying there is no problem?** Are you serious? If there is no problem, then there is nothing to talk about. (To parent) she is okay with that. That is what she is saying. (To student) You are okay with "E"?
- Student: No...
- Teacher: **But you are saying there is no problem.**
- Parent: She can tell us why she is saying that. She has an issue. (To student) Tell us.
- Teacher: What is the issue?
- Student: Form one and two work

In Example 19 above, the teacher told the student, "No problem and you are getting 'E'?...Otherwise you can't say you don't have a problem." In this, the teacher disagreed with/contradicted the student who had earlier said she had no problem. The teacher was emphatic that the student did have a problem which, in the teacher's view, was evidenced by the grade "E" that the student had got. This utterance has already been identified elsewhere as an expression of strong (negative) emotion hence threatening the negative face of the student (c.f 4.2.1). But, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), "there is an overlap in this (PT) classification of FTAs because some FTAs intrinsically threaten both positive and negative

face.” Expressions of strong (negative) emotion are given as one such example. When the teacher insists that the student has a problem, the utterance is also a disagreement / contradiction. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that in using a contradiction, “S indicates that he thinks H is wrong or misguided or unreasonable about some issue, such wrongness being associated with disapproval.” In so doing, the teacher threatens the student’s positive face by indicating a negative evaluation.

Aside from Example 19, a teacher also disagrees with a student who says his target is “C +”. The teacher responds, “Ah no, there’s no ‘C +’ here. I don’t accept ‘C +’ as a target in subject X. I expect you to get a ‘B’.” This is observed in discourse 5. In contradicting the student, the teacher has actually threatened the positive-face wants of the student. This is because, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), in general, persons want their goals, possessions and achievements to be thought admirable not just by anyone, but by some, particular others especially relevant to the particular goals. In the data under examination, contradictions/disagreements take up 10.1% of the total positive FTAs used by teachers during the formal conversations of the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools.

c) Passing of bad news about the student by the teacher

The third (and last) positive FTA found in teacher utterances is the bringing (by S) of bad news about H. Six occurrences of this FTA were observed in the data. Consider the following example, used previously but represented here as Example 20:

Example 20 (Source: Discourse 8.Appendix 2)

Teacher: Okay Student X. No, no, no. I didn’t expect X to get “D+”.

Parent: What do we do?

Teacher: I don't know what happened to him. He should tell us. In fact, there is a time he gave me another story and I want to confirm if indeed it is true. I am not amused. (To student) you got a D plus and it is not your grade. What is happening? Are you losing interest? **And there was a time you used to doze a lot in class. The whole of last term...**

Parent: I was told by Mrs X when we met here the last time we visited. But I also understand since then he's been moved from the place where he was sitting to the front.

Teacher: Yes, he used to sit at the back. It was at a corner at the back of the class.

Student: I have been moved

Teacher: Now, that was recent; this term. Then he was telling me...there was a time I was almost punishing him for that...but he told me his tummy ached.

Parent: I think that must be merely a story because that was a while ago. It only came up in this one term when the grades were really bad. Then you came in as his teacher. His grades shot up and then really came down again. So it's not about a time he did not understand. It's about what is happening now. That is the way I look at it. It doesn't make sense. There's no way you'll have a 'D' in subject X and 'B' in subject Y from the same head; unless you have subject X site and a subject Y site. It's up to you to pull up.

.....
Teacher: (To parent) I know, I know his capability.

Parent: I see. (To student) Those are very strong words. He knows your capability and is willing to make sure that he helps you to achieve your capabilities.

Teacher: **That is why you see I was mad when he persisted in that dozing. (To student) I almost punished you, yeah? (To parent) I took him to the deputy's office.**

Parent: *Ikibidi, punish him.* If necessary, punish him.

In the preceding Example 20, the teacher passed 2 pieces of bad news about the student. In the first he said, "And there was a time you used to doze a lot in class. The whole of last term." He also said to and of the student, "I almost punished you, yeah? (To parent) I took him to the deputy's office." The pieces are inter-related with the second meant to show that the crime of dozing for a whole term was so weighty that it deserved the attention of the Deputy Principal's office. In the teacher bringing these pieces of bad news about the student, he showed a disregard for the fact that the student would feel demeaned. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the positive face is the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants. Therefore, in choosing to bring bad news, the teacher indicated that he did not care about the student's feelings and wants. It is the argument of this study that when teachers

express a disregard for the students' feeling they contribute towards making the student not look forward to the conversation of the academic clinic. Of the total number of FTAs observed in the teachers' utterances, 6.1% were those in which the teacher was bringing bad news about the student as the hearer during the academic clinic.

The researcher observed that the following positive FTAs were not used by teachers in their formal conversation with the students during the academic clinic: expressions of violent (out of control) emotions by S toward H; irreverence; introduction of taboo /inappropriate/emotive/divisive topics; S's interruptions, non-sequitors, show of blatant non-cooperation by S to H or the use of offensive status marked identification terms by S to H especially in initial encounters. The researcher further observed that parents too had not used these FTAs in their formal conversations with students (c.f 4.1.2). This was taken to be an indicator that just like parents, teachers are not irredeemable in their communication during the academic clinic. They only need to improve on their skills.

In 4.2.2, the researcher has presented, analysed and interpreted the positive FTAs found in teachers' utterances. The predominant positive FTA in the teachers' utterances sampled was the use of expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt, ridicule, complaints, reprimands, accusations, and insults. As shown earlier in 4.2.1, the predominant negative FTA in teachers' utterances was the use of orders and requests. It is to be noted that these two FTAs had also been predominant in the utterances of parents sampled earlier (c.f 4.1.2). In 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, the researcher will present, analyse and interpret the data collected to investigate

the extent to which students read face threat in the utterances of teachers and parents respectively, during the conversation of the academic clinic.

4.3.1 Students' Perception of Face Threat in Teachers' Utterances.

The third objective of the study was to determine the extent to which students read face threat in the utterances made to them by teachers and parents during the academic clinic (c.f 1.3). This is important because according to the PT, face threat is a potentiality. It is only when the addressee perceives it that it becomes an issue in communication. To discover whether students perceive face threat in what parents and teachers say to them, the study used a questionnaire for students.

The questionnaire collected information on the opinion of the students on three main aspects that concern perceived face threat. First is the popularity of the academic clinic relative to other school meetings. This test was meant to confirm (or disconfirm) the researcher's assumption that the academic clinic is not viewed positively by the students (c.f 1.2). The researcher would take a confirmation of a negative attitude to mean that the forum is not owned or accepted by the students. The argument of the research is that this negative attitude could be (partially) caused by FTAs in the communication. The first test therefore sought to establish whether the student did feel the problem set forth by the researcher and expressed in objective (iii) of the research.

The second item tested in the questionnaire was whether the students felt/judged the academic clinic to be effective as a forum in which they could express themselves openly in

matters of academic progress, moral growth, discipline and personal welfare (c.f 1.1). The purpose of this item was to collect information on the perceived effectiveness (or lack of it) of the academic clinic discourse. This is because the study is looking at the effectiveness of the conversations of the academic clinic from the point of view of the student. The research links effectiveness (or lack of it) to the use of FTAs in the communication.

Having collected information on the opinion of the student towards the academic clinic, the questionnaire logically went to the main item which is students' perception of face threat in the words spoken to them by parents and teachers during the formal conversations of the academic clinic. Student perception of face threat was used to explain (using the PT) the degree of acceptance and effectiveness of the academic clinic communication in Kenyan secondary schools. The study however considered it indecorous to ask the opinion of the student on what his parent and teacher had actually said to him. This is because in focusing on perceived face threat, the study could be accused of encouraging the students to find fault in the academic clinic conversation and in all other communication with his teacher and/or parent. This would contradict the main goal of the research which was to make a contribution to improved school communication.

Additionally, if the student felt encouraged to find fault with the words of his parent and teacher, it could strain the relations existing between the student on one hand, and his parent and teacher on the other side. To avoid this, the study examined the data collected and sampled utterances that exemplify of each of the six classes of speech acts of the SAT as presented in Searle (1976) and modified in Traugott and Pratt (1980). For each speech act, a

sentence was formulated that was as close as possible to the utterance made by the teachers or parents. Thus, the study used six formulated sentences in the questionnaire for students. The formulation was done on the strength of Searle (1989) in which it is stated that every meaningful sentence in virtue of its meaning can be used to perform a particular speech act (or range of speech acts) and every possible speech act can, in principle, be given an exact formulation in a sentence or sentences, assuming an appropriate context of utterances. The sentence formulated therefore, was considered capable of performing the particular speech act defined by category, just as effectively as would have been the case had it been actually uttered by the parent or teacher during the academic clinic. Therefore, for each possible speech act, a statement was formulated. Care was taken to ensure that the statement was relevant to the context of secondary school academic clinic conversation.

It is on these statements that the students' perception of face threat was tested. It should be noted that the SAT was confined to ensuring a brief but an all-inclusive set of possible speech acts (or utterances) as well as a means of classifying the statements used in the questionnaire. In analysis and interpretation each speech act was examined in terms of the type of face threat it has potential to inflict on the hearer. This is because face threat is the focus of this study. The presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected on the students' perception of threat in the utterances of teachers during the academic clinic is shown hereafter.

The research sought the opinion of students towards the utterances made by teachers during the academic clinic. To ensure that utterances were a comprehensive representation of all possible utterances, the researcher used the SAT of Austin and Searle as presented in Searle

(1976). The utterances used in the questionnaire were put into six classes of speech acts or illocutionary acts numbered from (a) to (f) as follows:

a) Representatives are illocutionary acts that represent a state of affairs. The speaker may assert, conclude, state, tell, insist, suggest, describe, claim, and swear that something is the case. In the data, the following 2 examples were considered by the researcher to be representatives:

i) It [a particular course] costs x shillings per hour. (Source: Discourse 2. Appendix 2).

ii) The last paper will make you who you will be. (Source: Discourse 5. Appendix 2)

The formulated representative utterance used in the questionnaire for students was: “Disciplined students succeed in life.”

b) Expressives express the speaker’s psychological attitude towards some subject. Examples are utterances made to apologise, congratulate, condole, thank or greet. In the data collected, the following 2 utterances were considered by the researcher to be expressive:

i) I am impressed that you came top of your stream. (Source: Discourse 1 Appendix 2)

ii) You are a wise young man. (Source: Discourse 10 Appendix 2)

In the questionnaire for students, the formulated expressive used was “Congratulations.”

c) Verdictives are acts that deliver an assessment or rating of some situation or entity. It includes utterances that rank, estimate or express judgement. In the data collected, the following 2 utterances were taken by the researcher to be examples of verdictives:

i) I don't see you reading; one time you are at 50%, the other time you are at 13.

(Source: Discourse 3 Appendix 2)

ii) And when you don't want to work, I know you are also difficult to work with.

(Source: Discourse 4 Appendix 2)

For the student's questionnaire, the formulated verdictive used was, "You are simply lazy."

d) Directives are acts meant to get the addressee to do something. Directives include acts that request, command, plead, or insist that the addressee does some action. In the data collected, the following 2 utterances were considered by the researcher to be directives:

i) So, revision should be done well, eh? (Source: Discourse 1 Appendix 2)

ii) You need to practise, so one book I would recommend is entitled...(Source: Discourse 10 Appendix 2)

The formulated directive used in the questionnaire was, "You must start waking up earlier."

e) Commissives are acts that commit the speaker to doing something. This includes utterances through which the speaker makes promises, threats, offers and vows. In the data collected, the following 2 examples were taken by the researcher to be illustrations of commissives:

i) And then we can go through the paper. Like the last paper we did. (Source: Discourse 9 Appendix 2)

ii) Yes, get that, and I will talk to your father privately and say something should be bought for you. (Source: Discourse 3 Appendix 2)

The formulated commissive used in the questionnaire was, "When you improve this grade, I'll buy you a present."

- g) Declarations are acts that bring about the state of affairs they refer to such as blessing, firing from employment, baptizing, bidding, passing sentence, arresting and marrying. In the data collected, the following utterance was considered by the researcher to be a declaration: *welcome*. (Source: *Discourse 9 Appendix 2*) The formulated declaration used in the questionnaire was, “You are the winner of the prize I promised the class.”

For each of the six classes of speech acts/ utterances, the student respondent was requested to write the emotional reaction the formulated sentence would elicit in him as the addressee, if it was employed by his teacher during the conversation of the academic clinic. The responses from the questionnaire showed that students did perceive face threat in the utterances used by teachers during the academic clinic. The utterances were perceived to be threatening in this order from the most to the least threatening: verdictives, directives, representatives, commissives, declarations and expressives.

Face threat to the student was described by selecting one of a range of structured responses. These ranged from “very happy”, “happy”, “neutral”, “unhappy”, to “very unhappy”. Each response was given a numerical value ranging from 0 – 4 which helped the researcher numerically describe the extent of face threat perceived by the students on the use of any of the formulated utterances. Accordingly, ‘very happy’ was valued at 0 to indicate minimal or no threat perceived, ‘happy’ was valued at 1 to indicate a little threat, “neutral” 2 to indicate some threat, ‘unhappy’ 3 to describe a lot of threat and ‘very unhappy’ given the numerical value of 4 to describe maximum face threat perceived by the student.

Ten questionnaires from each of the three schools (coded A, B, C) were considered, making a total of 30 questionnaires. The numerical quantifying of responses means that if in one school all the ten students felt very happy with a certain utterance, the threat score would be 0 x 10 (out of the maximum possible score of 40/40) which makes it 0/40. If this happened in all three schools, the aggregate face threat perception score for the utterance would be 0/120. A threat score of 0 would be interpreted to mean the face threat in the utterance was minimal and almost not perceived. On the other extreme of the range, if all the ten students in one school chose “very unhappy” as their description of their emotional reaction when the speaker employed a certain utterance on them, the face threat perception score for that utterance in that school would be 40/40 derived from 4 x 10 and across the three schools, the aggregate face threat perception score would be 120/120. This would mean the utterance inflicted maximum face threat on all the 30 student respondents. In between are varying degrees of perception of face threat. Table 4.3.1 presents the number of students who chose each response to describe the face threat they perceived upon the use of each utterance by the teacher during the academic clinic. The table also presents the face threat perception score for each utterance per school as well as the aggregate face threat perception score which sums up the face threat perceived to have been inflicted by the use of a particular utterance across the three schools A, B and C. A discussion of the findings for each utterance follows Table 4.3.1. In the discussion, each of the six utterances is considered in terms of perceived face threat. The discussion is presented in sub sections numbered from (a) to (f) with the heading drawn from the speech act under discussion

Table 4.3.1 Table Showing Perceived Face Threat In Teachers' Utterances.

SPEECH ACT	UTTERANCE FORMULATED	SCHOOL	NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO CHOSE SPECIFIC RESPONSES AS THEIR DESCRIPTION OF EMOTION/FACE THREAT EVOKED BY THE USE OF THE UTTERANCE BY THE TEACHER					FACE THREAT PERCEPTION SCORE FOR UTTERANCE PER SCHOOL	FACE THREAT PERCEPTION SCORE FOR UTTERANCE ACROSS THREE SCHOOLS
			Code	Very Happy (0)	Happy (1)	Neutral (2)	Unhappy (3)		
Verdictives	You are simply lazy	A	0	0	3	2	5	$\frac{32}{40}$	$\frac{101}{120}$ (84%)
		B	0	1	2	4	3	$\frac{31}{40}$	
		C	0	0	0	2	8	$\frac{38}{40}$	
Directives	You must start waking up earlier	A	0	1	4	3	2	$\frac{26}{40}$	$\frac{85}{120}$ (70.85)
		B	0	0	4	2	4	$\frac{30}{40}$	
		C	0	1	3	2	4	$\frac{9}{40}$	
Representatives	Disciplined students succeed in life	A	0	2	7	1	0	$\frac{19}{40}$	$\frac{56}{120}$ (46.6%)
		B	0	1	9	0	0	$\frac{19}{40}$	
		C	0	3	6	1	0	$\frac{18}{40}$	
Commissives	When you improve this grade, I'll buy you a present.	A	0	4	4	2	0	$\frac{18}{40}$	$\frac{55}{120}$ (45.8%)
		B	0	4	4	1	1	$\frac{19}{40}$	
		C	0	4	4	2	0	$\frac{18}{40}$	
Declarations	You are the winner of the prize I promised the class	A	6	3	1	0	0	$\frac{5}{40}$	$\frac{12}{120}$ (10%)
		B	6	3	1	0	0	$\frac{5}{40}$	
		C	8	2	0	0	0	$\frac{2}{40}$	
Expressives	Congratulations	A	7	3	0	0	0	$\frac{3}{40}$	$\frac{2}{120}$ (6.6%)
		B	6	4	0	0	0	$\frac{4}{40}$	
		C	9	1	0	0	0	$\frac{1}{40}$	

a) Perceived face threat in teachers' verdictives

Verdictives were observed to be the most threatening speech act. The utterance used was "You are simply lazy." In the SAT, according to Traugott and Pratt (1980), the verdictive utterance is an illocutionary act that delivers a finding as to value or fact, and thus that rates some entity or situation on a scale, such as assessing, ranking, estimating and all other judgmental acts. In telling the student that he is simply lazy, the teacher is judging or assessing the student's diligence and negatively rates the student to be lazy. This utterance was observed in PT to be a negative evaluation. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the words "You are simply lazy" are an expression of disapproval, reprimand or accusation. Considering that earlier on in 4.2.1, expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt, ridicule, complaints, reprimands, accusations and insults made up 83% of all positive FTAs in teacher utterances, the observation that students did perceive them to be the most threatening is significant. This is because the questionnaire confirmed the findings of the conversations collected during the academic clinic. It also corresponds with Brooks' (1993) finding that teachers are found to have demeaned, belittled or accused students of being disruptive as they struggled to understand what was being taught (c.f 2.1). Brooks showed that such communication is bad for the students' self-esteem. Verdictives got an aggregate face threat perception score of $101/120$ (84%) in the questionnaire. This finding seems to show that expressions of negative evaluation in teachers' utterances could be playing a big role in hindering the communication of the academic clinic.

b) Perceived face threat in teachers' directives

The second type of utterance whose threat the students perceived was the directive. The sentence put to test was "You must start waking up earlier." In SAT, it is a directive because

according to Searle (1976), it is an attempt by the speaker to make the addressee do something. Other utterances in this class are those used in questioning, requesting, daring, inviting, insisting, commanding, suggesting and pleading that the addressee does something. When the teacher tells the student that he must start waking up earlier, it is an order. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the utterance is a negative FTA as are all the other utterances classified as directives in SAT. Orders were the dominant negative FTA observed in teacher utterances (c.f 4.2.1). Across the three schools, directives had a total face threat perception score of 85/120 (70.8%). This finding agrees with the finding of Coleman (Ed. 2004), whose study describes South African teachers as ‘authoritarian’; a term that suggests they have little regard for the feelings of those students in their charge. The impact of directives on inflicting face-threat would further be compounded by a finding of a study done by Janet Holmes in Schmidt (1983). Her study deals with utterances like suggestions, requests and commands which she refers to collectively as “teacher directives.” Holmes shows that because the teacher holds power in the school context, all directives (not just orders), will tend to be interpreted by the student as commands which mean they will carry more illocutionary force and be more threatening to the face-wants of the student. Holmes however, was dealing with Australian school children. The Kenyan children did read face threat in teacher directives. The research interpreted this finding to mean that the liberal use of directives by teachers was one reason why students did not look forward to the academic clinic in Kenyan Secondary Schools at the time of the research.

c) Perceived face threat in teachers’ representatives

The representative sentence was, “Disciplined students succeed in life.” When a teacher says this to a student, according to Searle (1976), the teacher is committing himself to the truth of the alleged proposition. He could be asserting or concluding from what he has observed.

Traugott and Pratt (1980) give other representatives as claiming, hypothesizing, stating, describing, predicting, telling, insisting, suggesting or swearing that something is the case. But in the thinking of the PT according to Brown and Levinson (1987), the statement “Disciplined students succeed in life” could be interpreted as a suggestion or piece of advice. The teacher is advising/suggesting that the student be (or maintain the state of being) disciplined so that he succeeds in life. In terms of the PT, advice and suggestions threaten the student’s negative face as they inhibit his freedom of choice of future action. Across the three schools, the representative “Disciplined students succeed in life” attains an aggregate threat perception score of 56/120 (46.6%). Considering that advice is part of what teachers are instructed (by the government) to do during the academic clinic, perhaps the only way in which the face threat inflicted through the giving of advice/suggestions can be reduced is by employing politeness strategies but not avoiding the use of the FTA.

d) Perceived face threat in teachers’ commissives

Students also perceived face threat when teachers used commissives. According to Searle (1976) a commissive is an utterance in which the speaker commits himself to some future course of action as in promising, threatening or offering to do some future act. Traugott and Pratt (1980) also add vowing to the class of utterances called commissives in SAT. The sentence used in the questionnaire was, “When you improve this grade, I’ll buy you a present.” Under SAT, it could be classified as a promise. Interestingly, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), the statement can be interpreted to be an offer or promise from the teacher to the student. This means the two theories have some common ground in the classification of utterances. The utterance threatens the students’ negative face as the teacher indicates he has no intention to avoid impeding the student’s freedom of future action. In the three schools studied, promises/offers were perceived to be threats. They got an aggregate

face threat perception score of 55/120 (45.8%). It is noticeable that in classification and definition, PT and SAT treat the utterances the same.

e) Perceived face threat in teachers' declarations

Declarations were also perceived to be face threatening. The sentence used to represent this class of utterance was, "You are the winner of the prize I promised the class." According to Searle (1976), the utterance is a declaration because it effects immediate change in the institutional state of affairs. Other utterances in this class are excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing an employee, blessing, bidding, passing sentence and marrying. The moment the teacher tells the student, "You are the winner of the prize I promised the class," the student becomes the winner. He is no longer just an ordinary student who attempted to get the prize. This is a change for the better. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the utterance is a compliment or expression of admiration. Through it, the teacher indicates a liking for the student's goods (his performance /ability). While this is a positive declaration, in terms of the PT, it threatens the student's negative face. This is because it forces the student to act to protect the object of the teacher's desire. Across the 3 schools the declaration "You are the winner of the prize I promised the class" Scored 12/120 (10%), an aggregate face threat perception score that shows it was only a little threatening. Indeed, most respondents felt either "very happy" (minimal/no threat) or "happy" (a little threat). The study encourages teachers to use more positive declarations. It is to be noted that negative declarations such as excommunicating, declaring war, firing an employee and passing sentence could have their equivalents in a secondary school academic clinic context. Though not put to the test, chances are that they would be perceived to be very threatening and are best avoided.

f) Perceived face threat in teachers' expressives

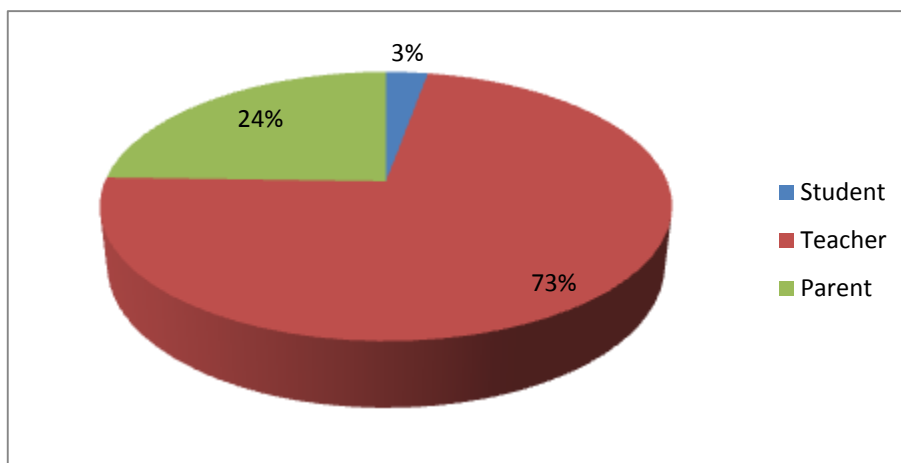
Finally, students perceived the least face threat when teachers used expressives. According to Searle (1976), expressives are utterances that express a psychological state of the speaker such as thanking, apologising, welcoming, or congratulating. Traugott and Pratt (1980) add condoling, deploring and greeting. The sentence formulated was "Congratulations." Coming from the teacher to the student it expresses the psychological state (of the teacher) of admiration for the student. In the PT, Brown and Levinson (1987) would treat the utterance as a compliment / expression of admiration. The sentence would therefore be having the potential to inflict threat on the student's negative face just like in the use of a positive declaration. The PT shows that the utterance could threaten the addressee's face much as it may have been used with good intentions. But across the three schools, "Congratulations" got an aggregate face threat perception score of 08/120 (6.6%) with most respondents indicating they read minimal or no threat in the utterance. Teachers would be encouraged to use more expressions of admiration in their communication with students.

On the whole, this study showed that students do perceive face threat in the utterances that teachers make during the conversation of the academic clinic. It is the suggestion of the researcher that these face threats contribute to making the academic clinic lose both popularity and effectiveness as far as the student is concerned. This position was confirmed by looking at the responses to question 5 of the questionnaire. The question sought to determine the attitude of the student towards the academic clinic as a communicative event in Kenyan secondary schools. To do this, the academic clinic was put alongside prize giving day, school assembly, and guidance and counseling sessions.

The student was to choose one in a range of structured responses to describe his/her attitude. The responses ranged from 'very happy', 'happy', 'neutral', 'unhappy' to 'very unhappy.' From the findings of the 30 students in the survey, none was "very happy" with the academic clinic and only 9 were found to be 'happy' with the event. The remaining 21 were 'neutral', 'unhappy' or "very unhappy." It was clear therefore that 70% of the students in the survey were not happy with the academic clinic. This is a significant finding as it means most students actually neither accepted nor had a positive attitude towards the day. It is the hope of this research that teachers can change this negative attitude and make the day more popular by taking care of the students' face-wants.

The research also confirmed the negative rating of the academic clinic by the students by looking at the relative participation of the speech interactants. The aim of this item (Question 6 in the questionnaire) was to find out whether the Kenyan student viewed the academic clinic as his forum for self-expression. The question set was "In your view, who is the most active participant in the conversation of the academic clinic?" To determine the student's views, the student informant was to choose one from the three interactants of the academic clinic discourse: the parent, teacher or student. Of the 30 respondents, 23 indicated that the teacher was the most active participant. 6 felt the parents was and only 1 felt the student was the most active. The figure that follows presents the information using percentages.

Figure 4.3.1 Pie Chart Showing Students' Perception of Relative Participation of the Interactants of the Academic Clinic



The preceding Figure 4.3.1 shows it was the students' perception that teachers dominated the conversation of the academic clinic. The students' perception was borne out by an examination of the conversations as recorded in Appendix 2. The teacher and parent seemed to be carrying out a conversation between themselves with very little participation from the student. Ideally, the academic clinic should be a day in which the parent, teacher and student take part fully. According to Yule (1996), "in simple terms, an English conversation can be described as an activity where, for the most part, two or three people takes turns at speaking". The observations (from the questionnaire) presented in Figure 4.3.1 indicated that there was a need for speaking turns in the conversations of the academic clinic to be distributed more equitably. Usually, the teacher tends to be in control of the conversation because he/she is the host and custodian of the records that are referred to in the conversation. In this role as the facilitator, the research observes that more sensitivity to the rules of turn taking would go a long way towards improving the formal conversation of the day.

4.3.1 Has presented, analysed and interpreted data to do with student's perception of face threat in teacher utterances during the academic clinic. The findings show that teachers' verdictives are the most threatening speech act and positive expressives incur the least face threat. In the opinion of the students, the academic clinic is not a popular day and they do not view it as a day when all three stakeholders have equal opportunity to participate. 4.3.2 will present, analyse and interpret data on students' perception of face threat in the utterances that parents make to them (students) during the formal conversations of the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools.

4.3.2 Students' Perception of Face Threat in Parents' Utterances.

As mentioned earlier, the third objective of the study was to determine the extent to which students read face threat in utterances made to them by parents and teachers during the academic clinic (c.f 1.3). While 4.3.1 has examined the extent to which students perceive face threat in teachers' utterances during the academic clinic, 4.3.2 will examine students' perception of face threat in the words of their parents during the forum.

The questionnaire sought to find out what students feel when their parents use various utterances in the conversations of the academic clinic. The utterances put to the test were the same ones used to determine students' opinion towards teacher utterances. The questionnaire (Question 8) required them to write what they would feel if the utterances were made by their parents in the context of secondary school academic clinic. The responses were structured and ranged from 'very happy' to 'very unhappy' with others in between. As explained earlier, these responses were taken to be the student's description of his perception of face threat. Students' perception varied from feeling minimum/no threat on one end of the scale to maximum threat on the other extreme by the utterances made by their parents (c.f 4.3.1).

Each of the five responses__ “very happy”, “happy”, “neutral”, “unhappy” and “very unhappy” __ were given numerical value from zero to four for ease of analysis as explained earlier (c.f 4.3.1). The utterances put to the test in the questionnaire were classified according to the SAT of Austin and Searle as presented in Searle (1976). The classes have also been modified by post – Austinian thought as shown in Traugott and Pratt (1980).

The questionnaire for students showed that the students did perceive face threat when parents used various utterances during the formal conversations of the academic clinic. The utterances used by parents were perceived to threaten the face of the student in the following order which ranges from the most to the least threatening in the opinion of the student: verdictives, directives, commissives, representatives, expressives and declarations. Table 4.3.2 presents the various speech acts as well as the sentence formulated to present each speech act. The definition of each speech act and formulation is well explained in the preceding section (c.f 4.3.1). Table 4.3.2 also presents the number of students respondents (to the questionnaire) who picked particular ranged responses as their description of how much face threat they perceived as their parents used various speech acts(as represented by each formulated utterance) to communicate with them during the formal conversations of the day.

As Table 4.3.2 shows, the questionnaire involved 30 respondents: 10 from each of the three schools coded ‘A’ ‘B’ and ‘C’. If in one school, all respondents indicated they felt ‘very happy’ when their parents used a particular utterance, then the face-threat perception score for the utterance in the school would be 0/40 and 0/120 if it was the same in all three schools. This face-threat perception score of zero would be interpreted to mean the use of the utterance by the parent only incurred minimum or no face threat. On the other extreme, if all respondents in one school picked the response ‘very unhappy’ as the one describing their

feeling at the use of a specific utterance, the face threat perception score for the utterance would be 40/40 in the school and 120/120 in all three schools. This would be interpreted to mean all the students perceived maximum face threat at the use of the specific utterance by the parent. In between the two extremes are various other ranges of face-threat perception scores. Table 4.3.2 presents the actual threat score for each utterance per school. It also presents the aggregate threat score for the utterances across the 3 schools A, B, and C. The face threat perception for each of the six utterances is discussed after Table 4.3.2. The discussion is presented in sub sections numbered from (a) to (f) with the heading drawn from the speech act under discussion.

Table 4.3.2 Table Showing Students' Description of Perceived Face Threat in Parents' Utterances

SPEECH ACT	UTTERANCE FORMULATED	SCHOOL Code	NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO CHOSE SPECIFIC RESPONSES AS THEIR DESCRIPTION OF THE EMOTION /FACE THREAT EVOKED BY THE USE OF THE UTTERANCE BY THE PARENT					FACE THREAT PERCEPTION SCORE FOR UTTERANCE PER SCHOOL	FACE THREAT PERCEPTION SCORE FOR UTTERANCE ACROSS THE THREE SCHOOLS	
			Very Happy (0)	Happy (1)	Neutral (2)	Unhappy (3)	Very unhappy (4)			
Verdictives	You are simply lazy	A	0	0	1	4	5	34/40	101/120 (84%)	
		B	0	1	2	4	3			
		C	0	0	0	6	4			38/40
Directives	You must start waking up earlier	A	0	0	5	5	0	25/40	81/120 (67.5%)	
		B	0	0	4	4	2			30/40
		C	0	0	6	2	2			26/40
Commissives	When you improve this grade, I'll buy you a present.	A	0	5	4	1	0	16/40	54/120 (45%)	
		B	0	4	4	1	1			19/40
		C	0	2	7	1	0			19/40
Representatives	Disciplined students succeed in life	A	0	3	6	1	0	18/40	53/120 (44.1%)	
		B	0	2	8	0	0			18/40
		C	0	3	7	0	0			17/40
Expressives	Congratulations	A	7	3	0	0	0	3/40	7/120 (5.5%)	
		B	6	4	0	0	0			4/40
		C	10	0	0	0	0			0/40
Declarations	You are the winner of the prize I promised the class	A	7	2	1	0	0	4/40	6/120 (5%)	
		B	8	2	0	0	0			2/40
		C	10	0	0	0	0			0/40

a) Perceived face threat in parents' verdictives

As the preceding Table 4.3.2 shows, verdictives were perceived to be the most threatening speech act. In the questionnaire, the formulated sentence was "You are simply lazy." As discussed in 4.3.1, this is a verdictive in the SAT since according to Traugott and Pratt (1980) it is "an illocutionary act that delivers a finding as to value or fact and thus that rates some entity or situation on a scale such as assessing, ranking, estimating, and all other judgmental acts". With the words, "You are simply lazy", the parent is judging or assessing the student's diligence and/or performance. The parent ranks the student as simply lazy. While in SAT the utterance is classified as a verdictive, in the PT it is a positive FTA involving a negative evaluation of the students values / behaviour. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), it is a face threatening act in the same class as expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt/ridicule, complaints, reprimands, accusations and insults.

Out of the 30 student respondents to the questionnaire, only one described his attitude towards the sentence as 'happy' which the research interpreted to mean little face threat was perceived. The remaining 29 chose responses ranging from 'neutral' (some threat perceived), 'unhappy' (a lot of threat perceived) to 'very unhappy' (maximum face threat perceived). Across the 3 schools code named 'A' 'B' and 'C' the sentence attained an aggregate face threat perception score of 101/120 (84%) which means majority of the students found the verdictive very threatening. The score is significant as it is exactly the same as that of teacher verdictives (c.f 4.3.1). This was interpreted to mean that negative evaluation hurts the self-esteem of the student a lot regardless of who (between the teacher and the parent) is making it. Its use contributes a lot to the possible disregard with which students hold the academic clinic in Kenyan secondary schools.

b) Perceived face threat in parents' directives

It was observed that parents' directives threaten the students. The sentence formulated for testing face threat caused by the use of directives by the parent was, "You must start waking up earlier". According to Searle (1976), it is a directive as it is an attempt by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. The utterance was included in the questionnaire to test the students' perception of face threat in a wider class of utterances that express acts such as requesting, questioning, commanding, pleading, inviting, daring, insisting or suggesting that the addressee does something. That is as far as SAT is concerned. But the focus of the research is face threat. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), in the PT the utterance "You must start waking up earlier" is classified as a negative FTA. It is an order which is classified together with requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, warnings and dares. All these are acts that predicate some future act of the hearer and in so doing, put pressure on him (hearer) to do or refrain from doing the act. They therefore threaten the addressee's negative face by indicating (potentially) that the speaker does not intend to avoid impeding the addressee's freedom of action. The parent is forcing the student to start waking up earlier than he (the student) has been doing. Across the 3 schools, the directive garnered an aggregate face threat perception score of 81/120 (67.5%). The research interpreted this to mean that the parents' directives also contribute to making the students have a negative attitude towards the conversations of the academic clinic.

c) Perceived face threat in parents' commissives

Students were also found to perceive face threat when their parents used commissive utterances during the academic clinic. According to Searle (1976), commissives are sentences that commit the speaker to some future course of action. In this class are sentences that express the act of promising, threatening, offering and vowing. The sentence that was used to

test student perception of the face threat in parents' utterances was, "When you improve this grade, I'll buy you a present." The research treated it as an offer and/or promise. While it is a directive in SAT, in PT it is a negative FTA. But the utterance falls under sub-categories that are common to the two theories: offers and/or promises. The parent wants the student to commit himself to whether or not he wants the offer of a present which has been made. In choosing to make the offer, the parent therefore puts some pressure on the student to accept or reject the offer/promise. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the act (promise/offer) threatens the addressee's negative face by indicating (potentially) that the speaker does not intend to avoid impeding the addressee's freedom of action. By the fact that the students indicated (in the questionnaire) that they did feel threatened, the face threat in parents' offers /promises is not just potential but actually inflicted. Across the 3 schools, offers/promises got an aggregate face threat perception score of 54/120 (45%).

d) Perceived face threat in parents' representatives

Students also perceived threat when their parents used representatives. The sentence formulated for the questionnaire was "Disciplined students succeed in life." According to Searle (1976), representatives are sentences through which the speaker commits himself to the truth of the alleged proposition. The sentence "Disciplined students succeed in life" could be treated as an act of the parent asserting /stating /predicting /describing /suggesting /telling the student that something is the case. Other representatives allege, claim hypothesize, insist or swear that some proposition is the truth. While in SAT the sentence is a representative, in PT it is a suggestion or piece of advice. In telling the student that "Disciplined students succeed in life", the parent could be suggesting /advising that the student become (or continue to be) disciplined so that he succeeds in life. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), advice /suggestions threaten the addressee's negative face because through their use

“S indicates that he thinks H ought to (perhaps) do some act A”. It is therefore a threat to the addressee’s negative face. Across the 3 schools, the representatives got a threat score of 53/120 (44.4%).

e) Perceived face threat in parents’ expressives

Out of the six parents’ utterances tested for student perception of face threat, the expressive came fifth. The sentence used was “Congratulations”. According to Searle (1976), expressives are sentences used to express a psychological state of the speaker. “Congratulations” was taken to be expressing the parent’s admiration for the student or something he had done. Expressives perform the act of thanking, congratulating, apologising, welcoming, condoling, deploring and greeting. But in PT, “Congratulations” is a compliment /expression of admiration which makes it fit in the class of FTAs that threaten the addressee’s negative face. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), compliments /expressions of admiration or envy “predicate some desire of S towards H or H’s goods, giving H reason to think that he may have to take action to protect the object of S’s desire, or give it to S.”

Much as “Congratulations” is expected to threaten the students’ negative face, the observation of the researcher is that it did so very little. This is because the aggregate face threat perception score across the 3 schools was a paltry 7/120 (7.5%). Indeed, out of the 30 students who filled the questionnaire, 23 indicated that the utterance “Congratulations” coming from their parents made them feel “very happy” which was interpreted to mean the face threat in the utterance was minimal and almost not felt. The remaining 7 felt ‘happy’ meaning a little face threat was inflicted. The research observed this to be a case in which the finding seemed to be contradicting the assertion of PT that the use of compliments and expressions of admiration causes face threat in the addressee.

f) Perceived face threat in Parents' declarations.

Finally, students perceived face threat when the parents used the declaration, "You are the winner of the prize I promised the class." This however, was the least threatening of the six utterances used in the questionnaire. According to Searle (1976), the declaration is a sentence whose use effects immediate change in the institutional state of affairs. Sentences in this class are those through which the speaker performs the acts of excommunicating, declaring war, christening, firing an employee, blessing, bidding, passing sentence and marrying "You are the winner of the prize I promised the class" changes the state of affairs. From the time the parent utters the words, the student's status is raised from being a possible candidate for the prize to the actual winner. In the thinking of PT, the sentence could be a compliment /expression of admiration from the parent to the student. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), compliments /expressions of admiration threaten the addressee's negative face.

The findings of the research however, show a different perception by the hearer. Of the 30 students who filled the questionnaire, 25 felt "very happy" indicating they read minimal or no threat in the utterance. The researcher interpreted this to mean the students were unaware that in terms of etiquette, a response is called for from them. Only 5 perceived a little threat when parents used the utterance during the academic clinic. Across the 3 schools, the declaration got an aggregate face threat perception score of 6/120 (5%). The research noted however, that the declaration was positive. Had it been negative, it would have effected immediate negative change in the student's institutional state of affairs. In all probability, it would have been deeply threatening. This was interpreted to mean that parents need to use more positive declarations during the academic clinic as well as other communication with the students.

In 4.3.2, the researcher shows that students read maximum face threat in the parents' verdictives and the least in the positive expressive. This pattern was the same with the utterances of teachers (c.f 4.3.1). Considering that 4.1.1 to 4.2.2 showed the expressions of negative evaluation were the most frequent FTA observed in the conversations of the academic clinic, the fact that the students read the most face threat in them means they possibly contribute a lot to making the academic clinic ineffective. As shown in a preceding section, none of the student respondents felt "very happy" with the academic clinic event in secondary school (c.f 4.3.1). This is a telling finding since it means the students did not have a positive attitude towards the forum. The reason as advanced by this research, was because the communication was face threatening. Chapter four has presented the data, analysed and interpreted it in view of PT and SAT. In summary, teacher and parent utterances were found to be threatening the face of the student. The questionnaire for students showed that students do perceive face threat in the discourse of secondary school academic clinic and that the day is not popular. In Chapter 5, the researcher will summarise, draw conclusions and present the implications of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS.

5.0 Introduction

The chapter presents a summary of the findings. It also shows the conclusion of the research and presents implications that arise out of the findings. Finally, it presents topics related to the study that could be studied further.

5.1 Summary of Findings

Parents were found to have inflicted face threat on the students through their utterances during the formal discussion of the academic clinic. The acts observed in their utterances threatened the negative face more than they did the positive. While the researcher observed 43 instances of possible threat to negative face, the number observed for the positive was 40. The negative FTA that was observed to be the most threatening was the use of orders and requests. Many of the requests were for information while others were to do with changes in behavior that the parents wanted the students to make in future. Suggestions and advice were also used frequently and they threatened the students' negative face. Parents were also found to use expressions of strong negative emotions, compliments and expressions of admiration, threats, and advice in that order.

The positive face of the student also came under attack by the parents. At 79% of the total instances of positive face threat noted, utterances in which parents expressed a negative evaluation of the student or his (the student's) goods were the most common threat from parents. The rest were expressions of strong (negative) emotions, disagreement/challenges and bringing (by the parent) of bad news about the student.

Teachers threatened the face of the students too. In total, 254 acts were noted to be threatening. Of these, 155 had potential to inflict the negative face and 99 the positive. Therefore, threats to negative face exceeded those to the positive. Top on the list of acts threatening negative face was the use of orders and requests. Teachers also gave advice/suggestions, paid compliments, made offers, threats, promises and reminders in that order of decreasing frequency of use.

The student's positive face was also threatened by the utterances teachers used in the formal communication of the academic clinic. The predominant positive FTA found in teachers' utterances was the use of expressions of negative evaluation of the student or his/her goods. These utterances accounted for 84% of all threats to student's positive face observed in the utterances of teachers during the academic clinic. This FTA was followed (in frequency of use) by disagreements and bringing (by the teacher) of bad news about the student at a distant 10% and 6% respectively.

The main finding was that two FTAs were predominant in the conversation. The positive one was the use of expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt/ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations and insults. The negative one was the use of orders and requests. These two need to be managed and that would go a long way towards improving the communication of the academic day.

Students did read face threat in the utterances of parents and teachers during the formal discussion of the academic clinic. From the opinion survey, the academic clinic was found to be relatively unpopular with students as a school communicative event. It was also the opinion of the student that the day is teacher-centered rather than one in which all three participants take part equally. As for the utterances themselves, while verdictives and directives of both parents and teachers were the most threatening, positive expressives and declarations were the least threatening. In comparison, teachers threatened the face of the student more than the parents did.

5.2 Conclusions

The researcher concluded that FTAs did occur in the utterances of both parents and teachers during the Kenyan secondary school academic clinic conversation. Both positive and negative FTAs were identified in the utterances of teachers and parents. The researcher also concluded that students did read face threat in the utterances made (to them) by teachers and parents (c.f 1.3). The FTAs hinder the communication of the academic clinic; hence secondary school students continue to feel they are denied a chance for self expression (c.f 1.1). This being a research in the area of school communication, it was concluded that the academic clinic communication needs to be improved so that the effectiveness and appeal to the stakeholders of the day is improved.

5.3 Implications of the Study.

The research implies that parents and teachers need to use more positive language. In all the students who participated in the study, compliments/ expressions of admiration/envy were noted to elicit a response of either “very happy” or “happy” which the researcher interpreted to mean that these utterances had the least potential of inflicting face threat on the student. Parents and teachers might do well to deliberately and keenly look out for aspects to

appreciate in the discussions of the academic clinic. This part of the discussion could possibly be given more emphasis than the aspects that may call for negative evaluation, warning, giving directions, advising, disagreement, voicing annoyance or the use of threats among other FTAs. This might mean using wider parameters to judge the student's overall progress. If a student is doing poorly in academics, he/she can still receive appreciation for moral growth, maintaining discipline and acceptable behaviour (c.f 1.5). This implies that the topics to be discussed during the school academic clinic need to be given attention. This research showed that academic progress was the main concern in the conversations. But, as shown earlier, teachers are expected to show interest in academic progress, moral growth and the welfare of the student. Parents are expected to enhance school discipline and acceptable behaviour in their conversations during the academic clinic (c.f 1.5). The moral growth, student welfare, discipline and acceptable behaviour need to be given as much attention as academic performance in the discussion of the Kenyan secondary school academic clinic.

The academic clinic conversation could be made more student centered. The research showed that parents and teachers did most of the talking, at times not involving the student in long sequences of exchanges. In all ten conversations under study, the parent and the teacher would be addressing each other, at times using third person to refer to the student though he/she was present and supposed to be actively engaged in the conversation. This observation was confirmed by the questionnaire for students which showed that in the opinion of the students, the teacher was the most active participant in the academic clinic discussion as carried out by the time of this research. The researcher interpreted this to be an implication that speaking turns were not well distributed. A good distribution would ensure that the student is given time to be heard. Eventually, the students might hopefully begin to view the

day as their forum for candid self-expression. In this way, the day would gain both appeal and effectiveness (c.f 1.2).

That the school academic clinic conversation threatens the face of students has implications on their self-esteem. According to Galvin et al (1994), much of your self-concept has been built on verbal and nonverbal messages from others. A good self-concept and high self-esteem are created through positive messages; a poor self-concept and low self-esteem are created through negative ones. The impact is especially powerful given the fact that secondary school students in Kenya are adolescents. The development of self-esteem increases rapidly during adolescence and continues to increase more slowly in young adulthood according to Erol and Orth (2011) in a US study on self-esteem development from age 14 to 30 years. Parents and teachers need to use more of the utterances that inflict minimal face threat for the sake of the student's sense of self-esteem. Until this is done, they might be contributing to raising generations of people with poor self esteem even when they have kept communicating with the students with the intent of moulding them to be whole persons in every way including the emotional.

Communication in school also has intellectual implications according to Wood et al (1994). Research done on the effects of self-esteem on education level has shown that those with a higher level of self-esteem tend to do better in school and receive more education than those with low self-esteem. Parents and teachers may need to rethink their communication strategies since they both want the student to excel in education.

Finally, there may be implications on the value systems of Kenya. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that culture may differ in the degree to which wants other than face wants (such as the want for efficiency or for the expressions of power) are allowed to supersede face wants. While face threats have their harmful impacts on the student and society in general, there is a possibility that both teachers and parents are expected to be sincere in speaking to the student. They may also (to a large extent) be expected to push the student to academic excellence. The face threatening acts may thus be partially legitimized by the high priority given to academic excellence. This means the values of academic excellence and politeness need to be weighed in terms of relative importance in society. Only then can the real import of face threats in school communication be determined as well the way forward.

5.4 Recommendations

The research recommends that secondary school parents and teachers might wish to re-examine the use of FTAs in the language they use in the formal conversations of the academic clinic. Perhaps, a consideration of the impact of FTAs on the students' self-esteem as well as on the effectiveness of communication could be topics of discussion in fora that bring parents and teachers together. Some aspects of this research may be found useful in such fora be they gatherings, teacher in-service training sessions, or any media that has parents and teachers as its audience. The researcher recommends that the two predominant FTAs brought out in the conclusion could be given attention first and then the others gradually (c.f 5.2).

Secondly, it is possible that there is a need for more teachers of secondary schools (if not all) to be exposed to the concept of politeness in their training, At the time of doing this research,

politeness is part of Linguistics, which means it is mainly teachers of language who get to know something about it. This could be a disadvantage as language teachers make only a small percentage of the secondary school teaching staff. While sincere evaluation, orders, suggestions and other acts could not be avoided altogether in the academic clinic conversation, knowledge of politeness may enlighten teachers on strategies to minimise the impact of the threat on the student.

Finally, the researcher recommends that measures could be put in place to prepare the student for the academic clinic communication. This research found that students do experience face threat in the course the conversation with the parent and the teacher. Perhaps, guidance and counseling could be done to help the student know the purpose of the forum as well as the expected contribution of each of the three stakeholders; parent, teacher and student. It is possible that an understanding of the academic clinic as a forum for all three may help change the student's attitude so that eventually it becomes a day not only for him/her to listen, but also to be heard. The student could also be informed on the topics expected to be handled by parents and teachers. In this way, it is hoped that the student might be in a position to participate more and with less threat of face.

5.5 Suggested Topics for Research

This study examined the FTAs found in parent and teacher utterances during the formal conversation with the student in the Kenyan secondary schools academic clinics. Perhaps, the following related areas of study could be of interest in the overall area of school communication.

1. FTAs in parents' and teachers' utterances during the academic clinic in Kenyan public primary schools.
2. FTAs in parents' and teachers' utterances during the academic clinic (or its equivalent) in Kenyan private schools.
3. Strategies of mitigating face threat for the student during the school academic clinic.
4. Impact of gender of student on perception of face threat during the school academic clinic.
5. The relationship between a student's academic ability and his/her perception of face threat during the school academic clinic.

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APPENDIX: 1 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Dear Student,

I am carrying out a research on communication in Kenyan secondary schools. I request you to assist me by giving your views. Please fill in the information required in each of the two sections (A and B) honestly and completely. I assure you that the information you give is only for research purposes. It will be treated with utmost confidence. Do not write your name anywhere in the questionnaire.

Section A: Personal Information

1. Name of School.....

2. Gender. Tick inside the box representing your gender

Male

Female

3. Your age: _____ years

4. Class: Tick in box next to your class.

Form 1 2 3 4

Section B: School Communication

5. Below is a list of 4 school events. Beside each, please describe your feeling towards it by ticking inside the box that best expresses your feeling. Use the key above the boxes.

Question: How happy are you with the communication in each of the following events?

Event	Very happy (0)	Happy (1)	Neutral (2)	Unhappy (3)	Very Unhappy (4)
Prize Giving Day					
The Academic Clinic					
School Assembly					
Guidance and Counseling					

6. In your opinion, who is the most active participant in the conversation of The Academic Clinic?

Put tick inside the box showing your opinion.

Parent

Teacher

Student

7. Below are words your **parent** may tell you in the course of the conversation of The Academic Clinic. The people taking part in the conversation are your parent, your teacher and yourself. Against each is a range of possible feelings the words would create in you as the hearer. Below the range of possible feelings are boxes that allow you to describe your feeling using a tick. Please tick inside the box that best describes your reaction.

YOUR PARENT’S WORDS	THE FEELING THEY CREATE IN YOU AS A STUDENT				
	Very happy (0)	Happy (1)	Neutral (2)	Unhappy (3)	Very unhappy (4)
i) Congratulations					
ii) You are simply lazy					
iii) When you improve this grade, I’ll buy you a present.					
iv) You must start waking up earlier.					
v) Disciplined students succeed in life.					
vi) You are the winner of the prize I promised the class.					

8. During the conversation of The Academic Clinic, your **teacher** may tell you the same words you have considered in item (7) of this questionnaire. Remember that the people who take part in the discussion are your parent, your teacher and yourself. The words are written in this item below the column “Your **Teacher’s** words”. Against each is a range of possible feelings the words would create in you as the hearer. Below the range of possible feelings are boxes that allow you to describe your feeling using a tick. Please tick inside the box that best describes your reaction.

YOUR TEACHER'S WORDS	THE FEELING THEY CREATE IN YOU AS THE STUDENT				
	Very Happy (0)	Happy (1)	Neutral (2)	Unhappy (3)	Very unhappy (4)
i) Congratulations					
ii) You are simply lazy					
iii) When you improve this, I'll buy you a present.					
iv) You must start waking up earlier.					
v) Disciplined students succeed in life.					
vi) You are the winner of the prize I promised the class.					

Thank you very much for taking time to fill this questionnaire. God bless.

APPENDIX: 2 RECORD OF THE TEN CONVERSATIONS ANALYZED

DISCOURSE 1

- Teacher: *Sasa huyu kijana sidhani kuna vita. Aaah...sidhani kuna vita hapo. Eh , because,, kijana ni mzuri anashidana na vijana kama wawili. (To student) Ni mmoja ama ni wawili, X? Now I don't think there is any fight where this young man is concerned. Aaah...I don't think there is any fight here. Eh, because the young man is good and is competing with about two others in the class. (To student) Is it one or two?*
- Student: In the class?
- Teacher: Yes, in the class.
- Student : Just Y
- Teacher: Y and...So you are playing number 2 to Y? There are 2" B" minuses. I want to know whose they are. It's ...you ...and Z. *Z hakushidi. Ako na 61 uko na 60. Z does not do better than you. He has 61 and you have 60. (To parent) He'll get an "A".*
- Student : Yeah
- Teacher: (To parent) But, he still has not convinced me. Because he's still at B minus and I want him to be at A. (To student) I am impressed that you came top of your stream...
- Parent: *Namba moja. Number one.*
- Teacher: ...despite the games. Now that there no more games, how much more shall you do? *Utakuja hapo juu? Will you come to the top? [Of class]*
- Student: Yes.
- Teacher: *Eeh...ongea na mzee smartphone ianguke, ukija hapo juu. (Laughs) Si ndio? Yeah...Talk to your Dad and he will buy you a Smartphone if you come to the top. (Laughs) Won't you?*
- Student : Yes.
- Parent : (to student) If you do, you'll get it.
- Teacher: *Eeh...Sawa. (To parent) Wacha atie bidii. Huyu sina shida nyingi na yeye. Yeah...Okay. (To parent) Let him put effort. I do not have much trouble with this one.*
- Parent: *Sawa Mwalimu. Okay, Teacher.*
- Teacher: (To student) *So revision ifanywe kabisa eh? So, revision should be done well Eh? Now that the syllabus is done.*
- Student : Yes.
- Teacher : (To parent) Okay.
- Parent: Thank you, Mwalimu.

DISCOURSE 2

- Teacher : *Jambo.How are you?*
- Parent : *Sijambo bwana. I am fine Sir.*
- Teacher : *Kwani X amepata baba mwingine? X umenilitea parent wako niwaambie vile uko, Eh?*
Has X got another father? X, you have brought me your parents I tell them how you are,
Eh?
- Parent: *Inaonekana anatuinjoi, yeye alisema atapita lakini labda hatapita. It seems he is joking with us.*

He said he would pass but he possibly won't. But you never know. Mimi nafikiria afaa kuongezewa assignment .I think he should be given more assignments...
- Teacher : *Assignment.*
- Parent : *Huyu jamaa muongezee assignment. Ndio akiamuka asubuhi ... hii subject X unaona amepata ngapi? C na yet anataka kuwa career X na unajua Career x lazima ufanye vizuri kwa somo X na Subject Y. Give more assignments to this fellow. So that when he wakes up in the morning...What mark has he got in this Subject X? C and yet he wants to join Career X. And you know to train for Career X you must have passed well in Subject X and Subject Y.*
- Teacher : *Aongeze kazi .He should work more.*
- Parent : *Aongezee tu kazi, kwanza yake yeye. He should work more; especially his own extra work.*
- Teacher : *Already ako nayo na analia, sijui anataka aje. He already has it and is whining; I don't know what he wants.*
- Parent : *Analia kumbe? So he whines?*
- Teacher: *Kulia analia ati Mwalimu unajua...Ho does whine. He complains that 'Teacher you know...'*
- Parent : *Aaah, kwanza akienda holiday asikuwe na time hata ya kuona T.V.Assignment kama tatu. Oh, in the first place when he goes on holiday, he should not even have time to watch TV. Let him have about three assignments.*
- Teacher: *Uzuri wake at least ajaribu kubalance. Wajua ingekuwa baya kwa hesabu kama angeenda ashidwe kubalance. At least akapata 50-60... kuna wanapata 60.Lakini yeye anapata 70 na 20, kwa hivyo sasa itategemea swing iko wapi. It would be good for him to try to be consistent. You know it would be bad mathematics if he failed to be consistent in his performance. If he at least ranges between 50 and 60... there some who get 60.But he will get 70 this time and 20 the next. So, it will depend on where the swing is.*
- Parent: *Consistency ndio hakuna. Consistency is what is lacking.*
- Teacher: *Eeeh, lakini sasa ako 50. Amejaribu.Kuna kajoto fulani anasikia. Yeah, but now he has 50.He has tried. There is some little warmth he is feeling.*

- Parent: *Lakini hako kajoto ndio ana – assume. (To student) Unajua ukisikia kajoto unasema sitasikia baridi. But that little warmth is what is making him assume. (To student) You know when you feel some little warmth you say, "I will never feel cold"*
- Student: (Keeps quiet)
- Teacher: *Ndio anakimbilia hapo .That is where he has run for refuge.*
- Parent: Comfort zone
- Teacher: Am rating him as a good student despite these oscillations because he has his own strengths.
- Parent: If he doesn't get an A, he can forget career X and go to an ordinary college.
- Teacher: (Laughs. To student) My friend!
- Parent: *Si unajua vile Course X iko na dough mob? Don't you know how training for Career X costs a lot of money? It costs Xshs per hour.*
- Teacher: (To student) Your die is already cast then. If you don't have an A...
- Parent: I always remind him, when he was in Primary School...
- Teacher: He was a force to reckon with? And to be feared in the village? (To student) *Kwani wewe ni jogoo wa mashambani? Hauwezi wika mjini? Are you the village cock? Can't you crow in the town? You should come here and also show us the might.*
- Parent: But, he's made attempts
- Teacher: *Kuna good attempts ingawaje hajaweka ile energy yote inatakikana.He has more potential and amerelax this time round. There are good attempts but he has not given it all the energy that is needed. He has relaxed this time round.*
- Parent *Eeh hizi matrips nitazikaja tu .Za... si hata uwache tukaje vile nilifanya za X wenu.Alikaa shule mpaka holiday na nikamsahau huko ajisort.Nikamtumia tu pocket money ya kukula tu basi. Ajisort. Asome mpaka aone tu vitabu zinakuwa tu kama nyasi.Anasiangalia hivi...that is the only thing.Na pocket money tunaikaja Yeah,I will just cancel these trips. To place X...Why don't you let me cancel them the same way I did those of your sibling X? He stayed in school even over the holiday and I forgot him there to sort himself out. I only sent him pocket money foe edibles. He sorts himself out. He reads until he sees books growing like grass. He looks at them like this...that is the only thing.*
- Teacher: *Unamalizana na yeye? Are you washing your hands off him?*
- Parent: *Eeh, ninamalizana na yeye. Yeah, I am washing my hands off him.*
- Teacher: (To student) X, will you work?
- Student: Yes.
- Teacher: (To student) I was also looking at these end-term exams. And I found that opening you got 28%, midterm 48%, the following 58% but when it came to end of term, kind of because you'd performed relatively well and you have realized that these are end of term and I must take good at home, you panicked or something. I don't know, I don't want to preempt what happened because I don't know.(To parent) So he got a 35 and a 29 in paper one and two. So, you need to be consistent like the way you had gone up, up, up. If you had maintained at 50, that's a safer ground and I should ask you, what made you get this 70%?
- Student: We had worked as a group

Teacher: As a group, what made you get the 70%?

Student: We worked as a group.

Teacher: As a group. So it tells you, if the grouping will enable you pass that is where you invest your energy. Okay? If you read by yourself and you don't understand, why don't you create many times for group discussions?

Student: I will.

Teacher: *Sijui kama mama ana jambo la kusema?* I don't know whether Mother has something to say?

Female Parent: I er...unless he explainswhat he finds a little bit hard. Is it to understand these concepts, which means he has a problem in application? Is it particular topics or...

Teacher: Or everything?

Female Parent: Or all of them? Which ones have you singled out as the hard ones that you can't...not really understood them?

Student: We told the teacher.

Teacher: The ones you raised as a class? So, the thirteen of them, you are a member to that?

Student: Matrices and Partial variation.

Teacher: And the like? (To parent) So, now we have completed the syllabus and we are going to embark on a revision mission. And they have named the topics they want us to revise together as a class. We have already started. We are forming groups...Some time before, we should be...er ...

Male Parent: Streamlined

Teacher: Streamlined. That is my hope

Male Parent: Yes. My biggest complaint is when there are gaps in the exam. That is my worry and concern. *Ndiyo ninamuuliza hata marks zikiambiwa zipeanwe*, That's why I ask him, if even marks were to be given freely, you cannot be given any surely? There is a gap. *Na hiyo inanishock* And that shocks me especially at this level.

Teacher: Because it tells you that...

Female Parent: *Haelewi* He does not understand.

Teacher: *Hata hakuwahi sikia kama hiyo ni nini*. Even he has never heard what it is.

Female Parent: That it is pure Greek.

Male Parent: As if it is hard; inatemptable.

Teacher: A no-go zone to him

Male parent: Because I was telling him I have said to him and I know mathematics the way they mark. They start from the beginning. *Sio ati ni kule nyuma*.Not from the end. Once you attempt, something is coming up. But if you don't attempt, you cannot get anything. So I think it is very important for him to have that attitude to approach something and start to attempt. *Sio akiiona tu anasema "Matrices. Ni hivyo. Sawa, mimi sitaweza*. He should not just say after seeing it, "Matrices. I am done. Now, I will not manage."

Female Parent: If you form an opinion that the questions is hard, even before you read it, it is hard. So you refuse (fear) to attempt it.

Teacher: Yes, and it could be the easiest of all I have seen sometimes. Otherwise, let him work

Parent: Okay mwalimu.

DISCOURSE 3

Parent: *Habari mwalimu.* How are you, Teacher?

Teacher: *Salama sana.* Very fine. (To student) Young girl, how are you?

Student: Fine.

Teacher: it is fear or what it is. (To student) Do you fear Subject X?

Student: No

Teacher: Um, she had an "E" and I am not happy with an E because opening she had 56%, then the following exam that they did she got 24.

Parent: 24

Teacher: Then the following, she gets a 60%, then, end of term paper 1 she gets 23% and p2 she gets a 21.

Parent: 21%?

Teacher: Yes, so average she gets 36% which is... Now, let's look at her Exam 1 and Exam 3. Exam 1 she has 56 and exam 3 she has 60. But she can go as low as 21%, so that oscillation, X, I cannot understand. I can actually say with finality that I do not know her as far as Subject X is concerned. Because, she will pull a surprise, of 60 and some other time she goes to 20

Parent: Yes like when she goes to 60.

Teacher: Yes, she's a good student then, but all of a student she goes to 21. (to student) What happens? Please tell us. Help us to help you.

Parent: Because of the fluctuation

Teacher: *mmh.* Y

Parent: X what's the problem? Tell mwalimu, so that she can know how to help you.

Student: The problem is Paper 2.

Teacher: Are those paper 2s that you performed badly? Are they paper 2? No. So it depends on how you woke up. What can we now make of this performance?

Parent: Because surely when you want to say she is very weak she's getting 40s and 60s.

Teacher: Yes, and that surprises you. When you want to classify her as average, she goes down again. (To student) So can you speak and tell me what is ailing you, as a person?

Parent: Surely, there's a problem. Tell the teacher.

Teacher: (To parent) There are some other small exams that I give the class. They are called quizzes and they are out of 30. At one time she'll get 19/30 the other time 4/30. At

another time 16/30 and at another 2/30. That is her. You see, I keep records. Because records are what can help you now to analyze anything that you want under the sun. (To student) And what do you want to say about this?

Student: I am not revising.

Teacher: You are not revising, so do you play any game? Because I haven't seen you in the field. Now that you don't play how do you spend your four o'clock session?

Student: In the field.

Teacher: In the field? But you don't play. You said you don't play. Doing what?

Student: Playing a game.

Teacher: Which game? I haven't seen you play. Which do you play?

Student: Netball.

Teacher: Ah! No.

Parent: Which game is she saying?

Teacher: She's saying netball. Which netball? Because I am the coach netball. (Laughs). This class I've found it the most funny. They have a way of coming together, I don't know. There are things I have not understood in this class. As she says she plays netball it's not netball for the school. They have their class team. (To student) Does it admit other members?

Students: Very few

Teacher: Very few. They play one ball at the corner of the field. In class, we are together. Yeah, this B class. I think I need to be helped and advised properly. Because I think there is a lot of stuff that is not straight. So they play that netball a bit, discuss it a bit in prep, so they don't read. (To student) Is that so?

Student: (Quiet)

Teacher: Yeah. I don't see you reading. One time you are at 50%, the other time you are at 13.

Parent: Or Subject X is what you do not read? Do you do all the five assignments that mwalimu gives you?

Student: Yes

Parent: So you don't you become consistent at 50, 60 like that? Why fluctuate?

Teacher: Or you decide to be at 45 and remain there.

Parent: Yes

Teacher: Instead of 50 one time, the other one 13.

Parent: So, do you think you will improve?

Teacher: (To student) Now that we have completed the syllabus, we are going back to revision. Those areas that are pulling you down. I hope you can now bring them on. Have the questions copied, present them to the group, let us do them together and from there on I think we are going to get good mastery of content. Alright. So that one day you are not at 50% and the other you are below 20%.

Parent: So what are you promising or targeting to get at the end of term?

Student: B.

Teacher: Are you sure you can get a B in the end term? Yes get that. I will talk to your father *kado niseme ununuliwe kitu* privately and say something should be bought for you. B in end term? Go get that. I don't want A.I want this B. Yes. And mentioning is so easy but getting it requires a lot of hard work and dedication. Okay? So, you don't just mention it so as to end this conversation.

Parent: It's true mwalimu. In fact, I was telling her that she has the ability. I was asking, what does she wait for? The time is too short.

Teacher: She has less than two months to live in this confinement of school. (To student) Okay? It is how many days?

Student: 52 days to go.

Teacher: (To parent) They have started the countdown.

Parent: So I don't want you to fail in Subject X. I have seen you have the ability.

Teacher: Alright. I wish her well. She will do well. Let us encourage her. Keep encouraging her.

Parent: I will.

DISCOURSE 4

Parent: How are you mwalimu?

Teacher: I'm fine thank you. Yes X, how are you?

Student: I'm fine thank you.

Teacher: Is this your brother?

Student: Cousin.

Teacher: Cousin?

Student: Yes

Cousin: I'm David...

Teacher: Okay, I'm the class teacher for class B where this young man is. I hope he's told you he's also the DH captain.

Parent: Yes I know.

Teacher: Or he did not mention that?

Parent: They know.

Teacher: (To student) They know? So they already know that is where a lot of time is going or something like that?

Student: It's not really a lot of time.

Teacher: Because I'm really wondering. X, you have more ability than what you demonstrate in my performance records. At 34%, there was a time you got 58%. What had you done so that you get that mark?

Student: I had done a lot revision

Teacher: And fortunately, you passed well. Now, can you go back to that kind of revision any time you want to do the exam? I think that problem here is the preparation bit. Either sometimes you are not well prepared or you want to fail on purpose. Do you purpose to fail?

Student: No.

Teacher: Because X, I would imagine that, like this exam that you got this month, it must have caught you off guard. I'm yet to establish whether you have kept that paper to date.

Student: I have it.

Teacher: And any time you look at it, what type of Student X does it portray?

Student: These are not my marks.

Teacher: It's not your mark. You don't want those marks, do you? Because, nobody wants to own poor performance. I want to encourage you that if you keep working, you can get 58 and above. At least I know that you have the potential - when you want to work. And when you don't want to work, I know you are also difficult to work with. *Si ndio?* Not so?

Student: *Ndio*. Yes. You see? You agree very well with that. So you decide to work. Now that we are doing revision. You know your areas of difficulty. Bring them to the group. We shall deal with them. Right? Good.

Student: Teacher, I would like revision papers

Teacher: Papers are so many. More than you can finish. Come for some. But not a lump sum. You get one' I see that you can do it, you get another.

Parent: Bwana mwalimu is it possible to transform an E to a C in the K.C.S.E exams?

Teacher: (To student) I think that question can be answered by you for your are the doer of the exam.

Parent: Because in subject X these students are scoring poorly especially class B

Teacher: Yes they had 30 "E"s. 30 students in that class got E .

Parent: Yes

Teacher: And they tell me they want us to get (to student) how many As do you want us to get? How many As in K.C.S.E?

Student: Everybody wants "A"

Teacher: Every body wants "A"? It is easier said than done. So, I know most of them will do well. But there are still a few students who will not do well. I don't want to describe how not doing well shall mean because that will go down to individuals. Last time we had 25 student with D minus overall but yet we still had ten C plains so it depends on the individual; what he wants

Parent: So there is hope?

Teacher: Beyond the tunnel there is light. He knows that, he knows that. (To student) Go ahead and work. Alright?

Student: Alright.

Teacher: (To parent) Keep encouraging him. He can do better.

DISCOURSE 5

- Teacher: So, Student X you have decided not to work
- Parent: *Mwalimu wa subject X alisema, walikaa 3 weeks hapo kwa kiwaja wakicheza hizi michezo yao. Akienda, he doesn't consult the teacher later. Hata hafanyi exams.* The teacher of Subject X said, they took three weeks in the field playing these games of theirs. When she goes, she doesn't consult the teacher later. She doesn't even do exams.
- Teacher: You need to put your priorities right eh If not, *utatoka hapa na machozi.* You will leave here with tears.
- Parent: *Na machozi. Hata imeanza hiyo machozi* With tears. Even they have started; those tears.
- Teacher: What is your target?
- Student: C Stand.
- Parent: Which target? *Last time alisema hakufikisha.* The last time she said it, she did not fulfill.
- Teacher: You are always failing to meet your target?
- Parent: *Sasa kama wengine wanasema "A" na yeye yuko hapo C stand and you are in the same class unapata the same assistance... na huyo msichana alikuwa mzuri toka primary.Sasa, nini inamfanya hivi saa hii...* Now as others are saying "A" she is saying "C" and (To student) you are in the same class. You get the same assistance... (To teacher) And this young girl was good in primary. Now, what makes her like this at this time?
- Teacher: (To student) Which target?
- Student: C+
- Teacher: Ah no, there's no C+ here. I don't accept a C+ as a target in subject X.I expect you to get a B and then your mean grade?
- Student: That one will be a B
- Teacher: Yes and you must work toward this *sawa sawa* Okey? You must attain this target
- Parent: *Shinda yake ni gani mwalimu?* What is her problem, Teacher? You are the class teacher.
- Teacher: Haven't I told you she is not serious? She is not working .
- Parent: *Hata kwa class?* Even in class?
- Teacher: No. You know, what matters most is what she does outside the class on her own not during the session. What matters is what does she do in her free time?
- That is what matters. If she is not serious she cannot focus on her work. But when it reaches there, there is very little that I or you can do. *Ni yeye mwenyewe.* It is she herself. The ball is in your court. *Na siyo* And it is not.....
- Parent: *Sio netball.* Not netball.
- Teacher: *Siyo netball in your court .*It is not the netball ball that is in your court. It is your life.

Parent: *Mwalimu naona saa hii tunamaliza tumeongea tumeongea the last time ni yeye atakaa na hii karatasi. Jina itakuja na X; haitakuja na jina linguine. (To student) Na hiyo ndio utakuwa unatembea nayo. Teacher, I see now we are coming to the end. We have kept speaking. Finally, it is her who will stay with this paper. The paper will come with her name; not any other. (To student) And that is what you will be going with. Wherever you go it will be your own paper not mine or mwalim's. The last paper will make you who you will be. Mimi nimeshidwa kabisa kuongea na huyu. Nikitoka huko kwa gate sasa uniambie yaani ananiambia give me the second chance where to? Teacher I am completely unable to speak with this one. (To student) If when we leave through the gate of this school you will tell me to give you a second chance, where shall I take you to? In School B you've got all the best teachers and all people struggle. wapi utaniambia nikupeleke? Where will you be telling me to take you?*

Student: (Keeps quiet)

Teacher: That is why you are told the ball is in your court, and this ball is your life.

Parent: And it is only once for all. Only these remaining months, *sijui ni 2 months*, I don't know whether its two months?

Teacher: (To student) It is you now to choose how you will play it. *Sawa sawa? Okey?* (To parent) *So wacha tuone vile itakuwa?* So, let us see how it is going to be?

Parent: *Mimi kuona nimeona mara nyingi mpaka sasa sina namna ya kuongea.* I have seen many times until now I do not know what to say.

Teacher: *In fact, tutamwangalia.* In fact, we shall watch her.

Parent: *Asante sana mwalimu.* Thanks a lot Teacher.

DISCOURSE 6

Teacher: (To parent) *Habari yako.* How are you?

Parent: *Salama sana.* Very fine.

Teacher: (To student) I understand that you were not feeding well in the morning. Are you feeling any better now?

Student: Yes

Teacher: What was the problem? I have heard that she has been sick. (To parent). *Amekwambia ni mgonjwa?* Has she told you she is unwell?

Parent: *Ameniambia hakuwa amesikia mzuri. Pengine alikuwa amezoea climate ya baridi. sasa unajua kuna joto.* She has told me she has not been feeling well. Perhaps she was accustomed to the cold weather. You know now it's hot.

Teacher: Now, *sasa X* her performance is not ...

Parent: *Haifurahishi.* Is not something to rejoice over.

Teacher: *Yeah, tangu Form 1 huyo nimemfundisha tangu Form one Form one.* Yeah, since Form one; I have taught this one since Form one. I don't know what the problem is. She is not doing as well as she should.

Parent: *Si hata inaonekana?* Isn't it just apparent?

Teacher: *Hata bila kuelezwa utaona tu, akienda sana she gets maybe a C Sasa she is going down, down, down.* Even without it being explained to you, you can just see; when she goes very far she gets maybe a C. Now she is going down, down, down.

Parent: *Maybe atatuzezea shinda zake.* Maybe she will tell us what her problems are.

Teacher: *Shinda iko wapi?* Where is the problem?

Student: The way I approach a certain topic ...the way I give answers. Despite how much I try I still don't do well and that's why I sometimes give up.

Teacher: Your answers are different from what I award?

Student: Yes especially maybe Topic X.

Teacher: Maybe?

Student: Topic X.

Teacher: Find out why...You've heard of Thomas... there is this inventor who invented the bulb-the electric bulb. Do you know how many times he tried before he got it right? One thousand .You don't give up. But you seek to find out where you are weak. That is why you are a student. That's why you are tested after...how many years?

Student: Four

Teacher: So that during these 4 years, you learn, okay? The test_ the kind that you are doing and get wrong_ is part of the learning process. So it is upon you to find out why and you learn the right things so that next time you get it right. Do not be discouraged .Is that clear?

Student: Yes

Teacher: You find out, why am I wrong? And I've said that several times in the class .Please can you focus on," why is my answer wrong?" Don't just write the correct answer. No .Why you are wrong. Because it could be your thinking. *Sawa sawa?* Okey?

Student: *Sawa sawa.* Okey.

Teacher: You need to find out why you are wrong. Once you learn why you are wrong, you avoid repeating the same mistake. You don't get hurt. *Tumeelelewa?* Have we understood each other?

Student: Yes

Teacher: Do that. And it cuts across all the other subjects not just Subject X. You don't give up, okay? (To parent) Now do you have anything to add?

Parent: (To student) *Ungetaka kuuliza maswali ama wakubaliana na mwalimu?* Would you like to ask questions or do you agree with the teacher?

Student: *Sina maswali.* I have no questions.

Teacher: Work. Work. Work. So that is part of your assignment .So, instead of giving up can you find out can you... come and ask why am I wrong here? Right?" I don't understand this."Have you ever done that?

Student: No

Teacher: You just took the easier option of giving up. You don't do that, eh? You start giving up, in life you'll always be doing that. Okay? Now what is your target for the end term?

Student: C+

Teacher: A C+ is okay. Let's work towards that, eh? You can attain it. *Sawa sawa?*. Okey?

Student: Yes

Teacher: (To parent) *Otherwise, wacha tuone vile atabehave*, Otherwise, let us see how she will behave, but we'll do everything in our power to assist her.

Parent: Okay

Teacher: Yeah thank you very much

Parent: *Tumefurahi*. We are happy.

Teacher: *Eeh*. Yeah

DISCOURSE 7

Teacher: *Habari yako*. How are you?

Parent: *Nzuri*. Fine.

Teacher: (To student) Where is that form we are filling? *Na usiikuje namna hii*. And don't fold it like this. Now last term you get 39% but even the other term, you know, performance between D, sometimes it goes to a C.....which is the highest grade you've ever got in subject X?

Student: C

Teacher: A "C"? *C sio mzuri*. C is not good. What's the problem?

Student: No problem

Teacher: No problem and you are getting an E? Eeh? You said there is no problem and you're getting an E? Tell us that the reason why you have an E. Otherwise you can't say you don't have a problem. (To parent) Last term she got D- . (To student) Then you are saying there's no problem? Are you serious? If there is no problem then there is nothing to talk about. (To parent) She is okay with that. That is what she is saying. (To student) You are okay with E?

Student: No...

Teacher: But you are saying there is no problem

Parent: She can tell us why she is saying that. She has an issue. (To student) Tell us.

Teacher: What is the issue?

Student: The Form one and two work

Teacher: So what are you planning to do from now henceforth?

Student: Revising

Teacher: You have not been doing Form one and two work?

Student: Not well

Teacher: So you feel if you do very well in Form one and two work you will do well?

Student: Yes

Teacher: So in this coming exam, what will you get?

Student: B+

Teacher: A B+? (To parent) We are going to back her target. So she is telling us that she will push this E up to a B+. (To student) And if you don't feel comfortable with Form one and two work please do that. Or else, this is the same grade you are going to get in K.C.S.E if you don't pull up your socks. (To parent) She has not been working hard.

Parent: Actually, she has also been a joker although I have also contributed. For part of last term, she was away for fees for almost a whole month.

Teacher: Yeah. (To student) But now you are here. Can you try? You only have a few months to go .3 months. Can you work hard? *Sawa sawa?* Okay? Work .Work very hard, eh?

Student: Teacher, I will.

DISCOURSE 8

Teacher: Admission number?

Student: 103102

Teacher: Okay, Sudent X. No no, no .I didn't expect X to get a D+.

Parent: What do we do?

Teacher: I don't know what happened to him. He should tell us. In fact there is a time he gave me another story and I want to confirm if needed it is true. I am not amused. (To student)You got a D+ and it is not your grade. What's happening? Are you losing interest? And there was a time you used to doze a lot in class. The whole of last term.

Male parent: I was told my Mrs. X when we met here last time we visited. But I also understand, since then he's been moved from the place where he was sitting to the front.

Teacher: Yes. He used to sit at the back. He was at a corner at the back of the class.

Student; I have been moved.

Teacher: Now that was recent; this term. Then he was telling me... there was a time I was almost punishing him for that ... but he told me his tummy ached.

Parent: I think that must be merely a story because that was a while ago. It only came up in this one term when the grades were really bad. Then you came in as his teacher. His grades shot up and then really came down again. So it's not about a time he did not understand. It's about what is happening now. That is the way I look at it. It doesn't make sense. There's no way you'll have a D in subject X and B in Subject Y from the same head; unless you have a subject X site and a subject Y site. It is up to you to pull up.

Teacher: You know you can give us so many tales. But at the end of the day we are not really It is you, your life itself. You know it's much better you say "okay I have not read", as you have not been reading consistently. Full stop. Then we say "Okay that is wrong, that is dangerous because if it continues like this you are going to end up very sorry". Is that what you want? And you know that may be there are one or two things you have not been doing well. Okay? You know at this stage it is very easy for one to get distracted and ignore the most important things that count .And when we ask you what is happening you give us a very long story but at the end of the day, you know it's you. So what is the problem?

Parent: What is the problem? Is it this man? What is the problem? Is subject X becoming harder and harder or you don't comprehend or what is the problem? (To teacher) He had said that there are some concepts in Form three that he does not understand.

Teacher: Ah uh...I don't believe that. In fact Form two concepts are more abstract than Form three. Okay? So what could have happened is that maybe in F3, he was not really focused, he was not interested. That's why those concepts appeared to be tough. But in Form two where there were relatively tougher concepts, but because he was focused...

Parent: They were easier to understand

Teacher: Yeah. It's a matter of interest where are your interests? Put your priorities right. If you renew interest in Subject X, you will do well in it. Just the interest, eh? Just the interest otherwise don't really imagine that he lacks...

Parent: The capacity

Teacher: Capacity

Parent: What do we do in your view? As a person who is independent, you know you can watch and say "This needs this kind of help". What can you do on your side?

Teacher: He needs to tell us what we can do to help him

Parent: (To student) what can we do?

Student: I don't know.

Parent: You don't know?

Student: Yes

Parent: You don't know what can help you to have a better grade?

Teacher: Is there anything I can do? Or he can do? Or else the problem is ...where is the problem? Is it with me, or it is him or is it you?

Student: Maybe, it is me

Teacher: Not maybe. It is you. Okay? Can you refocus your interests in the right place? What am telling you is, if you don't, you are going to end up very sorry. It will have been such a wasted opportunity and such a wasted person. Okay? The ball is in your court.

Parent: (To student) Did you say it could be in you? Because I would also take that one as a way of also of...what do you think the teacher could do to help you overcome that?

Student: I don't know

Parent: You can't tell me that you don't know what you need in the form of help. If you ask me how I want to go to Nairobi and go quickly I'll need to board the matatus and have some bus fare .So, the help I need is to get to the road. So, what time do you need to change this grade? Don't tell me you don't know again because I really get annoyed. I will get annoyed .Please don't take me there. What help do you need? Or if you are actually not interested, say you are not interested I forget about this. I just go back home. And you will become who you want to become. You will need to speak up.

Teacher: Because, you see one thing. I will not come to class and say, "X what can I do for you? "But there are those things that you would be telling me. You can ask. You can... am I clear?

Student: Yes

Teacher: What is it that you think you need?

Student: (Very softly) Maybe papers.

Parent: Papers? Speak a bit louder I can't hear you .From right here I can't hear...you speak louder.

Teacher: Can you talk definitely? Not "maybe papers". Say "Test papers." Okay? I would expect you to.....get them then we go through them together. Something like that. Okay? Yes. So that you have a very clear plan of action.

Parent: Yes, you have a very clear understanding of what your weakness is...If you don't understand why you are failing, there's no way you are going to have a plan of action. So if you do not plan to take care of them, then of course your plan is only one; you are going to fail

Teacher: (To student) Failing to plan is planning to?

Student: Fail.

Teacher: So can you plan?

Parent: So it's up to you, the teacher has got no ideas... You need to look at why you have failed. "I have failed in this and this". It will form a general... a general.... it will inform that...You will know that generally, this is where I am challenged...

Teacher: What's your target for end term?

Student: (very softly) B.

Teacher: *Hapana*. No. I will not accept a B from you.

Student: (Inaudible)

Teacher: B+ .*Sawasawa*? Okay?

Student: Yes

Teacher: And you can make it.

Parent: And don't just say it for the sake of saying.

Teacher: (To parent) I know. I know his capability.

Parent: I see. (To student) Those are very strong words. He knows your capability and is willing to make sure that he helps you to achieve your capabilities.

Teacher: (To parent) That's why you see I was mad when he persisted in that dozing. (To student) I almost punished you, yeah? (To parent) I took him to the deputy's office.

Parent: *Ikibidi*, If necessary, punish him.

Teacher: I get annoyed. When I think "what's wrong with this one now?" Of all students. You know, if it was somebody else, you know there are others, even as a parent, you know it. You don't expect certain kinds of behaviour from so and so.

Parent: That is right.

DISCOURSE 9

Teacher: *Karibuni. Eh, Hello X. Karibu kiti hapo ama usonge hapa ndio tuongee. Ndio.Nisaidie na hiyo form. Eh. (To parent) Huyu anaitwa X. Welcome. Eh, hello X. Welcome to that seat there or come nearer here so that we can talk. Yes. Help me with that form. Eh, (To parent) This is Student X.*

Parent: *Huyu anaitwa X. He is called X.*

Teacher: *Na wewe ndio? And you are?*

Parent: *Naitwa Y. I am Y.*

Teacher: *Unaitwa Y. wewe ndiye baba yake? You are Y. Are you his father?*

student: *Hapana, huyu ni cousin. No, this is a cousin.*

Teacher: *Huyu ni Cousin? This is a cousin?*

student: Yes

(Interruption. Another parent wants to leave in a hurry and was yet to see two teachers. He requests for his form to be signed by the teacher. It is done and the teacher picks the conversation from where he had left.)

Teacher: *Kuna watu wana ... wajua Kenya imekuwa baya. There are people who...you know Kenya has become bad.*

Parent: *Yeah, enyewe security. Yeah, indeed security.*

Teacher: *Security imekuwa baya (To student) Eh, X, uko namba gapi kwa class? Security has become bad. (To student)What number are you in the class?*

Student: Seven

Teacher: *Kwa class? You are number? So X si kijana ...ni kijana ambaye ... anajitahidi sana. In the class? You are number? (To parent) So, X is not a boy who...is a boy who is very determined.*

Parent: Yes

Teacher: *So. (To parent) Nitakuandikia comment za CRE kwa sababu mwalimu wake wa CRE aliniambia nimwandikie. I will write for you the comments of the CRE teacher because he had told me to. (To student) This one is an "A", isn't it?*

Student: Eh

Teacher: *(To parent) Ni kijana ambaye ako na drive, Ni kijana ambaye atakuja anilize maswali mahali ambapo amelemewa. Ni Somo X ambapo bado kuna shida kidogo. He is a boy with self-drive. He comes and asks me questions where he hasn't understood. It is only in Subject X that he has a small problem.*

Parent: *Eh hapo ndio nimeona...Yeah, that is where I have seen...*

Teacher: *Ni... kuna shida kidogo pale, nafikiri one of the ways eh... (To student) Sijui kama uko na revision materials.It is...there is a small problem there, I think one of the ways, eh... (To student) I don't know whether you have revision materials?*

Student: *Eeh. Yeah, I normally use some handout.*

Teacher: *Ulinunua? That you bought?*

Student: *Uh-uh. Kuna student X ako nazo. A certain student_X_ has them.*

Teacher: *Hauna yako? Don't you have yours?*

Student: *Uh-uh.*

Teacher: Okay, Aah so, you... what I would advocate you do, is you do extra work.
And this time you... Instead of doing it yourself, maybe we could do it together, that would be one way of ... I could assist you in.

Student: *Eeeh* .Yeah.

Teacher: So that you improve performance. Then, I don't know about your ... *Umeprogramme your timetable?* Have you programmed your timetable? Study timetable?

Student: *Eeeh*. Yeah.

Teacher: Which you use?

Student: *Eeeh*. Yeah.

Teacher: Any other problem that you have?

Student: Eh... I don't think I have another problem except in subject X and subject Y.

Teacher: *Eeeh* Yeah... *Because hii grade sio mzuri sana . This is not your grade X. Kijana ambaye anatia bidii hivyo* .Because this grade is not very good. This is not your grade, X. A boy who puts much effort the way you do.

Parent: *Eeeh kwa hii amedrop sana*. Yeah, in this he has dropped a lot.

Teacher: *Eeeh hiiunajua ni kijana ambaye.... What you want.... ujue ni kama unalima shamba sana... Yeah,this...you know is a boy who... what you want...you should know it's like a person who tills his land a lot...*

Parent: Yes

Teacher: *Halafu unapata mazao kidogo*. And then you get a low yield.

Parent: *Yes, Huyu kijana anatia bidii, lakini anapata mazao...mazao kidogo*. Yes, this boy puts effort but he gets...a yield that is....

Teacher: *Kidogo*. Little.

Parent: Yes

Teacher: Eh., so... *What... kitu naweza fanya na yeye, like from Monday*. So, there is something I can do with him, like from Monday. (To student) Any day from Monday. You can come with your paper.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: And then we can go through the paper. Like the last paper we did.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: *Hi ya.... end of term*. This one for end of term. We can look at the areas where you are weak...

Student: Yes

Teacher: *And then I tell you, pengine shida ni hii, shida ni hii*. And then I tell you, perhaps this or other is the problem. *Lakini pia, work on your handwriting, nimekuambia mambo ya handwriting*. But on top of that, work on your handwriting. I have told you about the handwriting.

Student: Yes.

Teacher: (To parent) *Otherwise, sina* ...I don't have ...eh...in fact he is a peer counsellor in our ... in the class

Parent: *Oo, Hiyo ni mzuri.* Oh, that is good.
Teacher: *Eeh anatusaidia sana kuzungumzia wenzake.* Yeah. He helps us to speak to his peers a lot.
Parent: Ooh.
Teacher: Eeh, *ndio. Tutaongea tena.* Yeah. We shall meet again.

DISCOURSE 10

Teacher: Yes, *habari gani?* How are you?
Parent: How are you?
Teacher: Fine thank you. (To student) *Nisadie na hiyo.* Help me with that. Hallo X. (correcting self) No, Y, not X.
Parent: Are you also the class teacher?
Teacher: I am also the class teacher.
Parent: Glad to know you.
Teacher: Same here, you got my SMS?
Parent: Yeah I got. You are the ... That was the phone number.
Teacher: Eeh, *ile nilituma jana. Ni juzi ama jana?* Yeah, the one I sent yesterday. Is it yesterday or the day before yesterday?
Parent: The day before yesterday.
Teacher: The day before yesterday, Ah yes.
Parent: *Eeh ndio nilipata.* Yeah, that's when I got it.
Teacher: Okay. Eeh. Aaah ... *mnaonaje hii performance?* How do you find this performance?
Parent: Subject X? Subject X *sio baya sana.* Subject X is not very bad
Teacher: Eeh.
Parent: *Lakini kwa jumla sio mzuri sana.* But the overall performance isn't very good.
Teacher: (To student) The highest in Form two has what? *Umeangalia umeona amepata gapi kwa hiyo list? Ako na..., who is in position 2. Ako na 77. Anaitwa X ako na 77.* You have checked and seen he is what position in the list? He has ...who is position 2.He has 77.He is called X and he has 77.
Parent: *Amemshida na 8 marks.* He has defeated him by 8 marks.
Teacher: Mmm. (To student) You need to do something there; Eh? Someone should not... these ones are 13, *amemshida na 13 marks.* He has beaten him by 13 marks. You need to do something eh? About that. So that you... you are not very badly off but you still can do much better; with your kind of ability. Okay? You have revision books?
Student: (Keeps quiet)
Teacher: Mmm?
Student: No.

Teacher: You need revision books. You know now you are almost in Form 3. So...normally revision starts early. You need to practise so, one book I would recommend *inaitwa* is entitled ...

Parent: Write for me.

Teacher: Sawasawa. Nitakupatia mbili. Okay. I will give you two Okay but you can choose. *Uzuri wa hii ni from form One to form four*. The goodness of this it is from Form one to four,

Parent: Highflyer.

Teacher: *Eeh, Ama, ama Golden Tips kwa sababu ya ...it has some notes. From form one to form four*. Yeah, or Golden Tips because of... it has some notes. From form one to four

Parent: Ooh.

Teacher: Eeh. Which are important also for them, for their revision. Then... *iko na* it has revision questions also.

Parent: We shall buy them... *badala ya wakule biscuits wanunuliwe vitabu*. Instead of eating biscuits we buy them books

Teacher: (To student) That one is okay? *Unataka biscuits?* You want biscuits?

Student: *Hapana*., No.

Teacher: *Ama vitabu? (To parent) Lakini ako more focused*. Or books? (To parent) But he is more focused. He is...I like his discipline.

Parent: Oh and by the way I wanted to ask you about the discipline because as his class teacher I know you know him.

Teacher: *Huyu hana shida*. This one has no problem

Parent: Oh...

Teacher: *Hatuna shida na yeye*. We have no problem with him and you can even tell from the performance. *Because huwa zinapelekana*. Because they usually go together Eeh... He is a student you will enjoy teaching.

Parent: Oh thank you.

Teacher: (To student) So just go out of your way also. Don't keep so much quiet in class. Ask questions; always ask questions. And ...

Parent: Let him make a target so that for this team at least. So that... he is focused.

Teacher: Yeah yeah . It is true.

Parent: *Ndio mwalimu ajue kama una* ...So that the teacher knows whether you are...

Teacher: True... *overall ulikuwa na grade gani?* Overall what was your grade?

Student: (Softly) C+

Teacher: Eeh?

Parent: C+

Teacher: What is your target for this team?

Student: Ah... B+

Teacher: Yes?

Student: B+

Teacher: Let me write it against your mark... You have said... this is a C+, so you want to move to...

Student: B+

Teacher: *And it's attainable, si its possible?* And it's possible. Isn't it possible? Okay. With the right strategies, you can do so well.

Parent: *Because at least hii clinic lazima iwe na fruits.* Because at least this clinic must bear fruit.

Teacher: Mmm. okay? *Tumeona wee hauko vibaya sana isipokuwa hizi grades hizi. Hii grade ukiona 35, 40, that is not you, this is not you. Hapo kuna shida Eh? Na Subject Y, eh. Where is Subject Y? What did you get in Subject Y? 48. Sitaki kuona such grades, you are planning to drop Subject Y eh?* We have seen you are not very bad except for these grades here. This grade, when you see 35, 40, that is not you. That is not you. Is there a problem there? Eh? And Subject Y, eh? Where is Subject Y? What did you get in Subject Y? 48. I don't want to see such grades; you are planning to drop Subject Y eh?

Student: (Almost inaudible) Yes.

Teacher: Eh? *Hivyo ndio umejidanganya ?* Is this how you are deceiving yourself? That's why you are not performing well.

Parent: Maybe.

Teacher: *Na unaona,* And you see, if you perform poorly here, it affects the rest.

Parent: All the rest. And the whole grade.

Teacher: *Si ndio? Kwa hivyo because if you look at watu kama hawa – X- what are they getting in Subject Y? Hakuna subject, for them hakuna subject wanadrop.* Therefore because if you look at people like these ones here_X_what are they getting in Subject Y? There is no subject, for them there is no subject they are dropping. They are doing everything.

Parent: You should not drop them, until they are dropped.

Teacher: Are we together? Think like a wise student; not like a fool. You are a wise young man. Isn't it? *Lakini hapa unafikiria kama mjinga... uko page what?* But here you are thinking like a fool... On what page is your name?

Student and parent: Five

Teacher: *Five? Look at that; kwa sababu ya ku- behave kama... kufikiria kama mjinga. You are a bright student.* Look at that; because of behaving like ...thinking like a fool. You understand me?

Student: Yes.

Teacher: (To parent) Alright. This one will be okay.

Parent: Thank you.

APPENDIX: 3 CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH FORM

I have been briefed on the ongoing research meant to improve the communication of school academic clinic. I have chosen to participate in it for the purpose of providing data. I have given consent for the formal conversation we shall hold on..... during the academic clinic to be recorded for use in the research only.

Additionally I give my consent as a Parent/Guardian of.....

Admission Number..... Class to be an informant in the questionnaire for students. The questionnaire is for the same research.

Signature

Name

Date

APPENDIX: 4 MAP OF KENYA WITH KIAMBU COUNTY IN RED

