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Nzema Idiomatic Expressions as Indirection Strategy: A Politeness Theoretical Perspective

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Abstract

The paper explores Nzema idiomatic expressions used as indirection strategy. Figurative devices such as proverbs and euphemisms have received quite an appreciable amount of study in connection with verbal indirection in Nzema. Little or no attention however has been given to idioms, particularly as indirection devices in the language. This paper therefore focuses on idioms which incorporate body parts such as head/brain, eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, hands, legs, heart/chest, stomach and body/skin that are used to avoid any straightforward language that seeks to undermine and threaten the face of an addressee. Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data comprise recordings of traditional ceremonies such as marriage contraction and arbitration, where the use of idioms as indirect expressions was pervasive. Authors' native speaker intuition was also brought to bear on the analysis of data. Interviews with competent indigenous speakers of Nzema were conducted for useful information and clarification on the data gathered. The secondary data were sourced from two Nzema literary texts. The paper finds that, these culturally constructed body parts related idioms are deliberately employed as both face saving and as politeness devices in the language.

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Introduction

Nzema is a Kwa language spoken in the South-west part of the Western Region of Ghana, West Africa. The dialectal components of Nzema are Dwɔmɔlɔ, Ɛlɛmgbɛlɛ, Adwɔmɔlɔ, Egila and Ɛvaloɛ (Annan, 1980; Kwaw, 2008); with Dwɔmɔlɔ as the standard dialect that is studied from Basic to the Tertiary level of education in Ghana. The speakers and their geographical location are also referred to as Nzema. The Nzemaland is bordered to the

West by Ivory Coast (also known as the La Cote d`Ivoire), to the East by the Ahanta, to the North by the Aowin (or Anyi) and Wassa, and to the South by the Gulf of Guinea. The Nzema population in Ghana according to the Ghana Statistical Service (2021) is 342, 090.

The Nzema area is predominantly agrarian; most of the Nzema population are farmers who engage in subsistence agriculture. Aside from farming activities, however, the people also take delight in trading to supplement their livelihood. Some of the Nzema speaking communities can also be found mostly in the southeastern part of the La Côte d`Ivoire (Kwesi, 1992). These communities include: Apolonu, Maama, Agyɛkɛ, Mouah (Mowa), Ngyeme, Noi (Noe), Akpanye, Anzeasawu, Manvea (Mafia), Bassam, Kakusuazo, Kpɔkɛti, Poso (Border town), Nzɔbɛnu, Mgbɔsɛya and Eboko. Their traditional capital is Bassam (also known as Grand Bassam) (Nyame, 2019).

Indirection, as a linguistic device, is largely employed in speech by most interactants all over the world. As a speech device, it avoids speaking about things in plain language or going straight to the point but rather go around the main purpose of the conversation yet, with the intention of putting the message across. This means that interlocutors try as much as possible to protect their relationship with others by means of employing indirection to encapsulate information that may sound unpleasant when stated in plain language. In other words, speakers in an interaction try to use words which would sound pleasant in the ears of their listeners which however may be unpleasant in their interpretation. The Nzema, like many other languages, employs indirection to enhance communication. This is achieved through certain indirection strategies. These strategies include evasion, silence, circumlocution, innuendo, euphemism, surrogate language, etc. (Hope, 2015).

The paper discusses Nzema idiomatic expressions as indirection strategy. Idioms are a group of words whose meanings are different from the meanings of the individual words. They are expressions which have figurative and metaphorical meanings. They are conventionally understood by a particular speech community. Idioms, by their nature, hardly ever mean exactly what the words say. In general terms, they are meant to embellish and reinforce expressions in any communication event. The paper focuses on idiomatic expressions related to human and some animal body parts. We argue that almost all of these body parts are a rich source of linguistic discourse in the domain of idiomatic expressions. The body parts comprise the head and its parts which include mainly the eyes, the nose, the hair, the lips, the tongue, the throat and the teeth. Other parts include the neck, the arms, the legs and the feet.

Apart from these, there are other organs that lie inside or within the body which are equally vital to human and other animates' virility. They include: the heart, the lungs, the kidney, the bile, the brain and all other glands of the body. These body parts form the fulcrum of most Nzema idiomatic expressions. The current paper discusses idioms which relate to the head and its associates such as head/brain, eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, ears, face and throat. For instance, if someone says *bɛli me nye* which literally means 'they have eaten my eyes', he or she saves the face for though 'they have eaten his/her eyes', yet he/she can see. It is face saving for him to state his disgust this way than to state directly that *bɛsisi me*, 'they have cheated on me'. Thus, by means of idiomatic expressions, a speaker can alleviate the shame and pain his statements may bring upon himself and other people.

The socio-cultural contexts or situations where indirection is mostly employed among the Nzema include arbitration at the chief's palace or traditional court, borrowing and lending and at marriage ceremonies. The essence of employing idiomatic expressions in speech among the Nzema is among other reasons to save both the face of the speaker and the addressee. This enables the interlocutors to communicate politely and therefore secure their interpersonal relationships. Effective use of idiomatic expressions as indirection strategy also means that one is competent in the language. Since idiomatic expressions as indirection strategy has not yet been documented in the scholarly literature, our focus is for the most part descriptive, although we do use and interact

with existing theoretical models for our discussion.

Obeng (1994) and Oyetade (2000) agree that indirection is a communicative device employed to avoid speaking plainly about things or going straight to the point but rather revolve around the main purpose of the interaction; however, with the intention of putting the message across. This communicative device which exists in almost all cultures, has compelled several scholars to examine the phenomenon and that has also given rise to different definitions of the concept.

Oyetade (2000) views (verbal) indirection as a strategy of communication in which interlocutors avoid directness so as to prevent crises, so as to achieve 'certain communicative momentary goal'. Thus, verbal indirection manifests in expressions such as proverbs, metaphors, subtle or polite insults, euphemisms, circumlocutions, honorifics, among others.

According to Obeng (1994, p. 42), indirection is "a communicative strategy in which interactants abstain from directness in order to obviate crises or in order to communicate 'difficulty' and thus make their utterances consistent with face saving and politeness." In the opinion of Hope (2015), (verbal) indirection is "a speech form which avoids speaking directly about things or going straight to the point but rather moves around the main purpose of the interaction; still, with the intention of putting the message across." From this assertion, it is clear that interactants employ indirection in their speech to prevent crises and conflicts.

Tannen (1994) indicates that indirection is a fundamental element in human communication. She explains that we all use indirect communication strategies at times and in certain circumstances – we mean more than we say, and we gather meaning from others beyond the words they use. Though indirection is used in almost all cultures, Tannen (1994) further points out that indirection is among the various discourse elements that varies significantly from one culture to another, and one that can cause confusion and misunderstanding. This implies that even in cultures where the phenomenon exists, the degree and type of indirectness vary. Indirect communicators try as much as possible to obviate conflict, tension and situations that may cause discomfort. The purpose of the communication exchange is maintaining harmony and saving face (Joyce, 2012).

Supporting Joyce's (2012) view, Peace Corps (2012) explains that in a high-context culture, which may be relatively homogeneous and tends to emphasize interdependence and social relationships, people develop deep and often unconscious understandings of what is expected in that culture. Because of shared expectations about behaviour, the context can be altered by the speaker to convey information without creating tension and uncomfortable situation. Explaining the reason behind the use of indirection among the Fante, Hope (2015) establishes that Fante uses indirection to indicate communicative competence in socio-cultural context and to avoid face threatening for both the speaker and his listeners and to show respect or politeness. This is so because, in our daily conversations, interlocutors usually obey cooperative socio-cultural principles and appropriate strategies so as to avoid misunderstanding or communication failure.

In communication, we try to take into account the other's feelings so that we do not make them feel uncomfortable. Being polite appears to be a complicated matter in all cultures. Politeness in conversation is definitely not a new topic for scholars, as a result, many scholars have expressed their views on what politeness means. Among them is Yule (1997) who sees politeness as a universal phenomenon that shows one has good manners and consideration for other people. This coincides with Tolmach's (1990) definition. He explains politeness as a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by decreasing the conflict and confrontation in all human interchanges (Tolmach, 1990). Goffman (1955) defines politeness as the actions of a person who is pledged to protect both his own 'face' and the

'faces' of others in social interaction. His submission is in line with Brown and Levinson (1987) who state that politeness strategies are developed in order to save the hearer's 'face'. Face refers to "the respect that an individual has for him or herself, and the maintaining of 'self-esteem' in public or in private situations" (Huang, 2008, p. 96). Yule (1996) views politeness as the means employed to show awareness of another person's face.

Brown and Levinson (1987) further state that there are two aspects to this self-image: one is positive face, the other is negative face. Positive face refers to the wish of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others. Negative face refers to the wish of every 'competent adult member' [of a society] that his actions be unimpeded by others. It is therefore not impossible to say that politeness can be understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon, a vehicle through which good interpersonal relationships are achieved, and a norm imposed by social conventions. An act or utterance which may be considered polite in one culture may not necessarily be regarded as polite in another culture. It is therefore obvious that in trying to be polite, it is necessary to consider the socio-cultural background of the interlocutor, as well as the communicative situation.

Ajayi (2018) studied verbal indirection in Yoruba to ascertain whether politeness expressions are really face-saving strategies in their contexts of use or not. His study revealed that, rather than the expressions functioning as face-saving devices, they are actually deliberately employed by interlocutors as face-threatening strategies. This means that in the Yoruba language and culture, expressions that can function as face saving, can as well be used as face-threatening devices. Fukushima (1996) also observes that the Japanese tend to be more direct in performing requests than the English.

The primary aim of this study is to explore idiomatic expressions used as indirection strategy in the Nzema language of Ghana. Since this area of Nzema has not yet been documented in the scholarly literature, we focus on idioms which incorporate body parts such as head/brain, eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, hands, legs, heart/chest, stomach and body/skin that are used to avoid any straightforward language that seeks to undermine and threaten the face of an addressee. Hopefully, the study will be of interest and use to Nzema and non-Nzema linguists specializing in the study of indirection and politeness.

Methodology

This qualitative study uses data from both primary and secondary sources. Data were gathered from some communities in the three Traditional Districts of Nzema, namely Nzema West, Nzema Central and Nzema East. We gathered (hand-recorded) some Nzema expressions which involved idioms from spontaneous natural speech contexts. Sometimes, as participant and non-participant observers, we sought permission as matter of ethics and tape-recorded proceedings of traditional ceremonies such as marriage contract and arbitration, where the use of idioms as indirect expressions was pervasive. Interviews with four competent indigenous/native speakers of Nzema were conducted for useful information and clarification on the data gathered. In order to obtain reliable information, we considered older people between the ages of fifty (50) years to seventy (70) years for the interview.

The rationale is that the aged, especially in the African context, are seen as the custodians of socio-cultural knowledge, including language due to their experiences (see Rababa'h & Malkawi, 2012; Thompson & Agyekum, 2015). We also relied on our competence, experience and intuitive knowledge as indigenous Nzema speakers to copy some of the expressions in a data collection note book. Researchers such as Diabah and Amfo (2018) and Nyame and Tomekyin (2018) consider data collection based on native-speaker intuition also reliable and thus used it in their works on Akan and Nzema proverbs respectively. We read two literary texts written in Nzema by Kwesi (1979) and Quarm (1993) and extracted idiomatic utterances to supplement the primary data. These secondary materials were considered useful because they are easy to read and comprehend, and also contain fascinating story lines with some figurative-idiomatic expressions which are considered

necessary for this study. The data were transcribed and translated for analysis. We analysed the data by looking for recurring patterns or themes in the selected idioms. For instance, idioms that relate to mouth were categorised as one theme. Idioms related to eyes were also categorised as another theme, inter alia. The data analysis is preceded by the various excerpts that illustrate the conversations and body parts idioms that were prevalent. In presenting the data (excerpts) for the analysis, we have indicated the dates and names of the communities in which the data were gathered. To fulfil our promise of confidentiality and anonymity to our participants, kingship terms such as mother, father, son, daughter, uncle, etc., and alphabetical codes have been used.

The paper is a contribution to studies in pragmatics, which deals with language use and understanding beyond its structural organisation. Mey (2001, p. 6) considers pragmatics as the study of the conditions of human language use that is determined by the context of usage. Agyekum (2019, p. 2) observes that pragmatics "explains aspects of meaning which cannot be found in the plain sense of words or structures". This implies that figurative devices such as proverbs and idioms among others, can lend themselves to pragmatic inferences and interpretations. Thus, the current paper is anchored on the notion of Face and Linguistics Politeness as an aspect of pragmatics to offer explanation and description of body parts idioms in Nzema. Grundy (2000: 146) posits that "polite expressions are properly and appropriately carried out in social interaction so as to avoid being offensive. In linguistic politeness, the speaker tries to be as tactful and respectful as possible and to avoid face threat."

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model is grounded on the notion of face. The politeness theory deals extensively with face threatening act, which run contrary to the face want of the addressee and/or speaker (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 65). Politeness theory and face theory seem to offer a common explanation and assumption (Redmond, 2015). Central to politeness theory, however, is the phenomenon of 'indirectness'. Thus, Brown and Levinson outline four main types of politeness strategies including bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record (indirectness). The authors explain indirect strategies as 'roundabout' language employed by speakers through the use of metaphors, irony, contradictions, overstatements and displacements among others. In a discourse encounter, these strategies help to remove/minimize speakers from potentially imposing embarrassments and discomfort on the listener in the communicative process.

The Nzema consider some explicit terms as abusive and obscene, and so they try to 'sanitise' such expressions through indirect strategies as shall be highlighted in section five (5) of this paper. Hence, we consider the politeness theory useful to underpin this study. The politeness theory suits the data because the use of Nzema body parts idioms is an off-record strategy, a means of avoiding face-threatening acts and offensive speeches. Interlocutors use such idioms to ensure social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

Results and Discussion

This section deals with the analysis of data. We focus on the presentation and analysis of data based solely on body-parts associated with the head, namely the eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, among others to engage in the discussion. The various discourse contexts where these idioms are employed are also discussed.

The literal and idiomatic interpretations of the idioms are not based on dictionary meaning. Rather, the inferences are based on the Nzema socio-cultural conceptualisations and context of use. We present the various idioms used for the analysis in table 1. The idiomatic expressions are provided in Nzema, followed by the English translation and their figurative-idiomatic meaning.

Table 1. Idiomatic expressions and their interpretations

Idioms related to eyes	**English translation**	**Idiomatic meaning**
i. Bɛli ɛ nye	Your eyes have been eaten up.	You have been cheated/fooled.
ii. Anwuma wɔ ɛ nye zo	You have rolling eyes.	You are promiscuous.
Idioms related to mouth	**English translation**	**Idiomatic meaning**
i. Ɛ nloa wale	You have a longer mouth.	You are a gossip.
ii. Ɔ nloa anu ɛbuke	His/her mouth is widely opened.	He/she is very extravagant.
Idioms about head/brain	**English translation**	**Idiomatic meaning**
i. Bɛli wɔ adwenle	Your mind has been eaten up.	You have been wooed.
ii. Ɔ nye ɛngyi ɔ ti anwo	He/she has no eyes on the head.	He/she is irresponsible/useless
Idioms related to teeth	**English translation**	**Idiomatic meaning**
i. Ɛ gye tu a ɛme	You swallow your tooth.	You are a pathological liar.
ii. Ɔle kila gye	It is mouse's teeth.	The house is not plastered.
Idioms related to nose	**English translation**	**Idiomatic meaning**
i. Kpɔla ɛ bonyi zo	Wipe your nose.	Cover your private part.
ii. Wɔhwi ɛ bonyi zo bile	You have painted your nose black.	You are adamant/unforgiving.
Idioms related to ears	**English translation**	**Idiomatic meaning**
i. Ɛ nzo gyigyi	Your ears are erected.	You are a pry.
ii. Ɔ nzo nu yɛ se	His/her inner ear is hard.	He/she is deaf.
Idioms related to face	**English translation**	**Idiomatic meaning**
i. Bɛye ɛ nyunlu nwoma	Your facial skin has been removed.	You are shameless.
ii. Ɛ nyunlu ɛgua aze	Your face has fallen.	You have disgraced yourself.
Idioms related to throat	**English translation**	**Idiomatic meaning**
i. Ɛnlɛ ɛ kominza	You do not have a throat.	You are a beggar.
ii. Ɛ kominza le kpole	You have a big throat.	You are selfish.

Idioms related to eyes

The data showed the prevalence of Nzema idiomatic expressions rated to eyes. As a veritable tool for ensuring polite communication, this category of idioms serves as indirect means to rebuke people who are easily lured/cheated and people who live promiscuous lifestyle. The excerpts in 1 and 2 exemplify the use of eye-related idioms in Nzema communication.

Excerpt. 1 (16/06/2021, at Nsein, a community in Nzema Central)

A (showing and informing her friends about a new dress she has bought from the market)
B (shouting in awe): *Tɛladeɛ boni ɛne, ɛdɔle ye ɛzɛ?* 'What kind of dress is this? How much did you buy it?'
A: *Sidi ɛya ko*. 'It is hundred Ghana cedis (GHS 100.00).'
B: *Bɛndɔ ye zɔ, eza tɛ kpalɛ ne bie ɔ?* 'It is expensive and not original.'
C (laughing from behind): ***Bɛli ɛ nye***. *Tɛ sidi abulanlu a bɛtɔ ye ɔ?* '**Your eyes have been eaten up**. Is it not sold at fifty Ghana cedis?'

In the above conversation, A shows her new dress to her friends with confidence that she bought a quality dress with a moderate price. B responds in awe, and indicates that the dress is not original and also expensive. C makes mockery of A, and tells her *bɛli ɛ nye*, 'your eyes have been eaten up.' This is because the original dress is sold at fifty Ghana cedis and not hundred Ghana cedis.

Some Nzema idioms encourage vigilance. Consequently, every Nzema is expected to be open minded, observant and be on top of issues. It is disheartening to hear that one has been lured or cheated. Therefore, victims of such situations are branded *ahoasea* 'fools', and by way of expressing this directly, they say *bɛyɛ ye koasea*, 'he/she has been fooled/cheated'. However, in order not to express the flaws of the victim in plain language, speakers rather resort to *bɛli ɛ nye*, 'your eyes have been eaten up'. This

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expression sounds milder and face saving as compared to the former. This accounts for why C employs the idiom *bɛli ɛ nye*, 'your eyes have been eaten up.' For one's eyes to be eaten implies that the person was never observant and also took things for granted.

Excerpt. 2 (03/07/2021, at Esiama, a community in Nzema Central)

Daughter (comes to sit in the family meeting about her reason for a divorce. Her mother interrogates her intention for the divorce): *Mame, mese mengya ko la, yemɔ ala ɛne!* 'As for me, I have made up my mind to divorce him and that is all.'
Mother (looks at her daughter in amazement): *Duzu ɛtane a yeyɛ wɔ a, anzɛɛ . . .?* 'What wrong has he done or . . .?
Father (interrupts): *Anzɛɛ wɔnwu nrenyia fofolɛ bie ɔ?* 'Or is it because you have seen another man?'
Son (her brother reveals the secret of her new relationship): *Ɔ nee nrenyia fofolɛ wɔ ɛkɛ. Ɛkenle ne, mengɔndole ye nee ye kpavolɛ fofolɛ ne wɔ ɛnweazo lɔ nza efiade ne anu kɛ bɛlɛno nza.* 'She has seen another man. I met her and her new boyfriend in the drinking spot at the beach last week drinking beer together.'
Mother (pulls her daughter closer to herself): *Ɔle nɔhalɛ ɔ? Ɛbɛla mɔɔ kɛkala ɛlɛbɔ la ɛ.* ***Anwuma wɔ ɛ nye zo*** *bɔkɔɔ*. 'Is that true? So, this is the new life you are living. It is clear that **you have rolling eyes**.'

From the above excerpt, it is obvious that the lady who is seeking divorce is a married woman. Her reason for divorce is not clear, but insists on divorcing her husband. However, from the information given by her brother, we are convinced that she has been flirting with other men. It is also obvious that apart from her brother who has seen her with her boyfriend, other people might have also seen her with him and have reported her to her husband. The lady senses possible divorce and does not want to wait for that to happen since it is defaming for a woman to be divorced on the basis of infidelity. To avoid this, she rather threatens her husband with a divorce. The mother, having realized her daughter's lifestyle, describes her as *anwuma wɔ ɛ nye zo* 'you have rolling eyes', an idiom which means one is a harlot or a maniser.

The Nzema, as part of their tradition and culture, embrace polygamy, but detest people who live promiscuous life (Kwaw, 2008). Any man or woman who flirts indiscriminately is described as *ahulomraalɛ,* 'womaniser' or *ahulomrenyia*, 'maniser' respectively. Since this attitude is unacceptable in the society, and brings shame and disgrace to indulgers and their families, speakers try to avert such shame and disgrace by employing a more subtle expression such as *anwuma wɔ ɛ nye zo* 'you have rolling eyes'. By having 'rolling eyes', it means that the person is always gallivanting in search of new lovers to satisfy his or her lustful appetite. Thus, the mother avoids the direct expression *ahulomrenyia*, 'maniser' in describing her daughter in order to save her face.

Idioms related to mouth

Other Nzema idioms that emerged were those related to mouth. These expressions are used to gently rebuke people who are gossip and extravagant, as can be seen in excerpts 3 and 4 respectively:

Excerpt. 3 (25/09/2021, at Adoabo, a community in Nzema Central)

A (meets B at the community centre and interrogates him): *Akee meande wɔ nganeɛ bieko. Kɛ adawu ne mɔɔ yɛbɔle la ɛhɔdwu ɛ?* 'I have not heard from you all this while. What has been the outcome of the issue we discussed the other time?'
B: *Menvɛlɛle lɔya ne mɔɔ edwɛkɛ ne wɔ ɔ sa nu la. Ɔbɔle ɛwɔkɛ kɛ ɔbamaa me mualɛ noko metɛtele ye nganeɛ.* 'I called the lawyer who is handling the case. He promised to give me feedback, but I have not heard from him.'
C (intrudes): *Lɔya boni ɔ, edwɛkɛ boni a wɔ ɔ sa nu a?* 'Who is that lawyer, what case is he handling?'
B: *Kyɛkyɛ, ɔnvale ɛ nwo,* ***ɛ nloa wale*** *somaa eza ɛ nzo gyigyi*. *Sɛ ɛbadie yɛ nloa anu na wɔahɔha.* 'No, it is none of your business, **you have a longer mouth** and your ears are erected. You have come as a sneak.'

We observe from the above excerpt that C intrudes in the conversation between A and B, and wants to get full details of their conversation. B rebukes C and refers to him as

ɛ nloa wale, 'you have a longer mouth.' Among the Nzema, it is a sign of disrespect to intrude into people's conversations uninvited. Moreover, revealing people's information which should be kept confidential is disapproved of. For instance, a discussion held in tete-a-tete, just as what is between A and B, is expected to be kept behind closed doors. Whoever is fond of thrusting into people's conversations is described directly as *nwondomgbɔ*, 'gossip/betrayer', an expression which is embarrassing. Therefore, an indirect expression such as *ɛ nloa wale*, 'you have a longer mouth' is used to lessen the embarrassment the above expression might cause. Having 'a longer mouth' does not mean that the person has a protruding or abnormal mouth. The idiomatic expression rather implies that the person spreads falsehoods, is incapable of keeping secrets, and above all, jumps into people's conversations. Consequently, B uses the idiom *ɛ nloa wale* on C so that C is not embarrassed.

Excerpt. 4 (10/08/2021, at Bolɔfo, a community in Nzema East)

X (sees his brother (Y) with a lady by the roadside. He waves and passes)
Y (comes home to meet his brother (X). He discusses his intention to marry): *Ayi, mekulo kɛ megya raalɛ o! Akee melɛnyi.* 'My dear, I want to marry. I am not growing any younger.'
X (sighs): *Wɔnwu bie ɔ?* 'Have you found one?'
Y: *Ɛhɛe o, wɔnwu ye bɔbɔ.* 'Oh, yes, you have already seen her.'
X: *Ɛnee nwane ɔ?* 'Who is she then?
Y (mentions the lady's name (Z)): *Yemɔ yɛɛ mekulo kɛ megya ye a*. 'It is Z I want to marry.'
X (shakes his head in disagreement): *Z mɔɔ ɛnee ɛ nee ye gyi nehane la ɔ? Aa! Kyɛkyɛ, ɛnze kɛ* ***ɔ nloa anu ɛbuke*** *ɔ? Ɛnrɛhola ye sɔ.* 'Are you referring to Z with whom I saw you this morning? Oh! No, don't you know that **her mouth is widely opened**? You can't handle her.'

Studies such as Sobo-Blay (1977) and Ɛzenrane (1992) show how the Nzema train their wards to be economical so as to save for the future. Lavish and extravagant life is seen as a sign of irresponsibility; a behaviour which they highly disdain. However, to save the face of those who live extravagant life, the Nzema employ the idiom *ɔ nloa anu ɛbuke*, 'his/her mouth is widely opened', which is milder than its direct counterpart *ɔsɛkye ezukoa somaa*, 'he/she is very extravagant'. From excerpt 4, X shows his disapproval about Y's intention to marry Z because he knows Z to be extravagant. However, in order not to talk about the behaviour of Z in plain language as *ɔsɛkye ezukoa somaa*, 'she is very extravagant', X deploys the idiom *ɔ nloa anu ɛbuke*, 'her mouth is widely opened', a subtle expression used to save Z from embarrassment. In this context, the 'widely opening of Z's mouth', is linked to the unnecessary spending and her lavish lifestyle which can impoverish Y. That is to say, anything that Z's 'mouth' gets hold of, it swallows it.

Idioms related to head/brain

The data further showcased Nzema idiomatic expressions that incorporate head and brain. This category of idioms points to the fact that a person must always be vigilant and very responsible in all endeavors. These are illustrated below in excerpt 5 and 6 respectively:

Excerpt. 5 (11/10/2021, at Yediyɛsele, a community in Nzema East)

Husband (during arbitration in the chief's palace, reveals his intention to divorce his wife): *Mehye ye nee nrenyia, ɔti mengya ye ko.* 'I have caught her with another man in bed therefore I can't continue to marry her.'
Chief's spokesperson (calls the woman): *Ɛ hu se yehye wɔ nee nrenyia, ɔle zɔ ɔ?* 'Your husband says he has caught you with another man in bed, is it true?'
Wife: (stammering): *Ɛ-ɛ-ɛ ɔle zɔ, emomu melɛ ngilenu ekyi.* 'Erm, erm it is true, but I have a little explanation.'
Spokesperson: *Duzu ngilenu bieko? Raalɛ mɔɔ ɛdawɔ bɛgya wɔ la,* ***bɛli wɔ adwenle*** *zɛhae.* 'What explanation do you have?' You are a married woman, but **your mind has been eaten up**.'
Wife (holds husband's legs while kneeling): *Kpavolɛ ne, tɛ me ɛhwee ɔ, me nee ye bɔ nzɛmedɛ ala. Anoma anzi yɛɛ ɔhanle kɛ anrɛɛ memakyi menlie debie a. Mengɔle la, ɔmaanle me nza menonle, noko meannwu ɛhwee bieko. Me nye zo kade me la, ɛnee me nee ye yɛ mu nwiɔ yɛgua*

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ye ɛkpa ne azo. 'There is nothing between me and the said man. We are only friends. Three days ago, he asked me to come to his house for an item. He offered me a drink which I drank, but fell unconscious afterwards. When I gained consciousness, I realised that we are in his bed.
Elder 1 (addresses the husband): *Mɔɔ ɛ ye ɛha la kile kɛ tɛ ɔ nye fuu ɔ, emomu kpavolɛ ne a gyegyele ye a. Yemɔti mgbɔdalɛ la ɛ nyunlu*. 'Your wife's explanation indicates that her act was not intentional, but the man caused everything. Therefore, we beseech you to pardon her.'
Husband (insists): *Mame, menlie mgbɔdalɛ biala. Mese me nee ye ɛndɛnla bieko*. 'As for me, I will not pardon her. I said this is the end of our marriage.'
Elder 2: *Ɔkile kɛ wɔhwi ɛ bonyi zo bile, ɛnrɛdie mɔɔ yɛlɛka la ɔ*? 'So, you have painted your nose black, you do not want to take our advice?'

The Nzema are not happy with people who fail to make assessment and think critically about foreseen and/or unforeseen circumstances. People who are gullible and therefore allow themselves to be duped and defrauded are seen as not making adequate use of their mental faculties. For instance, a married woman who is easily wooed to commit adultery, is regarded as not utilising her brain sufficiently. From excerpt 5, the married woman allowed herself to be seduced. However, since it is inconvenient to explicitly refer to her as *bɛbɛlɛbɛla wɔ* 'you have been wooed', the spokesperson indirectly uses the idiomatic expression *bɛli wɔ adwenle* 'your mind has been eaten up' to politely describe the woman as being gullible.

Excerpt. 6 (02/09/2021, at Mgbɔtɛba, a community in Nzema West)

X (introducing Y, the new caretaker of their cocoa farm to his wife, Z): *Ahenle mɔɔ kɛkala banlea yɛ egyinli ne azo amaa yɛ la ɛne.* 'This is the new caretaker of our farm.'
Y (turning to Z): *Ɛ hu se menea bɛ egyinli ne azo, na medame noko mebayɛ ye zɔ somaa.* 'Your husband has entrusted the cocoa farm to me and I promise to manage it well.'
Z: (addressing her husband, X): *Ɛfa awie wɔamaa yeanlea ɛya ne a, ɛyeka mɔɔ ɔdaye* ***ɔ nye ɛngyi ɔ ti anwo*** *la yɛɛ ɛvale ye a.* 'You could not find anyone to manage our farm than **this person who has no eyes on his head.**'

The direct expression used to describe a useless and irresponsible person is *sonlamgbane*. This expression undermines the reputation of an addressee, and so the Nzema try to 'neutralize' its effect by saying *ɔ nye ɛngyi ɔ ti anwo*, 'he/she has no eyes on the head.' From excerpt 6, Z refers to Y as *ɔ nye ɛngyi ɔ ti anwo*, 'he has no eyes on his head' because she knows Y to be irresponsible who will mismanage their farm. However, in order to be polite and save the face of Y, Z avoids the direct expression *ɔle sonlamgbane*, 'he is irresponsible/useless.' The eyes play a vital role by seeing things around and transferring them to the brain (in the head) for processing. Therefore, the Nzema believe that whoever 'has no eyes on the head' cannot reason to be responsible.

Idioms related to teeth

Nzema idioms related to teeth, as our data proved, can be employed to admonish braggers and liars. The idioms serve as polite and indirect means to show disapproval of such unsatisfactory behaviours. Consider the following excerpts in 7 and 8:

Excerpt. 7 (06/12/2021, at Bɔnyɛlɛ, a community in Nzema West)

A (brags in the midst of his colleagues about his newly built apartment): *Bɛse bɛnrɛzi sua kpalɛ la, bɛhɔnlea mɔɔ mezi la.* 'You people do not build proper houses, go and look at what I have built.'
B (puffs): *Duzu sua kpalɛ a wɔzi a?* 'What better house have you built?'
C: (taps B on the shoulder): *Mmatɛne ye zo. Sua ekpumgbunli nwiɔ mɔɔ eza* ***ɔle kila gye*** *la ɔdaye.* 'Do not listen to him. Just a two-bedroom house which is even **mouse's teeth**.'

Ɔle kila gye, 'it is mouse's teeth', is an idiom employed by interactants to politely indicate that a particular building is not plastered. The only context where this idiom is used is when someone builds a block house and brags about it when it is not plastered. Before contemporary architecture, the standard house an average Nzema could build

was either raffia or mud house. Only few could afford building cement block houses. Consequently, those who built cement block houses were deemed very rich and therefore revered much in the society. It became a practice where people built and completed them by just roofing and fixing few doors. The Nzema however do not regard an unplastered house to be complete even if the owners reside in them. Since living in a raffia or mud house indicates misery, even those who could not complete their houses by plastering them despise those residing in raffia and mud houses. To keep those braggarts mute over their uncompleted houses, the Nzema describe such houses directly as *bɛampɛlɛse nwo*, 'they are unplastered'. Such a comment is disparaging to the average rich people. Therefore, to avoid this, the idiom *ɔle kila gye*, 'it is mouse's teeth' is deployed. From excerpt 7, C humbles the braggart friend, A politely with the idiom *ɔle kila gye*, 'it is mouse's teeth' to imply that A's house is not any better as he claims. Here, the roughness of A's house because it is not plastered, is linked to the sharpness of the mouse's teeth that can harm easily. The idiom therefore admonishes unplastered house owners who are pompous to be humble, since their buildings can equally cause wounds just as the teeth of the mouse.

Excerpt 8 (23/05/ 2021, at Nzulezo, a community in Nzema West)

Grandmother (calls her grandson and asks him about a missing money): *Ezukoa ne mɔɔ mendole ye ɛkponle ne azo la wɔ ni?* 'Where is the money I put on the table?'
Grandson (opening his palms): *Metɛnwunle ezukoa biala o!* 'I have not seen any money.'
Grandmother: (grabs him and detects the money in his pocket): *Ɛse tɛ wɔ a wɔva ɔ? Nwane bieko a me nee ye de ɛke a? Ɛdawɔ,* ***ɛ gye tu a ɛme****. Ezukoa boni a wɔ wɔ kodoku nu la? Ɛ nyunlu ɛgua aze.* 'Are you saying that you have not taken any money? Who else lives with us here? As for you, **you swallow your tooth**. Which money is in your pocket? Your face has fallen.'

Teeth related idioms can be used to gently rebuke liars as well as people whose evil deeds catch up with them unaware and as a result are taken aback. For instance, someone who is fond of consistently defending him or herself even when he or she is caught in the act, is plainly talked about as *ɛle alane*, 'you are a pathological liar'. From excerpt 8, however, to save the grandson from an embarrassment, the grandmother resorts to the idiomatic expression *ɛ gye tu a ɛme*, 'you swallow your tooth.' Tooth, when removed from the gum is usually discarded. Therefore, the grandson 'swallowing his tooth' implies that he does evil things and covers up.

Idioms related to nose

Idioms related to nose also came up as part of the data. The usage of nose-related idioms as roundabout expressions to avoid face-threatening acts are observable in excerpts 9 and 10:

Excerpt. 9 (18/12/2021, at Asasetelɛ, a community in Nzema Central)

X (with her study mates, Y and Z. She signals Y to push her bra up)
Y (appears not to understand the signal from X): *Na ɛ sa mɔɔ ɛlɛtende wɔ me nwo zo noko la ɛ?* 'Why are you pointing your hand at me?'
Z: (notices that one of Y's breasts is almost exposed): *Ɔse* ***kpɔla ɛ bonyi zo****.* 'She is asking you to **wipe your nose**.'

From excerpt 9, Z could directly tell Y, *keda ɛ nyɛfo azo* 'cover your breast' to alert Y that one of her breasts is almost exposed. This direct information can however cause Y a serious embarrassment. To avoid this, therefore, Z employs the idiom *kpɔla ɛ bonyi zo*, 'wipe your nose'. The nose is among the most noticeable facial features. Therefore, asking someone to 'wipe his/her nose', according to the Nzema, is to indirectly inform the person to cover an exposed part of the body, particularly his/her sex organ.

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Excerpt. 10 (11/10/2021, at Yediyɛsele, a community in Nzema East) (also in excerpt 5)

Husband (during arbitration in the chief's palace, reveals his intention to divorce his wife): *Mehye ye nee nrenyia, ɔti mengya ye ko.* 'I have caught her with another man in bed therefore I can't continue to marry her.'
Chief's spokesperson (calls the woman): *Ɛ hu se yehye wɔ nee nrenyia, ɔle zɔ ɔ?* 'Your husband says he has caught you with another man in bed, is it true?'
Wife: (stammering): *Ɛ-ɛ-ɛ ɔle zɔ, emomu melɛ ngilenu ekyi.* 'Erm, erm it is true, but I have a little explanation.'
Spokesperson: *Duzu ngilenu bieko? Raalɛ mɔɔ ɛdawɔ bɛgya wɔ la, bɛli wɔ adwenle zɛhae.* 'What explanation do you have?' You are a married woman, but your mind has been eaten up.'
Wife (holds husband's legs while kneeling): *Kpavolɛ ne, tɛ me ɛhwee ɔ, me nee ye bɔ nzɛmedɛ ala. Anoma anzi yɛɛ ɔhanle kɛ anrɛɛ memakyi menlie debie a. Mengɔle la, ɔmaanle me nza menonle, noko meannwu ɛhwee bieko. Me nye zo kade me la, ɛnee me nee ye yɛ mu nwiɔ yɛgua ye ɛkpa ne azo*. 'There is nothing between me and the said man. We are only friends. Three days ago, he asked me to come to his house for an item. He offered me a drink which I drank, but fell unconscious afterwards. When I gained consciousness, I realised that we are in his bed.
Elder 1 (addresses the husband): *Mɔɔ ɛ ye ɛha la kile kɛ tɛ ɔ nye fuu ɔ, emomu kpavolɛ ne a gyegyele ye a. Yemɔti mgbɔdalɛ la ɛ nyunlu*. 'Your wife's explanation indicates that her act was not intentional, but the man caused everything. Therefore, we beseech you to pardon her.'
Husband (insists): *Mame, menlie mgbɔdalɛ biala. Mese me nee ye ɛndɛnla bieko*. 'As for me, I will not pardon her. I said this is the end of our marriage.'
Elder 2: *Ɔkile kɛ **wɔhwi ɛ bonyi zo bile**, ɛnrɛdie mɔɔ yɛlɛka la ɔ*? 'So, **you have painted your nose black**, you do not want to take our advice?'

Another nose-related idiom is *wɔhwi ɛ bonyi zo bile*, 'you have painted your nose black'. This expression is used to gently describe an adamant person who never reconsiders his/her thoughts in order to desist from any undesirable action. Among the Nzema, someone who is insistent, especially in maintaining undesirable opinion or position is described directly as *ɛnze gyakyi*, 'you are adamant/unforgiving'. Since this expression exposes the individual of a negative attitude, the former is used indirectly to 'prune' the inconvenience that may be caused. As can be observed from excerpt 10, the wife appears to give a pardonable explanation. As a result, Elder 1 implores the husband to pardon his wife. The husband, however, maintains his position. Consequently, Elder 2 rebukes the husband indirectly, referring to him as *wɔhwi ɛ bonyi zo bile*, 'you have painted your nose black.' Elder 2 uses this idiom to avoid describing the husband plainly as adamant. In the Nzema traditional setting, black is a symbol of sorrow or evil. Therefore, the husband 'painting his nose black' in this context, implies that he has put an evil action before him and he is determined to doing it regardless of any criticism.

Idioms related to ears

Ear-related idioms among the Nzema are used to rebuke pries in a subtle manner. Such expressions are also employed as a polite way to describe people who are deaf. The conversations in excerpt 11 and 12 exemplify the usage of Nzema idioms related to ears:

Excerpt. 11 (25/09/2021, at *Adoabo, a community in Nzema Central*) (also in excerpt 3)

A (meets B at the community centre and interrogates him): *Akee meande wɔ nganeɛ bieko. Kɛ adawu mɔɔ yɛbɔle la ɛhɔdwu ɛ?* 'I have not heard from you all this while. What has been the outcome of the issue we discussed the other time?'
B: *Menvɛlɛle lɔya ne mɔɔ edwɛkɛ ne wɔ ɔ sa nu la. Ɔbɔle ɛwɔkɛ kɛ ɔbamaa me mualɛ noko metɛtele ye nganeɛ.* 'I called the lawyer who is handling the case. He promised to give me feedback, but I have not heard from him.'
C (intrudes): *Lɔya boni ɔ, edwɛkɛ boni a wɔ ɔ sa nu a?* 'Who is that lawyer, what case is he handling?'
B: *Kyɛkyɛ, ɔnvale ɛ nwo, ɛ nloa wale somaa eza **ɛ nzo gyigyi**. Sɛ ɛbadie yɛ nloa anu na wɔahɔha.*

'No, it is none of your business, you have a longer mouth and **your ears are erected**. You have come as a sneak.'

Ɛ nzo gyigyi, 'your ears are erected' is an idiom used to indirectly rebuke pries. To have 'erected ears', implies that the person is fond of moving around and listening to people's conversations with the intent to spreading their private matters. In excerpt 11, B deploys the idiom *ɛ nzo gyigyi*, 'your ears are erected' to implicitly describe C as a pry. The idiom is intended to avoid the overt statement *ɛle akpɔsemadi*, 'you are a pry', an expression which condemns C. From the excerpt, it is obvious that the Nzema expect people to be always engaged, working hard to make ends meet. They detest idle people whose main concern is to be nosy.

Excerpt. 12 (18/07/2021, at Nsein, a community in Nzema East)

Tenant 1 (approaching his landlord while calling him): *Yɛmenle X, Yɛmenle X, mesɛlɛ wɔ gyinla die me kɛnlanɛɛ ezukoa ne.* 'Mr. X, Mr. X, please wait and take the money for my light bill.'
Landlord (still going)
Tenant 2 (addresses tenant 1): *Maa ɔrɛla sua nu na mɔɔ ɛlɛka la ɔnde. Anzɛɛ ɛ rɛle ɛvi kɛ sua menle* ***ɔ nzo nu yɛ se*** *ɔ?* 'Let him return because he cannot hear what you are saying. Or have you forgotten that **his inner ear is hard**?'

According to the Nzema, deafness is a natural condition which should not be made fun of. People who are deaf are said to be 'ill' but not impaired, and are therefore described as those 'suffering from their ears'. A more polite way to describe a person with such a condition, however, is to say *ɔ nzo nu yɛ se*, 'his/her inner ear is hard' as tenant 2 employs in the excerpt above. Tenant 2 uses this idiom to avoid the direct and harsh statement, *ɔ nzo ɛdi*, 'he is deaf', which is insulting and embarrassing.

Idioms related to face

The data revealed that face-related idioms are employed to admonish people who are insensible to disgrace. Also, when a person indulges in a shameful act, an idiom that incorporates 'face' is used to subtly remind them of such undesirable behaviour. Excerpts 13 and 14 respectively illustrate these instances.

Excerpt. 13 (06/11/2021, Mgbɔtɛba, a community in Nzema West)

Daughter (informs her mother that she is attending a friend's party): *Ɔmɔ, mekɔ meara o!* 'Mother, I am leaving for the party.'
Mother (asks her to return): *Se nehae, duzu tɛladeɛ ɛne? Metɛsele wɔ kɛ mmawula adɛladeɛ nzinrenzinra ɛhye mɔ ɔ?* 'Come back here, what kind of dress is this? Have I not warned you not to wear short skirts anymore?
Daughter (feigns): *Na nvonleɛ boni a wɔ nwolɛ a?* 'But what is wrong with my dress?'
Mother*: Yemɔti ɛnnwu nvonleɛ biala wɔ nwolɛ ɔ? Ɛnee noko ɔkile kɛ* ***bɛye ɛ nyunlu nwoma***. 'So, you see nothing wrong with your dress? Then, it means **your facial skin has been removed**.'

A person who is insensible to disgrace is usually careless and acts in a manner that undermines his/her reputation and that of his/her family. Such a person willfully indulges in immoral practices such as adultery, incest, stealing, and indecent dressing among others and is never ashamed. Among the Nzema, someone who behaves this way is dissociated. Both the young and the old are seriously cautioned not to keep such a person's company. To openly talk about someone who is amoral, the Nzema say *ɛnze nyiane*, 'you are shameless.' This expression derogates an addressee, especially one who occupies a position in the society. Thus, the idiom *bɛye ɛ nyunlu nwoma*, 'your facial skin has been removed', is the indirect expression used to mitigate the discomfort of the direct statement *ɛnze nyiane*, 'you are shameless.' From excerpt 13, we observe that the daughter is fond of wearing short skirts; an act which can bring shame to the family. Thus, the mother rebukes her for improper dressing. In rebuking her, however, the mother employs the idiom *bɛye ɛ nyunlu nwoma*, 'your facial skin has been removed' to save her face. From the Nzema perspective, the 'facial skin' is the human 'sensor' that detects shame and disgrace. When one's sensor, 'facial skin' is 'removed',

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issues of morality and immorality are of no concern to the individual.

Excerpt. 14 (29/11/2021, at Ekpu, a community in Nzema West) (also in excerpt 8)

Grandmother (calls her grandson and asks him about a missing money): *Ezukoa ne mɔɔ mendole ye ɛkponle ne azo la wɔ ni?* 'Where is the money I put on the table?'
Grandson (opening his palms): *Metɛnwunle ezukoa biala o!* 'I have not seen any money.'
Grandmother: (grabs him and detects the money in his pocket): *Ɛse tɛ wɔ a wɔva ɔ? Nwane bieko a me nee ye de ɛke a? Ɛdawɔ, ɛ gye tu a ɛme. Ezukoa boni a wɔ wɔ kodoku nu la?* ***ɛ nyunlu ɛgua aze.*** 'Are you saying that you have not taken any money? Who else lives with us here? As for you, you swallow your tooth. Which money is in your pocket? **Your face has fallen**.'

We observe from excerpt 14, that the grandmother exposes her grandson of a theft he initially denies. The grandmother in reproaching her grandson, however, uses the idiom *ɛ nyunlu ɛgua aze*, 'your face has fallen' instead of the direct expression *wɔbɔ anyiemgba*, 'you have disgraced yourself'. This direct expression connotes every act of misconduct and therefore denigrates the grandson. Even though the Nzema do not condone malice, it is too harsh to expose people in a manner as in the latter expression. The 'fallen face' in the idiom implies that the grandson has misconducted himself, and has attracted shame. It is as if he can no longer raise his head for his face to be seen.

Idioms related to throat

Beggars (people who wish to eat every food that they find others eating) as well as selfish people are indirectly reprimanded through the use of throat-related idioms among the Nzema. These are evident in excerpt 15:

Excerpt. 15 (13/05/2021, at Nzulezo, a community in Nzema West)

X and Y (eating fufu at the restaurant)
Z (comes to meet his friends, X and Y at the restaurant. He washes his hands and joins them on the table uninvited): *Bɛmɛ bɛ ti ɛyɛ boɛ bɛnyia bie nwonlomɔ ye bɛlɛtete*. 'You people are fortunate to be served fufu this morning.'
X: (holds Z's hand): *Duzu ati a ɛbato kɛ ɛ gɔnwo mɔ ɛlɛdi aleɛ a ɛmmaa bɛnvɛlɛ wɔ na wɔado ɛ sa nu a?* 'Why do you join us to eat uninvited?'
Y (addresses Z): *Wɔ subane zɔhane ɛha ɛ nwo,* ***ɛnlɛ ɛ kominza*** *fee*. 'This has been your usual habit, y**ou do not have throat** at all.'
X (also addresses Z): *Aleɛ biala ɛkulo kɛ ɛdi bie, noko* ***ɛ kominza le kpole***. 'You wish to eat every food that comes your way, but **you have a big throat**.'

In the Nzema socio-cultural milieu, people who cannot control their appetites for other people's foods are not cherished. Such people always yearn for food and want to taste any food they see others eating even when they are already full. Such individuals are described in a plain language as *adanlɛ*, 'beggars', an unpleasant label that seeks to expose someone as a glutton. From excerpt 15, Z joins his friends at the table to eat even though he is not invited. Such a behaviour is morally unacceptable, and so Y reprimands Z for his action. However, in order for Y to sound polite and to save the face of Z, the idiom *ɛnlɛ ɛ kominza*, 'you do not have throat' is employed. This idiom does not necessarily mean that physiologically, Z has no throat, but it implies, according to the Nzema, that Z always expects every food he sets his eyes on to pass through his throat. X also criticizes Z's behaviour by using the idiom *ɛ kominza le kpole*, 'you have a big throat' to further imply that not only is Z a gourmand, but also selfish. In this idiom, 'having big throat' does not suggest that Z has an expanded throat or that he has a goitre; rather, the implication is that Z is selfish and always wants the best for himself alone.

The Nzema detest individuals with such attitude because they tend to be greedy and corrupt, and always try to cheat on others. Since this attitude (selfishness) is unacceptable in the society, it is disturbing to plainly describe an indulger as *ɛle angomedi*, 'you are selfish'. Thus, X avoids the direct expression *ɛle angomedi*, 'you are selfish' in order not to embarrass Z.

Conclusion

Within the purview of Brown and Levinson's face theory, the current study has examined some Nzema idiomatic expressions used as indirection strategy. Beyond the language-specific description of Nzema idioms as indirection devices, this paper also makes a contribution to the broader study of indirection and politeness. As the data have revealed, the Nzema use a lot of idiomatic expressions that relate to body parts such as head/brain, eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, ears, face and throat. It has been shown that, these culturally established body parts related idioms are deliberately employed as face saving and politeness devices. Interlocutors employ these subtle expressions wherever they engage in speech activities that require face saving and politeness. This strategy enables interactants to be conscious of what they say so as to avoid conflicts, embarrassments and possible punishments. Even though the Nzema disdain people who engage in social vices, those who exhibit such acts are criticized in a language that does not weigh them down because such individuals are not born with those vices and therefore can change. A careful use of these idioms as indirection strategy indicates one's cultural and communicative competence in the language.

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